

A LECTURE  
ON  
The Causes and Progress  
of the Great War

By His Excellency Sir Walter Edward  
Davidson, K. C. M. G.,  
Governor of Newfoundland, &c., &c.



King's Printer, 1914

Nfld.

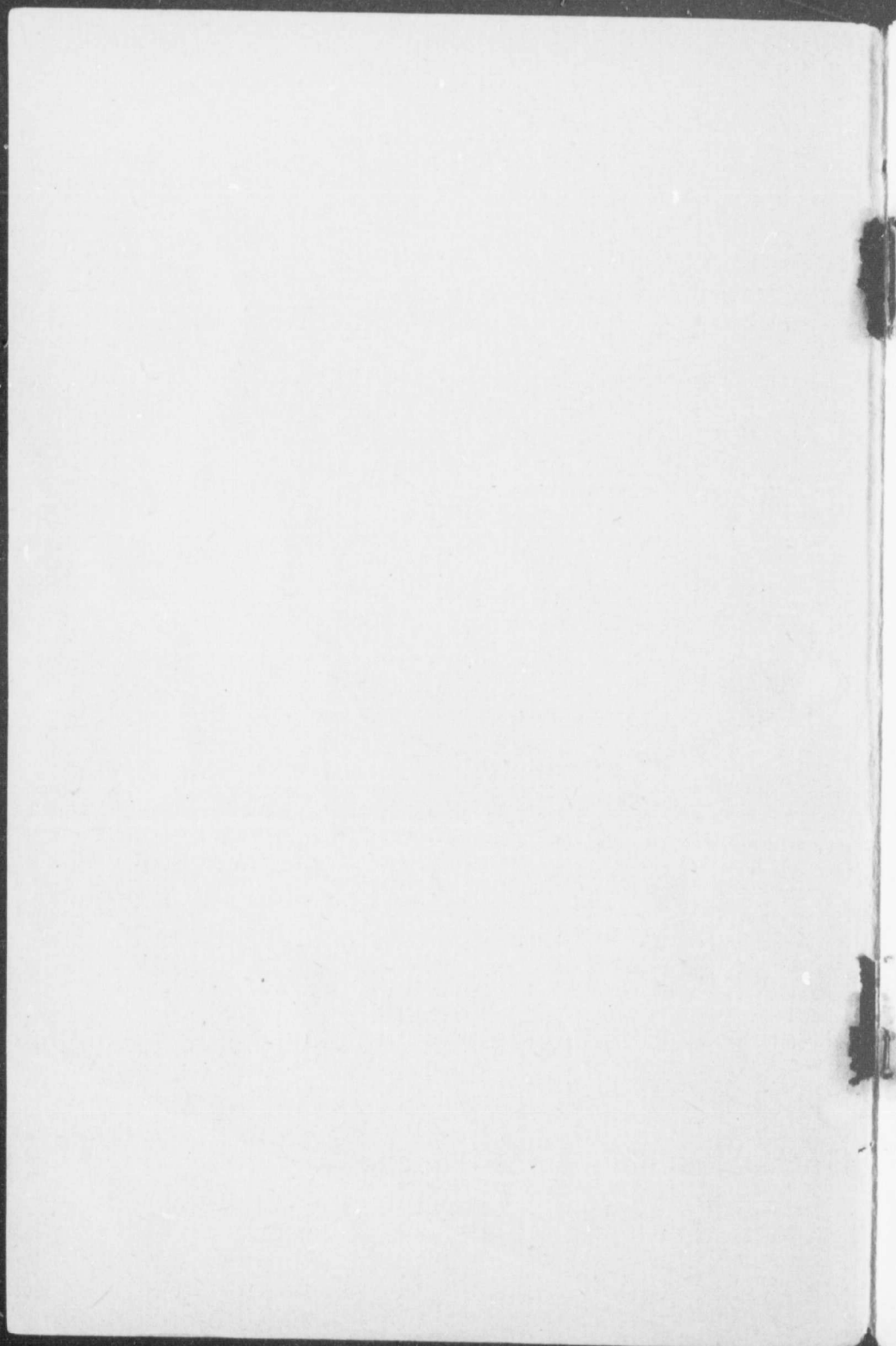
D

525

D39

1914

Rare



## The Causes and the Progress of the Great War.

---

**T**HE brain of Bismarck produced the German Empire. The material out of which he founded and maintained this fabric was the military caste of Prussian landlords, who lived solely for the profession of arms—they are generally called “Junkers,”—and the industry and docility of the rest of the German Empire. The mass had to be welded together by the prestige of victory: so he fought, conquered and robbed little Denmark in 1864; and fought and beat Austria in 1866, but did not rob them of land, and so did not alienate the German caste which rules that Empire; and finally fought and beat and robbed France in 1870. On the strength of these three victorious campaigns, the German people have ever since been intoxicated with success, and have convinced themselves that they are invincible by land, and that any sacrifice of individual liberty is worth making for the glory and the expansion of the great German Empire.

And prosperity followed fast: not so much (as the Germans believe) from their prowess on the battlefield, and the advantages which they gained by the constant rattling of their sabres, and the bullying of their rulers; but chiefly from the good sense and energy of the industrial classes during the long years of peace and commercial development.

I had a friend once, a Judge of the Supreme Court of Ceylon, himself a Sinhalese, who said once to me: "I mistrust my compatriot when I see him in the dock if he is very strong and burly, because I know my people, and if a man is powerful, he is prone to abuse his strength." And so it is with the leaders of the German people. Because they were strong they became arrogant with pride, and bullied their weaker neighbours outrageously; they heaped all sorts of insults time after time on the French nation, because they had once beaten them, and reckoned that they could do it again. Their little neighbours, the Dutch and the Belgians, the Danes and the Swedes, hated them much, but feared them more. The Italians hastened to ally themselves to the Germans because it is better to be bullied than beaten. Only two nations went on their way without fear—the English and the Russians.

Bismarck (who was a very wise man) feared Russia, holding that it could never be effectually conquered and subdued; and so all through the thirty years when he was building up the fortunes of Germany, he always took good care to be on good terms with Russia. But England he both hated and despised, though he could do the English no hurt. He coveted the British Empire, and consulted with his generals as to how he could strip the haughty islanders of their wealth; but though Moltke, the General, could devise fifty ways of invading England, he could find no way of getting his armies back—because Germany had no Navy.

