

GERMANY AND GERMANS

Germany might each render, without collision, her characteristic service to the world. But the past cannot be altered, and all we can do is to learn our lesson and do better in the future. Whilst rejoicing that at the darkest hour Britain followed the path of honour and realized that there are things more precious than peace, we can all prepare for a happier future by trying even now to look with sympathy on Germany. We are bound as Christians to love our brethren and to love our enemies, and the Germans stand to us in both these sacred relations. Sympathy will prove the straightest and easiest path to love. The love of which St. Paul writes, no facile emotion but evidently an affair of the will; enduring all things, suffering long, not easily provoked, thinking no evil—this love is ultimately a reasoned sympathy. And in our case sympathy with Germany's ideals and aims would be less difficult if we would take pains to realize how many noble and good qualities combine to make a German feel that it is 'a sweet and honourable thing to die for his country'.

An ordinary German is influenced far more by the lessons of his nursery and schoolroom than by the politics of the moment. The constitution of the Empire, which gives the average citizen only a negligible share in the policy of his country, has made politics the affair of a specialized class rather than a widely diffused interest. The many restrictions on liberty of speech and writing have deterred the best men from taking part in active politics, and the German habit of mind is more passive and amenable to authority than ours. We do not find in Germany the same eager probing into the causes of