

The following quotations from German writers during the war state quite frankly German aims:—

" What do we Germans understand by freedom of the seas? Of course, we do not mean by it that free use of the sea which is the common privilege of all nations in time of peace, the right to the open highways of international trade. That sort of freedom we had before the war. What we understand to-day by this doctrine is that Germany should possess such maritime territories, and such naval bases, that at the outbreak of a war we should be able, with our navy ready, reasonably to guarantee ourselves the command of the seas. We want such a jumping-off place for our navy as would give us a fair chance of dominating the seas, and of being free of the seas during a war. The inalienable possession of the Belgian seaboard is therefore a matter of life and death to us, and the man is a traitor who would faint-heartedly relinquish this coast to England. Our aim should be not only to keep what our arms have already won on this coast, but sooner or later to extend our seaboard to the south of the Strait of Calais."

This statement was made by Count Reventlow at a public meeting in Berlin in March 1917, and was afterwards quoted by Lord Robert Cecil in the House of Commons. An attempt was made to attribute it to the German Navy League only, but there is no doubt that it expresses views widely held in Germany, and enjoying at least semi-official approval, which are to be found in many other similar statements in the public press. The following are typical examples:—

From an article in the semi-official monthly, *Ueberall*, by Lieut.-Commander Bierbrauer zu Brenstein, towards the end of 1917:—

" For Germany there is only one ' freedom of the seas,' which is the liberation of the seas from the tyranny of England. England's outrageous power must be broken for ever. To achieve this end a strong and mighty Germany is required, and then the seas will be free. To achieve this a strong and powerful German navy is also required. We must have defended naval bases in our colonies and also on the Belgian coast, where no Englishman may land with hostile intent. Germany will then be the real protector of the neutrals and of the freedom of the seas. It must and shall be so."