

## CHAPTER VII

## THE EMPIRE AND THE WAR

Germany, at the outbreak of hostilities, had with one voice announced to the world her belief that Britain was her chief and greatest foe. The entry of Britain into the war shook at once the foundations of her confidence, and rightly so. She knew the bulldog breed which had fought Napoleon for twenty weary years and at last had freed Europe from his dominion. She knew right well that, once Britain had put her hand to the plough, there would be no turning back. So Germany resounded with the song:

“We have one foe, and one alone, England!”

Seldom has England received a more sincere compliment.

From the beginning, Britain became the core of the alliance which stood between Germany and world dominion. The reason is obvious. Britain controlled the seas; and sea-power has always been the deciding factor in wars in which any save land-locked countries have engaged.

It was British shipping which enabled the Continental Allies to wage war upon the scale that modern operations demand. British ships carried nearly half of the total imports of France and Italy during the war. British ships carried to the various Fronts more than half a million vehicles, ranging in size from small carts to the largest locomotives; more than two million horses, mules, and camels; more than twenty-two million men. British ships carried over two hundred million tons of oil, coal, and munitions. In addition to this the regular trade of the Empire was carried on. The transportation of troops