

**Origins of the Great War**

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or

**the British Case**

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**By John Kirkpatrick**

**M.A., LL.D.**

**Emeritus Professor of History**

**— University of Edinburgh —**



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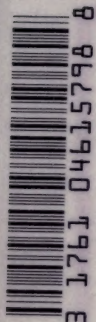
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ERRATUM.

On page 10, line 11, for '1912' read  
'1913.'

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Journal of the Royal Society

# The British Case

## ERRATUM

The paper for June 12, 1913, read  
1913



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50, South Square, London

1914



## Preface

THE War and its origins have been treated of from many different points of view, notably by the instructive "Why we are at War" (Clarendon Press, Oxford) and by the excellent Oxford Pamphlets, but, in all its essentials, the British Case as here submitted is short and simple. In a court of law Germany would probably be held to have "no case"; yet she still protests and appeals to neutrals so persistently that she surely "protests too much." *Qui s'excuse s'accuse.*

While the following pages were in the press confirmations of their accuracy have been almost daily coming to light. Thus, in the *Times* of 9th December, appears a notice of the sixth Report of the Belgian Commission on the violations of international law by the Germans. Like its predecessors, this report proves to the hilt that the wholesale massacres of innocent civilians, women, and children, the pillage and destruction of open towns and villages, and other outrages were deliberately planned and ruthlessly carried out. It forms a complete answer, borne out by abundance of other evidence, to the assertion by twenty-two German Universities that no atrocities were committed by the German troops! The same *Times* also contains a letter from Mr Ernest Barker

showing the futility of a German criticism of "Why we are at War." \*

The bad faith shown by Germany and Austria long before the present war is strikingly proved by Signor Giolitti's recent statement in the Italian Chamber that Austria, backed by Germany, contemplated a "defensive" attack on Servia a year ago. Why Italy denounced Austria's design as aggressive is fully explained by the *Times* of 11th December.

It is a deplorable fact that Germany has blindly entrusted all her higher civil interests, professional, commercial, agricultural, and others, to the irresponsible "noble" and military caste, whose love of power, of war, glory, and booty are hostile to all peaceful progress. As well might the lamb seek the protection of the wolf, or the dove that of the eagle.

One may perhaps briefly describe the causes of the German war delirium as ambition, vanity, jealousy, and cupidity, exploited by the Government for its own ends, and utterly unrestrained by moral principle or common sense.

J. K.

\* In that volume is quoted from the German White Book (Exhibit 17) the incredible statement by the German Chancellor, on 29th July, to his Ambassador in Paris, that "we continue to hope for the preservation of peace," whereas on that very day he made his "infamous" proposal to Sir Edward Goschen at Berlin, proving that Germany had already planned an invasion of France through Belgium (see *infra*, p. 8). The same volume (3rd ed.) also contains extracts from the Russian Orange Book. Two of these (Nos. 36 and 46) record a suspicious delay of telegrams by Austria and the suppression of important news by Germany. The suppression or miscarriage of Sir E. Goschen's momentous telegram from Berlin to London on 4th August is noticed below (p. 10).

16th December 1914.

# Origins of the Great War

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SO much has been said and written about the Great War of 1914-19—, so many conflicting and often untrue statements have been made regarding it, so countless are its various aspects, and so stupendous the issues at stake, that no ordinary observer can possibly master all its details or fathom all its mysteries. It is, however, possible, as well as highly desirable in the interests of truth, to inquire into its origins and to sum up in few and simple words its causes, which may be conveniently called immediate, indirect, and constitutional.

## I. IMMEDIATE CAUSES

Its immediate causes are fully stated in the Blue Book, published by the British Government at the end of September 1914. ("Great Britain and the European Crisis," H.M. Stationery Office. Wyman & Sons, Ltd., or T. Fisher Unwin, London. Price one penny.)

The statement it contains is unimpeachable, because it is founded on the whole official correspondence passing between the British Government and France, Russia, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Italy, Belgium, and Servia, from 20th July to 1st September. That correspondence, printed in the Blue Book, speaks clearly for itself, and it is followed by a full report of the



principal speeches delivered in the House of Commons on 3rd to 6th August ; but, as the official volume may not always reach persons residing abroad, we beg leave to submit to them a short summary of its contents.

