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## Germany and Town Planning

On looking through the Annual Report of the Garden Cities and Town Planning Association of London for 1914 we saw an extract given from the August Number of its official organ, as showing the close fellowship between the English and German town planning associations, which makes somewhat ironical reading at the present moment; it is as follows:—

"The intimate relations existing between the German and the English Garden Cities Association, and the keen personal interest taken on both sides in the progress in both countries makes the thought of the conflict of arms between the two nations almost unbelievable. During the last six years there has been continual interchanges of visits of study between the two nations, culminating last month in the great and successful International Congress, which was arranged jointly by the German and English secretaries. Only on the very day that war was declared did the last batch of foreign visitors leave England—French, German, Russian, Austrian, Italian, Belgian, and English, they studied together the best means of preserving the life and happiness of the people, and now by the most cruel of ironies, they are ranged on different sides in the death struggle which is taking place somewhere along the French frontier, and whose echoes reach even to the peacefulness of Gray's Inn Gardens, now filled with hundreds of drilling recruits. Whatever we may have to deplore in other directions, and whatever faults we may have to find, the town planning world in particular has much to thank the German nation for—they have been the world's teachers in this, as in other matters; but the die has been cast, and we can only hope that out of the tumult of things may emerge a surer basis for the peace of the world."

The particular exception we take to in the paragraph is in the words "They have been the world's teachers in this (Town Planning) as in other matters". This we cannot understand as coming from such a responsible body as the G.C. and T.P. Association. It would seem that the teaching of Germany has been anything but conducive to the "happiness of the people", and no plan, town or otherwise, based on the spirit of bureaucracy can be permanently suc-

cessful in democratic countries like England or Canada. It is true that Germany has made strides in town planning, made easier by her system of government, which is paternal to a degree, and no doubt many of the ardent advocates of town planning in England would be delighted if a little of it was even introduced into England. Not so, though Thomas Adams, our own particular town planner, who is democratic to his finger tips and whose teachings are based on common sense principles—certainly not German.

We recognize the thoroughness with which German officialdom dominates the civic government of the nation, but we also know that underlying the acquiescence of the people is the sense of fear and no town planning scheme, however good in itself, using such means to bring about its consummation—supposedly the greater happiness of the people—can be commended to a democracy for the thing would fail before it was half way through, and rightly so. Any town planning scheme to succeed in this country must be with the full approbation of the people affected and before that can be done they must be educated up to their responsibilities. The public certainly will not be coerced into accepting new conditions they cannot understand, because some good people consider the change good for them. The spirit of coercion is now rapidly dying and Germany is helping in its demise. In all such matters we have to choose between the system of force and the system of persuasion—autocracy and democracy—external compulsion and internal conversion. Ex-Chancellor Von Bulow devotes a third of his recent work "Imperial Germany" to discussing the ever-imminent danger of popular revolution through the hatred of the vast Social democratic masses for the bureaucratic and upper classes in Germany.