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A CRITICISM OF WAR

BOOK BY BERLIN PROFESSOR
STIRS GERMANY.

Dr. Nicolai Denounces the Teutonic
Doctrine That Wars Are the Re-
sult of Ineradicable Instincts and
That They Promote Virtues in
Lives of Warlike Nations.

A CYNICAL observer of letters
once remarked that al-
though it was the habit of
writers to affect humility,
yet there were but few who refrained
from the vanity of inscribing their
names on the title-page of their
works. However this caution may
apply to the unusual motives of
authorship, it is at any rate inappli-
cable to those rare books which owe
their genesis to an overwhelming
impulse, which possesses and com-
pels the writer to deliver his mes-
sage, be the consequences what they
may. In such cases to resist the
temptation to anonymity may be an
act of supreme courage. Such a book
is "Die Biologie des Krieges." That
such a book should be written at all
is itself noteworthy. That it should
appear bearing on its title-page the
name of no eminent a citizen of Ber-
lin as Prof. G. F. Nicolai represents
one of the greatest acts of heroism
of recent years.

It is not without interest to ob-
serve how this book came to be writ-
ten. In the early days of the war
93 German "intellectuals" issued to
the world an appeal which still lives
pleasantly in the memory by virtue of
the precise and categorical manner
in which certain things were asserted
to be "not true." Depressed, as
he well might be, by the guise in
which Germany was presenting it-
self to the world, Dr. Nicolai con-
templated the promotion of a coun-
ter-manifesto, intended as an appeal
to moderate men throughout the
world. Needless to say, Dr. Nicolai
was not successful in obtaining sig-
natures to his manifesto, and he next
purposed developing his ideas in the
form of a course of lectures to be
delivered during the summer ses-
sion of 1915. This scheme also fail-
ed, but the notes made for these lec-
tures became the basis of a book,
the influence of which cannot fail to
be far-reaching and enduring.

Dr. Nicolai's draft manifesto re-
printed in the earlier pages of his
work, is deserving of study, inas-
much as it indicates the lines in
which he was inspired during the
first weeks of the war. The follow-
ing passage, to a certain extent re-
miniscent of some of Mr. Wilson's
later utterances, may be quoted:

"If these things appear merely
desirable, but urgently necessary
that educated men of all states
should exercise their influence so
that whatever may be the still
more desirable, but not the condi-
tions of peace should not become the
source of future wars, but rather that
the fact that all European relation-
ships have fallen into a mobile and
plastic condition should be made use
of to create an organic unity out of
Europe."—(p. 19.)

Nicolai's object in writing his
work he briefly described, to analyze
the nature of war and to discuss its
place in the development of human-
ity. In the pursuit of his task he
observes dispassionately that war,
which at times almost grips upon
the reader. He is not one of those
who are tormented by the thought
of the sufferings and the tortures of
those who had lost their ideal that
war is only a "passing phenomenon
on earth which is not worth while
taking too seriously" (p. 12). Else-
where again he writes on the fact
that war, objectively regarded, is not
particularly cruel and that, from an
unconscious sentimentality, we are led
to exaggerate the sufferings which
war entails.

On what, then, does Dr. Nicolai's
objection to war rest? In a word, it
is because war is an anachronism, an
institution which has become out-
grown, and which now acts as an
obstacle and a hindrance in the path
of human progress. That war cor-
responds to a deep and ineradicable
instinct in our nature, that it pre-
sents a galaxy of virtues, that for
mankind it represents the struggle
for existence to be found throughout
all nature, are doctrines which are
written throughout the whole of
modern German literature; the reader
who desires to find these views epito-
mized in their extreme forms may
be referred to Spangenberg's "Kriegs-
und Heilens" a work which for some
reason has not enjoyed that nota-
dory in this country to which its great
desmerits undoubtedly entitle it. It is
against these doctrines that Dr. Ni-
colai's thesis is directed, and he very
ingeniously takes as his starting
point one of the fundamental doc-
trines of his opponents. He admits
that war does in fact correspond
with a human instinct, but he denies
that instincts are in all cases to be
followed, or even that they are in all
cases beneficial. The utmost that can
be inferred from the existence of an
instinct is that it was useful at the
time it was evolved.

Dr. Nicolai then proceeds to con-
sider where else in nature we find
anything analogous to war. From
the days of Lucretius it has been
proverbial that the lion does not
fight with the lion. Apart from deers
and certain birds, where the motive
to fighting is sexual, Dr. Nicolai
shows that real wars are to be found
only in the case of two other animals
—ants and bees. War, in fact, can
only arise where the sense of self-
preservation has developed, and its only
purpose is the exploitation in one form
or another of the enemy. It is thus
inextricably interwoven with a sys-
tem of slavery, and is only defensible
in so far as so long as slavery is
defensible. With the abolition of
slavery war becomes void of purpose.
Dr. Nicolai next subjects to a dam-
aging criticism the familiar doctrine
that war represents for man the high-
est form of struggle for existence.