First, however, let us answer the question often asked by those whose sources of information are imperfect : What are we fighting for? We are fighting, and shall never cease to fight, for loyalty to solemn treaties, for national and international honour. We and our Allies promised to guarantee the neutrality and independence of Belgium, and we have tried to keep our promise. We are fighting to defend small, peaceful, and highly-civilised states against wanton attack and destruction by larger and more powerful states. We are fighting in order to crush a military despotism which aspires to world-wide conquest and empire. We are fighting, not in order to gain territory or booty or glory, but to safeguard the rights and liberties, perhaps the very existence, of ourselves and our Allies. Such is the case that we submit to the judgment of impartial inquirers. But before they deliver judgment let them study the facts of the case and hear the German arguments also. "Treaties," we are told, "are mere scraps of paper," which may be torn up by any one of the parties if he thinks fit. The safety of Germany was threatened by Russia, France, and Britain. It was necessary to violate the neutrality of Belgium lest it should be violated by the French and the English. For the last twenty-six years the Kaiser has striven to preserve the peace of Europe, but was compelled at last to declare war in self-defence.

The first of these four pleas proclaims a new gospel, destructive of those principles of truth and honour on which the welfare and happiness of mankind mainly depend. The other three are untrue. Germany, however, has been led by her rulers and her enslaved Press to believe that she is waging a war of self-defence, and that her very existence is at stake. On that ground alone, had it been true, her tremendous military campaign, though not the "frightfulness" of her warfare against civilians, would have been justifiable. Such, briefly, is the British case with the German answer to it. Our readers will now be good enough to mark and digest the chief facts of the case, to enable them to give their verdict in favour of the party "that has his quarrel just!"

The facts recorded in the Blue Book are already familiar to most of our readers. On 28th June 1914, Archduke Francis Ferdinand, heir to the thrones of Austria and Hungary, and his wife were assassinated at Sarajevo, capital of the Austrian province of Bosnia. The Government of Servia was accused by Austria of complicity in this atrocious crime. On 23rd July Austria (at the instigation, it is said, of Prussia) sent an ultimatum to Servia, making very stringent demands, and requiring an answer within forty-eight hours. Within that time Great Britain, along with Russia, asked Austria in vain to extend the time limit. She also asked Germany to intervene, but without success. Servia, however, on 25th July, yielded on every point, except where her sovereign rights were to be infringed. In spite of this Austria was dissatisfied and broke off diplomatic relations

with Serbia. On 26th July Sir Edward Grey proposed mediation by Germany, France, Italy, and Great Britain in a conference to be held in London, but Germany dissented. On 27th July Russia again tried to mediate, but intimated that she would intervene if Serbia were attacked. Austria replied that it was too late, and she declared war on Serbia next day, whereupon Russia ordered a partial mobilisation in her southern provinces. On 28th and 29th July Germany said she was trying to mediate both at Vienna and St Petersburg, and on the 29th both Russia and Great Britain made a further similar effort.

On the night of the 29th the negotiations entered on an entirely new phase. Germany asked if Great Britain, in the event of a European war, would remain neutral, giving Germany a free hand with regard to the French colonies. Germany would respect the neutrality of Holland, but her attitude towards Belgium would depend on the action of France. To this Sir Edward Grey replied that such a bargain would be a disgrace to Great Britain, "from which the good name of this country would never recover." (On 6th August Mr Asquith publicly denounced it as infamous.)

Germany's designs against France were thus clearly revealed. As she professed that her attitude towards Belgium would depend on the action of France, Sir Edward Grey, on 31st July, inquired both of France and Germany if they would respect their treaty obligations towards Belgium. On the same day France replied that she would, while Belgium next



day declared that she would maintain her neutrality to the utmost of her power. Germany gave no answer.

We now return to Serbia. Austria had attacked her and would at first brook no intervention; she had even moved troops towards the Russian frontier, in reply to which, on 31st July, Russia ordered a general mobilisation. On that day, however, at the instance of Sir Edward Grey, Austria agreed with Russia to reconsider the ultimatum to Serbia, whereby peace might yet have been secured. On the same day Germany suddenly sent an ultimatum to Russia, calling on her to demobilise within twelve hours, and she declined to consider the Servian question unless she received a satisfactory reply from Russia. She received no reply to this peremptory demand, and on the 2nd of August she declared that she was in a state of war with Russia. On 31st July she had called on France to define her attitude in view of the ultimatum sent to Russia, demanding an answer by one o'clock next day. France replied that she failed to understand this menace, as there were no differences between her and Germany, whereupon the German Ambassador left Paris, and Germany formally declared war on the 3rd of August. On 1st August Germany, Austria, and France mobilised. On that day the Russian and the British Ambassadors met at Vienna and still strove for peace, but they were both "convinced that Germany desired war."