But there arose a new Kaiser in Germany; the old King, who had simply followed the lead of his Chancellor, was gathered to his fathers, and his grandson reigned in his stead. This talented young man discarded the wise and

wicked old counsellor, and took the advice of the younger men about him, who flattered him and fired his ambitions, until he and the whole nation longed for new conquests which would make the German Empire the greatest in the world,—instead of the British Empire. It is hard to be an absolute monarch, and yet to remain sane. At length the madness has arrived, and this great and powerful ruler, who might have done incalculable good, has challenged the whole world in arms, and is doing irremediable harm.

In the programme of world-power on which all Germany counted, the first conquest was to be that of England, the first nation to be abased was to be the British. But, so long as we were all-powerful at sea, the conquest was impossible. So he resolved to build a great fleet to be as great and invincible as his army, like the King of Spain who, having the greatest army of his time, built the Invincible Armada to conquer Queen Elizabeth and her Englishmen.

And this is how the German Kaiser began. On the first of January, 1900, the Kaiser said: "I shall organize my Navy, so that it shall stand on the same level as my Army, and *with its help* the German Empire shall attain to a place which it has not yet reached." That place was occupied by the British Empire, and it was the Kaiser's will to displace the British Empire.

Two events greatly helped him to fire the imagination of the docile dreamy people over whom he was the absolute War Lord. There was a wonderful Exhibition at Paris in 1900. In the pride of kingship he ordered his merchants to show at conquered Paris the wealth and splendour of his nation, and it was a brave show. And in the most prominent place in the great Exhibition he ordered the words

to be painted on a great and gaudy German pavilion: "Our Future is on the Sea." However, it costs much to build an Armada and the people hesitate to pay the money. But then came the second event to help him to get his people willing to tax themselves in order to build the Armada which was to conquer England. Some of his enterprising merchants were occupied in selling arms to the Boer Republic in South Africa with whom we were then settling an old standing difference which had to be fought out before we could settle down as friends. His merchants carried arms in piano-cases and one of the German ships was stopped and searched for contraband of war. This was enough. He could not, he said, declare war and avenge the insult to the mighty German Nation, because whatever might be the outcome of the war in South Africa—the German merchants would be driven off the seas and his armies could not get to close quarters with these Englishmen, because they had no great fleet. So his courtiers started a Navy League and told in every hamlet that Germany could never be great until the pride of the British was humbled.