That there is such a struggle he ad-
mits, but it must be a struggle for
life and not a struggle against life,
such as war represents. The true
struggle for existence is expressed
by Nicolai in terms of the consump-
tion of the general stream of energy,
and the object of each individual and
species is to utilize as large a share
of this energy as possible.

The cow and the horse are pressed
into the service of man, but so long
as man is compelled to keep horses,
the necessity of providing them with
hay restricts the number of men who
can be supported by a given area of
land. If all horses were ousted by
automobiles, the total energy avail-
able for the support of the human
race would be increased. Man would,
in fact, have defeated the horse in
the struggle for existence. The Dar-
winian struggle for existence, which
figures so largely in German litera-
ture in exaltation of war, is never an
excess for war and does not even
furnish an analogy.

Having disposed of the claim that
war is an expression of the struggle
for existence, Dr. Nicolai proceeds to
consider, under the present war, what
act as a selective agency. He pictures
the type of man that would ultimate-
ly result from a prolonged continuan-
ce of the present type of struggle.
It is not to be expected that a re-
markably courageous, strong, and in-
telligent race would arise, but there
would result a kind of rabbit-race,
corresponding to our present type of
warrior. The new man would be
without refined needs, which cannot
be satisfied in dug-outs, with bad
news, if only to bear the smell of
decomposition. He would be quick
and active, equipped with good ears
and eyes, to be able to leave and return
to their holes quickly at the right
moment. He would have a low level
of intelligence, since the occasion is
primitive and simple; he would
have contempt for the work of peace
—a certain esprit de corps with his
comrades, above all, hate and fear of
the enemy.—London Nation.

The Foe is Worried.

The "splendid solution" that
Germany has contrived to engineer
for herself has a few disadvantages
which the people of the Rhineland
are just beginning to discover, and
they are looking anxiously into the
future and constantly asking:
"What will be our relations with
America after the war?" We glean
from the press that this question is
asked not only in the industrial cen-
tres but at the great shipping ports
as well, and the general opinion
seems to be that America will make
every effort to harm German inter-
ests by barring Germany from all
the raw products she bought from
us before the war. As usual, the Ger-
man papers indulge in bombast rather
than facts, and grandiloquent
threats are made as to what the
Fatherland will do to us if we don't
behave ourselves after the conflict.

For example, the Berlin Deutsche
Zeitung says:
"If America sells us no cotton,
she shall get no potash, which is a
fertilizer almost indispensable to
improved agricultural land. Ger-
many has a world-monopoly of
potash. If America gives us no gas-
oline and no grain, she shall get no
eyes, no drugs, no glassware, no opti-
cal instruments.—In fact, nothing
that Germany has exported to the
United States in the past."

It is not yet known in Germany
to what extent the United States will
depend upon us for such imports af-
ter the war, but we may generally
assume that none of the other belli-
gerents nor any neutral country will
be able to take our place as a pro-
ducer of all the goods that America
used to buy from us."

After all this sound and fury, it
is refreshing to turn to the official
Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung
and learn, despite all the boasting,
Germany will have practically nothing
to export when the war is over.
The economic pressure which we
and our allies have exerted upon
Germany through the blockade is so
severe that factories are everywhere
being shut down through lack of raw
material. Here is the official organ's
sorrowful tale:

"Out of 1,700 spinning and
weaving mills, only 70 are still
running at high pressure, while in
the boot and shoe industry, 1,400
factories have been amalgamated
into 300. In the oil industry, 15
factories working at high pressure
have been formed out of 730 works
previously existing. In the silk in-
dustry the number of spools has
been reduced from 4,000 to 2,500."
This state of affairs is terrifying
to the economists of Germany.

Foch and French, 1914.

It was at two o'clock in the morn-
ing of November 1 that Foch met
French when the tide of battle was
running strongly against us. It was
suggested, for the sake of prudence,
that the British should retire. The
development of this suggestion was
scattered by Foch's interruption, ut-
tered in those stirring machine-gun-
like sentences of which I know so
well. This is what he said:
"The Germans have sixteen corps.
Very well. We have only ten, with
yours. If you retire I shall remain.
Remain! The British army never
drew back in its history. As for my-
self, I give you my word as a soldier
that I will die rather than retreat.
Give me yours!"
The soldiers round him listened in
silence. It was Lord French who
stepped forward and grasped Foch
firmly by the hand. In that hand-
shake a doom of the Germans at
Ypres was sealed.

For She Is a Canadian—
Mary Pickford—our Mary—is now
Honorary Colonel Mary Pickford of
the 143rd United States Field Artil-
lery, of which unit she also is god-
mother. Needless perhaps to say, she
looks well in the uniform.

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