On 2nd August Germany invaded the neutral duchy of Luxemburg, and on 4th August violated the neutrality of Belgium by marching against Liège. On the same day Germany offered "friendly

neutrality" to Belgium in return for a free passage through Belgian territory, but that offer was declined. These facts speak for themselves. It may also be noted that, on 1st August, Italy had declined to join Austria and Germany in what she declared to be an aggressive war, as her alliance with them was purely defensive. These facts are fully confirmed by the French Yellow Book of 1st December, which adds the significant declaration made by the Kaiser and General von Moltke to King Albert in November 1912, that "*il faut en finir avec la France.*" This proves that the Kaiser had already quite abandoned the peace policy he had previously professed.

The die was cast. Germany and Austria were at war with France and Russia. Germany had violated the neutrality of Belgium, which both she and Great Britain had guaranteed. On 4th August Great Britain informed Germany that, if Belgium's neutrality were not respected, the British Government would do all in their power to uphold their treaty obligations.

The sequel is instructive. On the same afternoon Sir Edward Goschen, British Ambassador at Berlin, was told by the German Secretary of State that Germany had already invaded Belgium, and could not possibly now draw back. He also interviewed the Chancellor (Dr von Bethmann-Hollweg), who expressed bitter indignation that Great Britain should go to war against Germany "just for the word neutrality, just for a scrap of paper." Sir Edward then telegraphed his report to the Foreign Office, but the telegram never reached its destination.

The European conflagration was now fully ablaze ; by whom and why kindled, it is for our readers and for posterity to judge.

## II. INDIRECT CAUSES OF THE WAR

The chief indirect or preparatory cause of the war is to be found in the politics of Bismarck, in Nietzsche's philosophy, in Treitschke's "Politics" and "German History," and in General von Bernhardi's military and political works (1911-13), particularly his "Germany and the Next War," and his "Our Future, or Warning to the German Nation" (entitled by its translator, Mr Ellis Barker, "Britain as Germany's Vassal").

As General von Bernhardi, an author of undoubted ability and industry, derives his inspiration largely from the sources just named, it may suffice to remind the reader that Nietzsche scoffed at Christianity, and held that power is the most desirable of earthly possessions, that Bismarck resorted to mendacity in order to provoke a war, and that Treitschke's "History" is of the "patriotic" type, exhorting Germany to vigorous self-assertion. That Bernhardi was a great military authority and a shrewd observer of European politics is generally admitted, but we need only refer to him now as a preacher of the gospel of war. Much that he says is wise and sound, and his warning might well be laid to heart by England as well as by Germany, but Germany has since rejected his good advice and followed the bad. He tells us that it takes a year to make a good



soldier, and of course much longer to make a good officer; it takes a year to make a big gun, and necessarily several years to equip and organise a large army. An army cannot therefore be hastily improvised. He advocates universal military service as an excellent mental, moral, and physical training for the nation. He disapproves generally of duplicity and intrigue as unworthy political instruments. An honourable policy forms an element of strength. A state which followed deceitful methods would soon fall into disrepute. A fine frankness is the characteristic of great statesmen. He admits that peace is the normal and desirable condition of a nation, but he insists that it can only be purchased by war. Every nation should be always prepared to defend itself by physical force. If it is so weak, so decadent, or so negligent as to be incapable of self-defence, it must fall under the domination of some more powerful state. He denounces the dream of universal peace as Utopian, as it would inevitably lead to national stagnation and decadence, whereas war is a wholesome stimulus to human progress and the greatest of all "instruments of culture."

Culture, by the way, is a very favourite word with Bernhardt, recurring hundreds of times in his books. He means, of course, culture as the word is understood in Germany, but, as he does not define it, we may venture to do so with the aid of his own writings, and in the light of subsequent events. It rightly comprises the high rank of Germany as a cradle of industry, science, philosophy, music, and the various arts of peace and war, but it seems entirely to lack

the ethical elements of justice, honour, loyalty, and humanity, usually comprised in the word. Like Mrs Shelley's "Frankenstein" it resembles an inhuman monster without a soul. "What a falling off is there" since the days when we learned to love the delightful poetry, fiction, and romance for which Germany was famous, since the many happy days we formerly spent among our kind and hospitable German friends!