Then all his people gave to their War Lord of their possessions and increased their taxes five fold (between 1872 and 1909), and also borrowed the enormous sum of \$1,256,000,000 to be spent in great armaments by land and sea, and in preparation for the great War. And thus the business of building the Armada began, until it is now only second to that of Great Britain. So the officers of the German Navy drank every evening in every wardroom to "The Day" when they might challenge Great Britain for the supremacy of the sea. The day was not to come until 1915 or 1916, until after the Kiel Canal had been deepened and the new fleet was large enough to cover the invasion of England.

Now the wily old Bismarck had always kept friends with Russia, the huge nation on the East, who are mainly of Slav or Slavonic race. That was wise, for the Russians could at any time be humbled, after the British Empire had been broken up and the small nations, Belgium, Holland, Denmark and Sweden, had been absorbed and the French had been smashed forever. But an event happened when Russia was foolishly drawn into a war with Japan in which the Russian armies were not victorious. Bismarck would not have been deceived into thinking that the Russian Empire was weakened thereby, for he would have guessed that, after this serious reverse, the Army would again be built up better than before. But the Kaiser and his flatterers did not understand the signs which history teaches and thought that the huge Nation of the Czar was really unfit to fight: that the officers were dissolute and ignorant and that the peasants were indifferent or rebellious. So the Kaiser and his puppet Chancellors—the little men who aped the ways of Bismarck without his brains—no longer sought the friendship of Russia and allowed the Nations who saw the dangers of German ambition to combine in self-defence.

Then came an attack by the Christian States in the Balkan Mountains against their enemy and oppressor, the Sultan of Turkey. They beat the Turks and then fought again among themselves for the spoils, and the Serbians and Greeks and Montenegrins were victorious. The Serbians and Montenegrins are Slavs like the Russians and their success established south of German Austria, a consolidated Kingdom of Slav race under Russian protection.

This was a great trouble to the Generals around the Kaiser, because they had been the officers who led the

Turkish armies and they had been beaten by Serbian and Bulgarian officers instructed in Russia and in France. And the conquest of the Serbians of Turkish territory made more difficult of accomplishment the German ambition to be the rulers along the whole course of the Danube and down to the Mediterranean Sea at Salonika and Constantinople. So the Kaiser and his Generals and his Admirals determined that "The Day" had come when United Germany should strike, so that the German Empire should attain to the summit of the War Lord's ambition.

Any excuse will do to start a fight, if you want to force a fight, no matter how unwilling the other man may be, and the excuse was quickly found. The heir to the Empire of Austria—himself of German race—went on a Royal tour throughout some new provinces where most of the people were Slavs—and he was assassinated by two men one of which was an Austrian subject and the other a Serbian subject, though both were Slavs like the Russians.

Thereupon, after first obtaining the permission of the German Emperor, a demand was sent to the King of Serbia of a very insulting character, ordering him to do very humiliating things such as no king had ever been before told to do. Nevertheless, the Ministers of the King of Serbia promised to perform nine of the ten orders but asked that the tenth might be referred to the Hague Tribunal for amicable settlement. But this humble answer would not suffice, for the decision had been arrived at beforehand; and despite the remonstrances of our Foreign Minister, Austria declared war on Serbia and overran that country. The Czar of Russia remonstrated and ordered some of his armies to be got ready on a war footing, whereupon Germany and



Austria (who had been preparing for war for months past) both declared war on Russia and on France as well. It was known that France and Russia were bound by treaty each to support the other in case a war of aggression was forced on either of these nations. Therefore, the German Emperor gave the order to invade France before the French should have time to get ready for war, and, because the French fortresses on the German frontier were strong and prepared for defence, the German armies were ordered to invade the territory of Belgium, so that the German invasion might pour into France along an unprotected frontier.

