

SOME PROGNOSTICATIONS AND A PREFACE

with whom I had been in controversial correspondence blossomed out into a colonel of the famous Prussian Guard. That seemed to throw a back-light on the whole business.

V.

Even as an author I have suffered from the Germans, for one of the greatest tortures of my life was reading the proofs of my novels in German. When I reflect that my translator was a popular novelist who has since become famous by his vigorous verse against England, I cannot help suspecting that his translation was a premature act of war. His rendering of a nursery reference to "Baby Bunting" I have never forgotten. It was turned into "Baby's Flagge." Such is the insidious effect of *Militarismus*.

Socially, too, my Teutonic experiences have not been captivating. The beer-regurgitating, face-slashed student of the *Kneipe* and the duelling ground has always seemed to me a barbarian type of young man: my esurient and lip-smacking neighbours at Teutonic *tables d'hôte* have never impressed me as the latest models of refinement; nor have I been overcome by the *Kultur* of the tourists who, with opera glasses slung across their portly bosoms, ejaculate their monotonous "*Wunderschön!*" before every mountain or miniature. I have loved the old towns and the life at Munich and Dresden, but I have never been at ease in the Zion of the German salon, with its heavy spirit-constricting furniture. And one of the greatest shocks I ever received in a drawing-room was when Wagner's step-daughter (the Countess Gravina) imparted to me that Jesus was not born into my race but was a pure Aryan. I was not then aware of the copious literature on the subject with its humourless demonstration that the founder of Christianity was a German. Of course the Countess was merely echoing her relative, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, who remarks urbanely: "Whoever maintains that Christ was a Jew is either ignorant or a liar." She may even have agreed with Herr Max Bewer that Jesus was of Rhenish-Westphalian origin.¹

So if the readers of the *Morning Post* find me in as imperfect affinity with the Germans as Charles Lamb was with the Jews, they will know it is not from mere eccentricity or conservatism, but from a reasonable antipathy to spiritual swagger and mediæva militarism, accompanied by bumptiousness and cruelty. Repug-

¹ A new book, "*Die Erde und Unsere Ahnen*," proves that Moses was born in the Harz Mountains, Jerusalem was the North German town of Goslar, and Solomon's Temple stood on the Brocken Mountain!