

THE WAR FOR THE WORLD

way of Prussia. There was a deadlock, as in the trenches of Flanders. At this moment a third official came up—in a somewhat different style of decoration and also of a more gentlemanly cast. He inquired into the cause of the disturbance, and, having heard both sides, he turned to me and said politely: "I should strongly advise you, *mein Herr*, not to resist, or there will be very considerable trouble."

I was disappointed and outraged: "What!" I cried in wilfully dramatic accents. "In Switzerland, which we in England have always looked upon as the land *par excellence* of Freedom!"

"This is not my land," explained the gentlemanly Swiss. "This is the German part of the station."

I understood.

But this was not the end, for as I refused to return to the room, even though it was Prussian, porters appeared with a long rope, with which a space was roped off in the station immediately outside the asphyxiating little room, and here, penned like cattle at market, we stood in the dead of night till our Prussian train, punctual to the second, rolled obediently into its appointed platform.

IV.

Our treatment enabled me to appreciate more vividly the callous handling of the thousands of poor Jews whom for many years it was a function of an organization, over which I presided, to emigrate *via* Germany. Constant and perennial were the complaints of cruelty both at the German frontier stations and on board the German steamers. Once the brutality was so palpable that I actually succeeded in getting a couple of naval officers dismissed. But as a rule it was less acts of tyranny than a pervasive atmosphere of harshness and contempt, difficult to cope with, but embittering the lot of the steerage passengers, already suffering sufficiently from exile, poverty, and sea-sickness. To dispense with the German lines in favour, for example, of Dutch was impossible, because Germany simply forbade emigrants to pass through her territory unless provided with sailing-tickets for her vessels. And this is the Germany that prates of the freedom of the seas! The outbreak of hostilities between our respective countries served to suspend them between my organization and a great German shipping company which was vainly demanding an apology from our Russian representative for his outspoken statements concerning the treatment of emigrants. The chairman