Then came the critical moment. Germany was confident that her military organization could crush both France and Russia. She had secretly prepared her arrangements that her troops should be ready on the very day of the declaration to invade France through Belgium, devastate the country, sack and burn the towns, butcher the population and dictate terms of utter subjection within one month; and then turn on Russia and smash her armies as soon as France was done with. And she trusted that England, the peace-loving and the unready, would temporize, and then not strike until too late. And even if England did intervene, her land forces were insignificant, the men of England were untrained, the Colonies, even if willing, would be too late to be of any value. If England could be cajoled into not fighting at all, she could be conquered later; if England did agree to fight, that could be used as an excuse for the conquest of the British Empire, once France had been humbled and the Russian armies had been defeated. And here is where the German Emperor and his arrogant generals, and his pettifogging lying diplomats, made their cardinal blunder.

They chose their own time, before France had brought into force her new law of three years' military training (instead of two), and before she could provide new heavy artillery to meet the siege artillery which Krupp had prepared. They chose their time, when Russia had lost her Navy and had not recovered from the disastrous war in Manchuria. They chose their time when England appeared to be in difficulties with Ireland, where a civil war appeared imminent, both sides having received their weapons from Germany itself.

They reckoned that France would again beg for mercy, knowing that her fair land must be devastated. They reckoned that Russia, being unprepared, might fear the results of a war, and would let the Serbs be conquered and the Balkan States be divided anew between Austria and Turkey. They reckoned that Italy would contribute her Army to attack France and her Navy to control the Mediterranean. They reckoned that Turkey would assail Egypt and raise a religious war on the borders of India. They reckoned that peace-loving England and her Colonial Empire had lost the capacity to defend themselves and that the Irish would revolt. They reckoned that the Americans would be content to reap the benefit to be obtained from the ruin of England's trade. And they reckoned, above all, that their magnificent war organization would triumph at every contest.

Here is where these little Bismareks reckoned wrong. France was prepared to fight for her existence. Belgium was prepared to fight for her independence. Russia was prepared to fight for her fellow-countrymen in Serbia. England was prepared to fight for the observance of solemn treaties, for the freedom of Belgium, for right against might.

for her own honour. Ireland was prepared to sink her differences for the maintenance of the Empire; the Dominions Overseas were prepared to do all they could to help; India was prepared to give her fighting men and her resources for the country which had treated her so well and so justly. America was prepared to denounce the attempt of might to overcome right.

So much for her enemies. And as to those whom she expected to help the conquest of the world by Prussia:—Italy was not prepared to fight against England, her greatest benefactor; the Mohammadans of India and Egypt declined to rebel against our Liege Lord, the King-Emperor. The Turks realized that a fight against England and Russia meant utter ruin. So the edifice of hate and cunning crumbled in the dust. Great Britain, Russia, France, Belgium and Servia are banded against the would-be oppressor. Ireland and the Dominions—including the Union of South Africa—the Indian Empire, the Colonies, all declared their loyalty. It seems as if very little would cause Italy, Roumania, Bulgaria and Greece to join in the league against oppression. America has with one voice declared that England is in the right and Germany is in the wrong. Turkey is wise enough to remain quiet. Egypt, Algeria, Tunis and Morocco show no signs of hostility. The whole edifice of the diplomatists tumbles down like a pack of cards, and the country which has pushed over the cards is Great Britain, the country which the Prussian officers sneer at as the land of shopkeepers and poltroons.

But, mark it well, it is the championing of justice and the protection of the weak and the oppressed—in her old-fashioned way—by Great Britain which has secured the isolation

of Germany and will, in the end, humble the pride of her over-bearing soldiery. The Germans know it well, in their inmost hearts. I have read nothing more pathetic in its tragedy than the hysterical outburst of the German Chancellor when the firm attitude of Great Britain was communicated to him by our Ambassador. The story of the interview is recorded by our Ambassador and is published; it tells how the Chancellor incoherently stormed for an hour in his uncontrollable rage. He knew that he—a mere nobody in Prussian eyes—had been raised to be the puppet-Chancellor of the German Empire merely because he could talk English like an Englishman, and was expected to fool the English public with fair words while the engine of destruction was getting up steam. The calm, the natural, the upright attitude of England—which he had not the true knowledge to foresee—was, he well knew, his death-warrant as a statesman, and the black seal of infamy would be branded on his name by posterity when the calm history of the events is written.

