

PART II

ANTECEDENTS OF THE CRIME

CHAPTER I

THE PREVENTIVE WAR

PREVENTIVE WAR OR WAR OF CONQUEST ?

IN *J'accuse* I have already pointed out with all possible emphasis that of the three descriptions which may be applied to this war, namely, that it is a defensive war, a preventive war, or an imperialistic war of conquest, in my opinion, so far as Germany is concerned, the third only is in point.

The first description, that it is a war of defence against attack, is the one which after two and a half years of war still dominates public opinion in Germany. It is the formula with which the war was begun, and with which it is still being carried on to-day. On August 1st, 1915, the first anniversary of the outbreak of war, the Emperor spoke, in almost the same terms as he had used a year earlier, of "the struggle in defence of the highest possessions of the nation, its life and its freedom." After the success of the third war loan, the Emperor emphasised in his congratulatory telegram to Dr. Helfferich, the Secretary to the Treasury, the immovable will of the German people to "continue to a victorious conclusion the war that had been forced upon us by a criminal attack." Until to-day the same formula has remained in force. But untruths are not converted into truths by frequent repetitions, and all the constantly renewed efforts of the German authorities to represent the war as a war of defence continue to be vain in the eyes of the