Although this is a digression, we may endeavour here at once to account for the recent very palpable and deplorable deterioration of the German national character. This deterioration has been caused partly by the teaching of the above-mentioned apostles of might, self-assertion, and war—a teaching daily reiterated by a servile Press—partly by the hasty and artificial building up of the twenty-five Germanic States into a new empire in 1871, to the detriment of their independence and individuality, and above all, by the general national surrender of body and soul to Prussian militarism, which the deluded nation vainly believed would lead them into the promised land of world-wide empire. Down to 1870, or even down to 1911, we had reason to admire and esteem the Germans, and we believed them to be our friends and well-wishers, but of late their friendship has been turned into furious and fanatical hatred by our opposition to their fondly cherished ambitions. We, for our part, are far from hating the Germans as a nation, but we abhor the policy which has plunged half the world into sorrow and mourning, and will probably cause the ruin of Germany herself.

To return to Bernhardi, we gladly approve of his words of wisdom already quoted, and we admire the naïve frankness and bluntness of his style, as where he tells us that his books were reviewed unfavourably almost everywhere except in Germany ; but those of our readers who have not studied these books will now judge for themselves which of his reviewers were right. They will probably also be amused by some of the General's bombastic utterances and historical misstatements. A few of these, in his own words as far as possible, may now be given as specimens.

The German people, says the General, are the greatest civilised people known to history. Right, between nations, is respected only when compatible with advantage. Strong and healthy nations require territory for their surplus population, and must obtain it, as a rule, by conquest at the cost of its possessors, which thus becomes a law of necessity. ("Necessity," we interpolate, "is the tyrant's plea," and is often the plea of the robber and assassin.) Might gives the right to occupy or to conquer ; it is the supreme right ; war gives a biologically just decision. (That is, law, rendered powerless by might, is incapable of protecting the weak.) War is a moral necessity to protect the highest interest of a State, which is to increase its political power. It is only in a State with a large sphere of influence that mankind develops into splendid perfection. The condition of small States that cannot expand is pitiable. "War," said Frederick the Great, "opens the most fruitful field to all virtues." Weak nations have not the same right to live as



powerful nations. War may be forced on a nation by the state of its home affairs. Bismarck, at the decisive moment, had the boldness to begin a war on his own initiative. Great statesmen resolutely make war when the issue is likely to be successful. The Great Elector founded Prussia's power by war deliberately incurred, and Frederick the Great followed his example. (But such wars are sometimes unsuccessful!) To extend the dominion of German thought is one of our great duties to the human race! Germany is fully entitled, not only to demand "a place in the sun," which Prince Bülow modestly claimed for her, but an adequate share in the sovereignty of the world. We require space for our increasing population and markets for our growing industries. We must grow into a World Power, and stamp a great part of humanity with the impress of the German spirit—"World Power or Decline," is Germany's motto. (May we ask, by the way, if German, one of the most cumbrous and difficult of living languages, is likely ever to become a *Weltsprache*?)

It seemed necessary to make these quotations from Bernhardt for several reasons. His books produced a profound impression in Germany on their publication, and were received there with almost universal approval; his policy (with the omission of its better features) has since been adopted by the German Government; and to this day numerous German professors and divines are unwearied in extolling their culture, their superiority, mental and moral, to the rest of mankind, their institutions, their liberty! Never in the world's history were drums beaten or trumpets blown with such

astonishing vivacity. Some of the interesting grounds of this self-laudation may be gathered from Bernhardt's works.

Germany, says Bernhardt, attaches more importance to right and justice in international relations than do most other States. Since her first appearance in history she has been a civilised nation of the first rank, nay, *the* civilised nation. The Reformation was born from the soul of the German people. (But he ignores the Waldensians, its first pioneers; Wycliffe, who proclaimed all its chief doctrines and translated the Bible about a hundred and thirty-five years before Luther; the Wycliffites and Lollards, who preached, taught, and suffered in the cause for more than a century before Luther; Huss and Jerome of Prague, who taught Wycliffism at Prague and were burned at the stake at Constance. None of these were Germans.) The philosophy of Kant became the foundation of all philosophical speculation. (Kant's father was a Scot. And what of the great Greek philosophers?) German civilisation reposes on the impartiality and universality of the German mind. No other nation thinks so clearly and so historically. But Germany is cramped and must expand. In the interest of the world's civilisation she must extend her colonial empire. (The German colonies can, or could, support many millions. Whence, then, the notorious fact that they are shunned by those numerous German emigrants who flock to the United States and to British and other colonies?) The Congo State is only exploited financially by Belgium. Has not Germany a moral right to such colonies? It is practically useful and

morally necessary for Germany to follow an honest and energetic policy of force.