As to the conduct in this affair of those who govern Great Britain and who guide the policy of the British Empire, I cannot do better than quote the judgment of Mr. Theodore Roosevelt, who represents in these words the feeling of the great Republic, and who has himself been in former times the intimate associate of the German Emperor. He says:—

As for England “when once Belgium was invaded, every circumstance of national honour and interest forced England to act precisely as she did act. She could not hold up her head among the Nations had she acted otherwise.”

This passage is very near the summing up of history when these stirring events can be reviewed with freedom from

prejudice. Of Mr. Roosevelt—there is his portrait on the wall given in recognition of Grenfell's good work for mankind—all the world agrees in admiration of his manliness I would he were an Englishman

And so the War began. Its outstanding feature is a proof that the Germans had much reason for trusting their Army and its organization. Their troops—after a trifling setback before Liege from the gallant Belgians—swept through Belgium from end to end and passed like a mountain torrent through the north of France even to the gates of Paris. Nothing could stay their determined onslaught. Fortified places were devastated and taken, the armies of Belgium and France were driven back; the only check was the wonderfully plucky stand made by our little Army of England which held in check huge armies, many times their number, without being crushed or demoralized, though they lost 20 per cent. of their numbers. The account is marvellously to the credit of the stubborn fighting qualities of the British. Although enveloped on both flanks by five German Army corps and fiercely attacked in front, they held the enemy back all through a week of the most difficult fighting of all; a retreat before superior numbers. They fought at Mons on August 23rd, then at Valenciennes on the 24th, then at Cambrai Le Cateau and Landrecies on the 25th; (It was at Landrecies where Geoffrey Feilding in command of a battalion of the Guards greatly distinguished himself), then at at Peronne and Guise on the 26th, at later at Compiègne on the 28th.

At length, the word went out that the French and British would stand and give battle on the line of the River Marne, extending from Paris on the westward nearly to Toul on the

eastward ; and the German armies dashed to the attack. But they failed to win through. Not only that but they were themselves attacked on their western flank and compelled to yield ground ; and at last, after fighting from September 6th to September 14th they retreated some thirty miles and entrenched themselves on the line of the river Aisne and were themselves attacked. In the battle on the Marne, the British troops again proved their fighting value, and it is a pride to us that the German retreat was first commenced between Meaux and Chateau Thierry where the British pressed home their advantage.

Now the battle on the River Aisne which began on September 18th shows signs of ending. Again it is at the point where the British are that the Germans have shown the first signs of yielding ground ; and from Soissons to Craonne the British have been making headway since October 5th. Strategists have long ago named this particular front on the River Aisne as the battle field on which the destination of France would be decided. I hope and trust that on this historic ground (for it was here that Napoleon fought his finest defensive campaign in 1814) that the salvation of France will be found and that the defeat of Germany will commence.

On the Russian side, the Germans have made good the defence of East Prussia. The Austrians have, as usual, been defeated, but the line of battle is now formed in Russian Poland, on the line of the Vistula. The united forces of Germany and Austria may capture Warsaw, but I am sure that they cannot win a decisive battle this year, and I think that they may be disastrously defeated.

But the aspect of the battle has greatly changed during these twenty days. The German line on September 18th, from west to east, lay from Noyon on the Oise, through Soissons, Craonne, Rheims, Sernon, Varennes, Montfaucon, to the River Meuse. On their right they have been pushed back, and on their left they have gained ground; but the principal feature has been the attempt of the Allies again to turn their western flank. First, the French pushed up to Roye, Ham and Peronne, but the Germans faced them resolutely on this new line, and as the French extended their lines further north, the Germans have faced them anew as far north as Arras and Lille, and to the Belgian frontier, and almost to the sea. So, in addition to a front of 100 miles from west to east, they are now fighting also on a new line at right angles from Noyon, on the western end, for another eighty miles from south to north.

All this time you may note that the Germans hold on to the line of navigable canals connecting the Aisne and the Oise, and the Sambre and the Meuse; for it is by those waterways that the Germans can transport all their heavy supplies of food and ammunition, on big barges of 600 tons each, the whole way from Germany.

