

price she paid for peace; that advantage Germany gained by striking first. It is a hard moral for the pacifists, but one which ought to give the French conscience a cleaner taste in after years.

The Kaiser, too, insisted that he was for peace. So he was, according to German logic. He realised his military power as the outside world could not realise it. Had Italy joined her forces to her allies, he might have crushed France and then turned on Russia, as his staff had planned. For striking he could reduce France to a second-rate power, take her colonies, fatten German coffers with an enormous indemnity, and gain Belgium and the Channel ports as the next step in national ambition before crushing England and securing the mastery of the seas. But he held off the blow for many years; that is the logic of his partisanship for peace. The fact that France proved stronger than he thought hardly interfered with his belief in his own moderation, in view of his confidence in his arms before the test came. He was for peace because he did not knock the other man down as soon as he might.

No other race in all Europe liked the Germans; not even the Huns, or the Czechs, or the Croats, and least of all the Italians. The Belgians, too, shared the universal enmity. It was Germany that Belgium feared. Her forts looked toward Germany; she looked toward England and France for protection. In this she was unneutral; but not in the thing that counted — thorough military preparation.

Thus were the Germanic empires isolated in sentiment before the war began. This strengthened their realisation that their one true ally was their power in arms, unaffected by any sentiment except that of beating their enemies. Europe, straining under the taxa-