Quotations in the same strain from Bernhardt and writers of his school might easily be multiplied. Other military writers, it may be added, inculcate, not only a "policy of force," but a policy of "frightfulness" in actual warfare, in order to strike terror into the civilian population. Such, then, is the new German gospel, which, directly or indirectly, has given birth to the present war with its unparalleled horrors.

### III. CONSTITUTIONAL CAUSES

The remoter, but scarcely less real, causes of the war may be called constitutional or historical, though dating from 1870 only. The down-grade of the German national character seems traceable to the too easy triumph of Germany over France in that year, with the milliards in its train, and to the hasty and mechanical erection of the twenty-five independent German States into a single new Empire. These events were followed in 1871 by the framing of a new imperial constitution, which "keeps the word of promise to the eye, but breaks it to the hope." Being in almost every respect the reverse of "constitutional," it has enabled Prussia to establish a powerful military autocracy of the mediæval "divine right and passive obedience" school, a form of government which in most civilised countries has been abolished as intolerable. The Stuarts, "gods upon earth," to use the phrase of James I., who claimed "a divine right to break every law, human and divine," were dethroned



in 1689, and a century later the Bourbon monarchy was overthrown by the French Revolution. Yet at the present day the German Kaiser claims the right to say, like Louis XIV., "*l'Etat c'est moi.*" By all constitutional and democratic peoples such an autocracy is justly held to be subversive of freedom of speech, freedom of the Press, oneness of law and equality before that law, even-handed justice, and responsible government. These most cherished of popular rights are practically unknown in Germany, although outwardly law and order are well maintained. This form of government has been extolled by German writers as the "perfection of liberty," with the Reichstag, or imperial Diet, as its great bulwark; but when the reader looks a little below the surface he will discover few traces of the liberty enjoyed and prized by most other nations.

The German citizen lives under three distinct codes of law. The common law governs the everyday relations of citizen towards citizen. But if a citizen is wronged by a policeman or other government official, common law can afford him no redress; he may submit his case to the administrative courts, but there the wrongdoer is favoured and protected by "administrative law," a code designed to uphold officials in the execution of their duty, so that the injured party rarely obtains redress. All civil officials thus form a privileged class, above the ordinary law of the land, and they treat private citizens as inferiors. This system is obviously repugnant to the principles of fair play and equality before the law. Instead of being the servants, government officials are the masters.

of the people. But there is a third code of law, far more stringent, to which unquestioning obedience must be rendered. This is the military law, imposing on all men of military age the "general duty of defence" (*allgemeine Wehrpflicht*), which the Kaiser interprets as including a "duty of offence" also. But he and the Imperial Chancellor, in order to give the war a semblance of legality, have persistently reiterated pleas of self-defence and danger to the Fatherland. It is worthy of note, however, that Italy declined to regard the war as defensive.

Besides the Kaiser, the military caste, and the bureaucracy, another class partakes to some extent of the privileges of divine right. This is the "nobility," who are numbered by tens of thousands as against a few hundred British and Irish peers. When a peer's eldest son becomes a peer and the others are commoners the title carries with it a certain prestige; but when a German baron's sons and male descendants are all barons the title has little value. In Germany, however, a hard and fast line is drawn between *Adlige* and *Bürgerliche* (nobles and citizens), which causes a good deal of soreness and friction, especially as almost all the officers belong to the former class, while most of the eminent men in other professions belong to the latter. This mediæval distinction, now an anachronism, forms another bar to the fusion of all classes into one community.

Next comes the vital question, how the Kaiser can enforce passive and unquestioning obedience. He enforces it partly by administrative, partly by military

law, but chiefly by the potent oath of military allegiance. As commander-in-chief of the army he exacts from every man this crowning oath of blind and passive obedience which renders him practically omnipotent.