On the sea, the course of the war has been as satisfactory as we had expected. German commerce has been driven off the seas. The high sea fleets are lying under the shelter of their land fortifications where they are safe from attack, for the present. If the fleet come out to fight, I believe they will be destroyed. If they are kept in port, they will ultimately be taken or sunk by a combined movement by land and sea. Meanwhile, many small fast cruisers had been stationed in all the seas ready for the pre-concerted

signal for war to commence on August 4th, and some few of them have achieved some success in sinking unarmed merchantmen. The skill and forethought shown in the supplies of fuel and ammunition have alike been admirable; and their system of wireless information has been really good. We have lost a few ships through the attacks of their well-designed submarine ships: it is not generally known here that these submarine ships have a displacement of 800 tons, with engines capable of 1900 horse-power, a radius of action of 2,000 miles, and a speed of 17 knots on the surface and 12 knots when submerged. Their four torpedo tubes can launch an explosive engine of a diameter of nearly 20 inches. The complement of men is 32, picked men and highly trained. Their other interests at sea are mainly directed to chartering vessels flying neutral flags and destined to neutral ports, whence their cargoes can be safely conveyed to Germany.

I have given the Germans credit for their wonderful organization and supplies, and the fine fighting of their corps of officers, and the discipline of their men under fire. But I hardly dare to let myself speak of their utterly savage brutality, and their disregard for all feelings of humanity.

They rob and they plunder the houses in towns and villages: perhaps the officers cannot wholly help that, though I remember a fine answer which the British officer in command sent to the Frenchmen when they wished to surrender in St. John's. They asked that their private property should be respected. The answer was, "His Britannick Majesty's troops never pillage."—(Prowse's History, page 414).

They destroy property wantonly. They levy huge requisitions on undefended towns and hamlets. (They actu-



ally have demanded \$140,000,000 in towns in Belgium alone, besides foodstuffs). They detain the leading people in each place as hostages (the Bishop of Liege is still, I believe, a prisoner). They take the hostages out and shoot them if any drunken soldier is molested. They mutilate non-combatants, very many instances having been conclusively proved by the formal enquiries of independent persons of position. They have permitted (and do not punish) murder of young and old—old men, women and children, out of utter wantonness or cruelty. If any one such case were known in the British Army, the offender would be shot by court martial, or tried before the civil courts and hanged. They destroy the glorious monuments of these beautiful towns, which have been respected for hundreds of years by every army in the world, and by even the most savage races. They burn to the ground whole towns and villages.

Why do they commit these appalling crimes? Why does the Kaiser sanction such horrors? They frankly reply:—  
 “ We intend to render it impossible for any of the races  
 “ whom we conquer to rise up against us. Any who resist  
 “ we kill. Any who dare to be against us we destroy. We  
 “ mean to cause such terror that we shall have no more  
 “ trouble in holding them under for ever.”

Hence Louvain; hence Rheims. You would say, Surely these crimes are unknown to the Emperor. If he knew, he would stop it. But he does know, and does not stop it. Here are his words. It is difficult what to say when we read the words of the Kaiser who, after the infamy of Louvain, wrote: “ My heart bleeds that such measures should  
 “ have been unavoidable, and at the thought of innumerable  
 “ persons who have lost their homes and their property ‘ as

*“ the result of the criminal and barbarous actions of the Belgians ”* Pecksniff is for ever dethroned from his eminence as a type of sanctimonious hypocrite, in favour of this Imperial expert.

What, then, is to be the outcome of this cruel and murderous infraction of all laws, human and divine? Is there to be no end to this bloody reign of terror? Are we really to be conquered by these inhuman brutes? Can we possibly be in the wrong, and deserve such brutal oppression?

We are not in the wrong. No nation can be in the wrong whose King can address his subjects in such words as these:

“ During the past few weeks the peoples of my whole Empire, at Home and Overseas, have moved with one mind and purpose to confront and overthrow an unparalleled assault upon the continuity of civilization and the peace of mankind.

“ The calamitous conflict is not of my seeking, my voice has been cast throughout on the side of peace. My ministers earnestly strove to allay the causes of strife, and to appease difference with which my Empire was not concerned. Had I stood aside when, in defiance of pledges to which my Kingdom was a party, the soil of Belgium was violated and her cities laid desolate, when the very life of the French nation was threatened with extinction, I should have sacrificed my honour, and given to destruction the liberties of my Empire and of mankind. I rejoice that every part of my Empire is with me in this decision.

