

venting successful intervention by other powers prior to the declaration of war? Whatever justification might have been found in a general case against Serbian ingratitude, hatred or design, the submission of Serbia to the Austrian ultimatum was a circumstance which paved the way to ample redress through diplomatic channels. The summary rejection of the Serbian reply, involving, as it did, immediate recourse to arms on the part of Austria and Serbia, with the certainty of other European nations being brought into the conflict, can not be explained on any theory of fear on the part of Austria that ample reparation for wrongs committed could not be found by means fraught with less hazard to the security of the nations of Europe, and the peace of the World. The rejection points only too plainly to a determination to win by arms, by force of Might, and not because of Right, ends and purposes far beyond those disclosed, and the accomplishment of a design vastly more aggressive than the subjugation of an inferior, though troublesome people. To understand Austria's purpose it is necessary to look at the geography of the Balkan Peninsula.

The Austro-Hungarian Empire, which consists of a political union between the Kingdom of Hungary and Austria, was established in its present dual form in 1867. The policy of the Empire is, however, dictated by Austrian statesmen, and Austria as a state has existed for a thousand years. From the earliest time Austria has been both reactionary and despotic. She has opposed political liberty and national freedom. Italy suffered under this despotism until freed from it by Cavour, the founder of Italian unity. Russia has been Austria's hereditary enemy on the North, and the Balkan situation has found its significance for European powers, in the desire of these two nations to reach the Mediterranean, and be in a position of strategic control of its commerce, of the Suez Canal and of a possible future all-railway route through Persia, to India and China.

The Balkan States, of which Serbia is the pivot, are in a direct line between Europe and the Orient. Salonika, on the Aegean Sea, now in Greek territory, is one of the finest harbours on the Mediterranean. A railway through Serbia connects this splendid port with Austria and Germany. A canal might unite the Danube and Salonika. Austria's commercial and manufacturing interests are growing. She once tried to reach the Mediterranean through Italy and failed; the conquest of Serbia would bring her where, without difficulty, she might reach it through Salonika. Therefore, while racial hatred, intensified by aggression, and the fear of further aggression explains, on Serbia's part, outrages committed and plots conceived, the Teuton's hatred of the Slav, and a determination upon further conquest, for which an atrocious crime gave cover of an excuse, explains Austria's eagerness for war.

Austria's Action Inconceivable apart from Germany's Support

But neither racial hatred, political ambition or commercial greed could have tempted Austria to such a course, had she not had, as her ally, the powerful Empire of Germany, and had she not secured from the German Emperor assurances that, no matter what the consequences or cost, the German arms

would be one with the Austrian in any struggle that might ensue. Austria well knew that Russia, her hereditary foe, could never be indifferent to the conquest of Serbia, and Austria's approach to the Aegean. Motives racial, political and commercial would all render that impossible. Russia's population is Slavic, and her racial sympathies are naturally with the Slavic peoples of the Balkan States and certain parts of Hungary. For years Russia has been trying to get a foothold on the Mediterranean. Russia's ships can now reach the Atlantic only through the ice-bound Baltic Sea, or through the Dardanelles out of the Black Sea, and the latter passage is forbidden to her warships by International agreement. The Crimean war ended, for the time-being at least, Russia's hope to obtain territory on the Mediterranean, to occupy Constantinople and establish a position from which Great Britain's Indian and Oriental possessions might be menaced. To expect Russia to remain indifferent to a conquest which would gain for her political enemy and commercial rival, an advantage which she herself, through force of arms was obliged to forego, is something Austria could never have dreamed. Austria knew full well that war on Serbia meant war on Russia also, and this she would never have attempted but for the assurances of her powerful ally. Germany, too, understood the situation, understood it perhaps even better than Austria. Germany knew that war between Austria and Serbia meant war between herself and Russia, that war between herself and Russia meant war with France as well, and that war with France might lead to war with Britain, must inevitably so lead, if it meant, as appears from the first to have been deliberately planned, the violation of Belgian neutrality. An international conflict so gigantic could never have been faced by Austria had her ally not been prepared to share the cost, and even urged her towards the fatal step. In a word, then, as has been not less eloquently, than truly, said "Austria's invasion of Serbia was the Teuton's defiance of the Slav, and Germany's support of her ally is the Teuton's defiance of the rest of the world."

Germany's Influence Over Austria

But how account for such a willingness on Germany's part? The answer is not to be given in a single phrase. Historic tradition, racial influence, economic necessity, political aggrandizement, military organization and imperialist sentiment, combine to afford the explanation. The creation of the German Empire was the work of Bismarck. It was effected, not by diplomacy, but by the strength of the Prussian army, which, in Bismarck's day, had become the most perfect fighting engine in the world. "It is neither with parliamentary oratory", Bismarck told the Prussian Chamber of Deputies, "nor by the votes of majorities, that the great questions of the hour can be solved. It is only by blood and with the sword," With this engine, he wrenched the provinces of Schleswig-Holstein from Denmark in 1864, imposed by degrees Prussian leadership on the German speaking world, and in 1871 made the French province of Alsace-Lorraine, a part of the German Empire. The genius of Bismarck has given to Germans their faith in "Prussian methods," his spirit has bequeathed to Germany, the completion of the task he began. Ten