As already indicated the civil official is shielded by *robur et æs triplex* against the arm of the common law, but the military officer enjoys a still larger share of the divinity that doth hedge a king. His political and social status is monumental. He towers on a pedestal far above the *profanum vulgus*. For military offences he may of course be punished, but in all other cases he is almost as immune as his master. This was well exemplified by the recent military scandals at Zabern, in Alsace. The high-handed aggression of the officers was in the end approved by the military authority (and the colonel is said to have been embraced by the Crown Prince)! The pretext for such travesties of justice is that officers must be protected in the discharge of their duties, and that they must be entirely exempt from the jurisdiction of any civil authority.

The following characteristic incidents, which might easily be multiplied a hundredfold, indicate the great gulf fixed between the German citizen and the protected official and military classes. Shortly before the war of 1870 an English student in Germany proposed to give his big surly mastiff the name of Bismarck, but his German friends earnestly warned him that he might be severely punished for *lèse-majesté*! A little later Bismarck himself had a dog which he is said to have called Reichstag to show his



contempt for that body. Some years ago the present writer was similarly warned by a friendly porter at Herbestal on the Prussian frontier against speaking his mind too freely to a rude custom-house officer: "um Gotteswillen, don't, for he is a government official!"

Later on, at Wiesbaden, the writer saw a cyclist slowly rounding a street corner, but too near the kerb, when a gendarme suddenly thrust the scabbard of his sword into the wheels and upset the rider. Luckily unhurt, the rider got up and, though he looked daggers at his assailant, trundled off his machine without a word. He knew of course that remonstrance would have been worse than useless. On another occasion the writer met a Prussian lieutenant undergoing a year's imprisonment in a fortress for killing an unarmed civilian. An unwritten military law requires a Prussian officer to "draw blood" if he thinks his cloth insulted. In such cases the criminal law has no jurisdiction. In the present instance a court-martial, holding that the assailant had gone further than necessary, pronounced the above sentence. The "prisoner" had a comfortable room in the fortress and was free to go out all day on parole.

Let us now glance at the Germanic Constitution of 1871. The system of Government is nominally bicameral and representative. The Reichstag, or imperial Diet, consisting of 397 members elected by all Germans over twenty-five years of age, votes taxes for the army and navy and legislates in matters of imperial importance, but it lacks the essential attributes of a constitutional assembly. It has no

control over the executive, it has no initiative unless by permission of the Federal Council (*Bundesrat*), and it may be dissolved by that Council before the end of its five years' term of office. There is no cabinet, no ministerial responsibility, no government to turn out. The Federal Council, composed of fifty-eight delegates from the twenty-five German states, is at once the executive, an upper chamber, and a kind of cabinet. It is presided over by a Chancellor appointed by the King of Prussia, who is also German Emperor. It prepares bills to be submitted to the Diet, which it entirely dominates, and is itself dominated by the Emperor. A declaration of war by the Emperor requires the consent of this Council, "unless the frontiers of the Empire are threatened." A significant sidelight is thrown on this power of the Emperor by a clause in the Prussian Constitution, which gives the king the sole executive power and the sole right to declare war or peace. This system of government is therefore a very thinly veiled autocracy. If the autocrat is wise and benevolent, the nation may thrive fairly well; but if he is mentally or morally deranged, or if he is a mere puppet in the hands of designing sycophants and favourites, his rule is certain to be disastrous.

This kind of government invariably begets intrigue, bribery and corruption, servile officials, tyrannical officers, and a brutal soldiery.

In order to remedy this terrible evil, and to regain their fair fame among nations, the Germans will do well to replace their antiquated and irresponsible form of government by some constitutional

form, which will at once promote their own welfare and secure the respect and good-will of the rest of the world. They have imprudently entrusted their sovereignty to an autocrat, his sycophants, and his military caste, who, as they fondly hoped, would lead them to glory and world-wide empire; but they will discover some day that all the most civilised nations in the world wisely delegate their sovereign power to representative and responsible rulers.

Their remains to be noticed a hideous indictment against Germany for her treacherous and fiendish methods of warfare, such as the slaughter of countless civilians, men, women, and children, the pillaging and wanton destruction of peaceful homes, the bombardment of open towns, the poisoning of wells, and mutilations and outrages too horrible to describe. To these crimes must be added the secret armaments and other hostile preparations treacherously made in friendly countries long before the outbreak of the war, besides the world-wide circulation of false and slanderous news, which continues to this very day.