“ Paramount regard for treaty faith, and the pledged word of rulers and peoples, is the common heritage of Great Britain and of the Empire.

“ My people in the self-governing Dominions have shown beyond all doubt that they whole-heartedly endorse the grave decision which it was necessary to take.”

These are noble words : and what is more, in uttering them His Majesty has given voice to the sentiments of all his peoples, whether they be English, or Scots, or Irish, or Canadians, or Australians, or New Zealanders, or Newfoundlanders ; or whether they be born in any part of India, or Ceylon, or Malaya, or China, or any region in Africa, or in the West Indies, or in any land washed by the seven seas ; whether they be Conservatives, or Liberals, or Radicals, or Socialists ; whether they be Christians, or Buddhists, or Hindoos, or Mahommadans. These noble words represent the whole principle of the British peoples. They stand for Right against Might ; for Liberty against the lust of Conquest, for Equal Rights under our Flag. They signify that we oppress no one, that all governments under the King-Emperor work for the good of the people, and for the Britannic peace. And the result—the grand result—is that all petty anomosities are hushed, and all stand to attention awaiting the orders that are necessary for the maintenance of our Empire and the preservation of our rights. If any branch of the Empire desire to break away, there is none to hinder them. But the central authority stands for this—that no army, no hordes of savages, shall enslave any British subject.

Now, there is no point more remarkable in the organization of the German Emperor, and his Prussian generals, and ministers, and professors, than the frankness with which they have spoken and written of their intention to conquer the world. I could give you thousands of passages from the writings of General von Bernhardi, or Professor Treischke, or the ex-Chancellor von Buelow ; or from the speeches, from the Emperor downwards. Most of them hold that Great Britain should be conquered first ; others want to re-

conquer France, and absorb Belgium and Holland, and the northern parts of France, and to take over the Dutch colonies, as a preliminary step; most of them say that Russia can wait until the rest have been disposed of. Many frankly announce the absorption of Denmark and Sweden; all of them declare that the Danube, as well as the Rhine, must be in German hands from source to mouth. All offer the Mediterranean to their allies; but let it be clearly understood, that Germany means to be also the greatest Mohammedan Power, and to possess Constantinople, Asia Minor and Egypt, and to rule the troublesome races—such as the stubborn English—by the use of Mohammedan soldiers. All of them snap their fingers at the American Republic and its Monroe doctrine, and point out that pretensions unbacked by soldiers and the engines of destruction, are of no avail against the Nation in Arms, whose rallying cry (as Bernhardt puts it) is, "World Power or Downfall!"

And being a logical and a painstaking people they compute the rival forces. They claim that Germany has six million trained soldiers and Austria two millions; a total of eight millions, for they have decided to ignore Italy which was nominally a member of the Triple Alliance. Against this eight million, they reckon the French at three million; but, in their pride of having beaten them once, they say they can beat them again, although they admit them to be their most formidable opponents. They reckon Russia as able to bring only two million into the field, arguing (I think wrongly) that most of the Russian forces are needed to maintain order in Siberia and Manchuria, in Turkestan, and the Caucasus, and to hold down the Socialists in the towns and the Finns in Finland and the Poles in Poland. Moreover, they con-

sidered them ill equipped and fighting without heart. They have made no greater mistake than under-estimating the power of Russia.

They analyze the forces of the British Empire with the utmost insolence and contempt, almost as openly as they slight the powers of the United States. Bernhardt places the British Army as far below, in numbers and value, that of even Turkey. The United Kingdom (General von Bernhardt thinks) can place in the field in a Continental European war 130,000 trained men, of no great value even then because they serve for pay and not for love of country. This is how he disposes of the self-governing Colonies:—"These latter have at their disposal a militia, which is sometimes only in process of formation. They can be completely ignored so far as concerns any European theatre of war."—(page 135).

He refers to the Territorials Reserves and so on as a very small number for coast defence: "Months must certainly elapse before portions of this Army can strengthen the regular field Army."

