

PREFACE

ears were plied to satiety through all the many official and unofficial channels which Germany had at her command, from the Emperor and his Ministers down to the personally conducted parties of amiable Teutons who periodically came over here with hatred in their hearts but with a keen eye to business and always with their pockets bulging out with messages of peace and goodwill. Only a nation as addicted as ourselves to contemptuous indifference in regard to all foreign countries could have failed to be struck with the contrast between the smooth language used before the footlights under the audible prompting of the Imperial stage manager, and what was being not merely said but done behind the scenes by the blood and iron authors of the new Teutonic drama: "World Empire or Downfall." Our prosperity had satisfied us that peace was the greatest of British interests, and, that being so, we hugged ourselves with the comfortable assumption that nobody else would try to