

FIGHTING A PHILOSOPHY

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SOME people who profess to know Germany well are trying to make out that the temper of the ruling caste has not been influenced in any considerable degree by Friedrich Nietzsche. They point out that Treitschke, whose influence has certainly been enormous, would have nothing to say to Nietzsche, whom he trenchantly described as 'a madman, bitten to the marrow by the *folie des grandeurs*'. They prove that Nietzsche repaid the Professor's contempt with interest. They show without difficulty that Nietzsche's writings abound in sentiments which cannot be pleasing in high quarters, that he was no flatterer of the Hohenzollerns, and that he even, on occasion, criticized the German character and culture and disparaged the State. How, they ask, can the author of such heresies, the man who claimed the title of 'Good European' in contradistinction to Prussian Patriot, be thought to have inspired the makers of the present war?

If we take the 'ruling caste' in a strict and narrow sense, it is very likely true that its members are not much addicted to the study of Nietzsche. One cannot imagine the Kaiser, for instance, giving his days and nights to *Zarathustra*. Nevertheless the exact agreement between the precepts of Nietzsche and the policy and practice of Germany cannot possibly be a matter of chance. There is not a move of modern Prussian statecraft, not an action of the German army since the