As we are now inquiring into the origins of the war we must also ask who is responsible for all these horrors. Those of us who have studied, and travelled much, and lived long in Germany, a country we had learned to love and admire, refuse to believe that the people, as a whole, could possibly have been the guilty parties. No. The guilt is distinctly traceable to their rulers, whose unexampled cunning and treachery in plotting against their unsuspecting neighbours, and whose "frightful" methods of warfare, have unfortunately brought infamy on the whole



nation. But how, it is often asked, can the people be ignorant of all this; can they be unaware that they are merely "food for cannon" in the eyes of a military caste bent solely on glory and booty; do they not suspect "something rotten in the state"? Let the impartial reader kindly note and weigh the simple answer, that the whole of the German Press is either inspired or rigorously censored by Government. Where there is neither freedom of Press nor freedom of speech there can be no genuine public opinion. News and opinions displeasing to the Government are suppressed, while the reader is spoon-fed on "patriotic" history and politics. For scurrility, which is often thrown in, there is neither gag nor boycott. For years past the reader of German newspapers has been told that a great and glorious future is in store for Germany, that she is destined to dominate the whole world with her power, her culture, and her trade. He is taught that decadent nations like France and Britain, besides smaller and weaker nations, must be crushed, that the barbarous Slavs must be sternly repressed, and that Germany must have a greatly extended seaboard on the north-west, and free access to the Mediterranean on the south. All this he believes, for he belongs to the great German genus *Simplicissimus*. (The comic journal of that name, by the way, once fairly outspoken, has been obliged of late to become "patriotic.") Most noteworthy of all the members of that genus are the professors and divines, to the number of about one hundred and thirty-five, besides the rectors of twenty-two universities, who have

recently signed appeals "to Evangelic Christians" and "to the Civilised World," and who evidently "walk by faith" (in the Kaiser), "and not by sight" of facts. How they came to set their names to these extraordinary documents is accounted for by the fact that the German scholar is a singularly guileless and credulous person, entirely without political or constitutional training, and ready, as a believer in "divine right and passive obedience," obediently to sign any statement submitted to him by his superiors. Nor is he quite insensible to the charm of those titles and decorations, dear to the German soul, which are so lavishly bestowed by the Kaiser with his "own all-highest hand" on his good and faithful servants.

A few short extracts from the address (undated) "to the Civilised World," signed by ninety-three "representatives of art and science," and recently circulated broadcast in different languages, will suffice to enlighten the reader who has not seen the document itself. We translate from the Dutch edition: "We protest against the lies and slanders uttered by the enemies of Germany's righteous cause. It is *untrue* that Germany is responsible for the war. The Germans have done their utmost to prevent it. It is *untrue* that we violated the neutrality of Belgium. France and England agreed to do so with Belgium's consent, and Germany was obliged to anticipate them. (Let the reader note, parenthetically, that this last statement is even more glaringly untrue than all the others. The German Chancellor, in his recent speech to the Reichstag, said that "Belgium had surrendered her neutrality to England before the war." What England

did was to assure Belgium that, if her neutrality were violated by another power, England would, as in honour bound, come to her help.) It is *untrue* that a single Belgian was attacked except in self-defence. The populace shot our soldiers, maimed our wounded, and murdered our surgeons. It is *untrue* that our troops showed brutality in Louvain. With heavy hearts they bombarded it to punish the infuriated inhabitants; but the greater part of the town was saved; the famous Hôtel de Ville is uninjured; our soldiers, in a spirit of self-sacrifice, protected it against the flames. It is *untrue* that we have infringed international law. Lawless cruelty is unknown to us. In the East the earth is saturated with the blood of women and children murdered by the Russians. In the West dum-dum bullets rend the breasts of our warriors. It is *untrue* to say that an attack on militarism is not an attack on our culture; we require an army to defend our culture. We trumpet forth to the world that our enemies bear false witness against us! Believe us! We shall fight to the end as a people of culture!"

Instead of attempting to criticise these statements, we leave it to our readers to say whether they can discover a single one of them that is true.

The origins of the great war and the main facts in this *cause célèbre*, the greatest yet known to history, have thus been respectfully submitted to our readers all over the world, who form a jury of millions of "good men and true." Whatever may be their verdict, it will become historic; it will assuredly be on the side of justice and truth, and it will conclusively determine whose was the righteous cause.



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