

THE CAUSES OF GERMAN AGGRESSION

them instead of waiting for them to rob her. By war, she secured access to the Baltic; by war, she obtained the coveted Silesia; by war, she annexed much of Poland; by war, she spread her ægis over the whole of northern Germany. The humiliation of conquest she knew under Napoleon, and she has never forgotten nor ever will that no natural barriers stand between her and the invader. Poverty-stricken, still recovering from the ravages of the wars of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, menaced on all sides by powerful enemies, her only safety, Bismarck saw, lay in aggression, her only chance of victory depended upon striking the first blow. By this policy, she has built up one of the most powerful states in the world and one of the most populous and prosperous. But she has reached the boundaries of Germany; further expansion means the acquisition of what other nations now own.

The logic of facts, proving the necessity of expansion, is, to such Germans as General Bernhardi, unanswerable. The population has increased so rapidly that it is already difficult for efficient, well-trained men to secure any employment. Not only is the superficial area of the country suitable for cultivation practically exhausted, but intensive scientific agriculture is speedily limiting the possibilities of the employ-