

may conflict with its highest interest. "War," said Bernhardt, "is in itself a good thing. It is a biological necessity of the first importance * * * * War is the greatest factor in the furtherance of culture and power * * * * Efforts to secure peace are extraordinarily detrimental as soon as they influence politics * * * * Efforts directed toward the abolition of war are not only foolish but absolutely immoral and must be stigmatized as unworthy of the human race * * * * Courts of arbitration are a pernicious delusion. The whole idea represents a presumptuous encroachment on natural laws of development which can only lead to the most disastrous consequences for humanity generally * * * * The maintenance of peace never can be or may be the goal of a policy * * * * Efforts for peace would, if they attained their goal, lead to degeneration* * * * Huge armaments are in themselves desirable. They are the most necessary precondition of our national health."

The profound influence of this teaching upon the German people may be realized from their unquestioning support of the enormous increase in their military and naval forces. Beyond question, Germany is the greatest military power in the world. Without any such need as makes a great fleet imperatively necessary to ensure the safety and even the existence of the British Empire, she has built up in ships, personnel, dockyards and all other essentials, a powerful navy designed to challenge conclusions with that of Great Britain. What ambitions would not be open to Germany, what tribute could she not exact, if, dominating Europe with her army, she could wage a successful naval campaign against Britain!

Within the past ten years the peace of Europe has been threatened by Germany on no less than three occasions. In 1905 France at her dictation was obliged to dismiss her Foreign Minister. In 1909 Germany shook her mailed fist and compelled Russia to bow to her will. In 1911, as the history of the Agadir incident recalls, she again attempted to coerce and humiliate France and the situation was saved only by the interposition of Great Britain. Germany receded on that occasion from her first pretensions, but only to abide her time. Her time, as she thought, had come in July, 1914.

The military autocracy of Germany have taught their people for more than twenty years that the British Empire stood chiefly in the path of German expansion and that war was inevitable. No one could predict the exact occasion which would be seized, but no one could doubt the intention of the Prussian militarists. There was the lesson of Denmark and Austria and France. In the end