The Emperor's advisers have made a very big mistake. We have already 200,000 picked men in the fighting line. We have already 40,000 fighting men, of the best—landed in France from India. To-day there are 32,000 landed in England from Canada; I had no hesitation in saying—when I spoke on the occasion of the formation of our Patriotic Association—that the original offer of 20,000 really meant 200,000. Australia and New Zealand are already good for 50,000 men and that will mean 100,000 in the fighting line before next summer is over. There will also be all the regular troops from South Africa and many thousands more

of British and Boers from that glorious land, the cream of their fighting race. We too in Newfoundland will find that all the young men of manhood will go forward; not merely the one in five hundred who have had the glory of being the first to leave, but many more. In future years when our children look back upon this great struggle for our freedom from conquest, they will remember that their sires who fought in the Great War of 1914, 1915 and 1916 bore themselves as bravely as their sturdy ancestors from Devon or their fighting ancestors from Ireland. In every hamlet, the most treasured heirlooms will be the War Medals and the Regimental Lists of those who volunteered.

Finally, how does this mighty struggle come home to us? And in answering this question, I prefer to quote largely from a speech made by Lord Rosebery, one of our greatest men, who puts the case better than I can myself. He says every man valid and capable of bearing arms is bound at the call of his country to do so

“It is a war of nations, and our nation, if it is to uphold itself, will not be able to remain aloof. We are fighting on the Continent it is true, but we are fighting in defence of Great Britain. There is one thing that is perfectly clear in all this matter, it is that those who go to fight will go to fight in a righteous cause. We are fighting for the independence of Belgium against a Power which guaranteed it, and has destroyed it. We are fighting for the freedom of France, a friendly Power who is allied with ourselves. But we are also fighting for the sanctity of the public law, which, if our enemies shall be the conquerors, is torn up and destroyed for ever. When the German Foreign Secretary was asked if he were really going to infringe the neutrality of Belgium, he said: ‘You are not going to war for that—going to war for a scrap of paper?’ A great Power that treats scraps of paper like that is not unlikely to be scrapped herself. The

German Chancellor, when he vindicated this policy in Parliament said: 'We knew we were doing wrong in invading the neutrality of Belgium, but we were compelled to do wrong.' A nation that begins a great war by declaring that its foundation is wrong, and that it is obliged to do wrong, is likely to fare badly if there be a God in Heaven.

"Then we are not merely fighting for Belgium, France and the sanctity of public law, but we are also fighting for ourselves. We do not fight to gain any advantage for ourselves. We do not fight to gain an acre of territory. We only fight to secure our liberties against an oppression which would be intolerable.

"I know that we have seen wars in our time in which the loss of a province or two ended the war. That will not be so. You may lose territory and you may lose money, but what is certain is this, that if you are beaten to your knees, if you are compelled to submit, you will lose infinitely more than province or money. Make no mistake this is a fight to a finish. If we go under now we go under for ever. I do not ask you to suggest to yourselves that you will go under for a moment. But if you are not going under every man who is capable of defending his country is bound to step into the breach.

"Just think, try and imagine what it would be if we were beaten. I do not suppose we should be annexed as a province. That is unthinkable, To see foreign uniforms, foreign police, foreign laws, foreign tax-gatherers in our country—that I discard as absolutely impossible. But there is another very improbable contingency which might happen, which would happen if we were defeated, which is that we would be reduced at once to an inferior power, living at the goodwill of our superior Lord, living on sufferance, our Army limited, our Navy limited, our Empire cut up and divided among the plunderers—a position so abject that we cannot realize it. If we were to sink to be a third-rate power in the position that I have described, I, for one, would from my heart and soul rather that all our people as they now exist

were to pass into exile and into death and leave our Island vacant for some superior race.

“I can end, at any rate, in a more cheerful vein. Make no mistake about it, we shall win. We are fighting with our back to the wall to prevent a shame and defeat such as England has never sustained and is not now prepared to endure. We are going to win because a Nation and an Empire like ours cannot be extinguished by any such warfare as this. We are going to win because we have our people united as they never have been before. We are going to win because our Dominions and Empires outside these Islands vie with each other in generous emulation as to which shall give us most support in supplies and money and men. Above all, we are going to win because we have a high, a pure, and a just cause, and we can appeal with humble but, I think, earnest confidence to Him who in the words of the beautiful old paraphrase we recognize as the

“God of Bethel by Whose hand  
Our people still are led.”

