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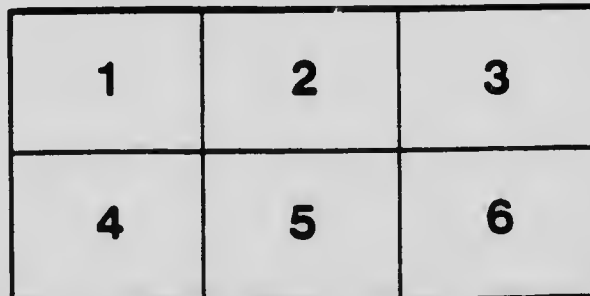
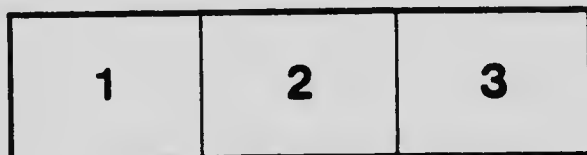
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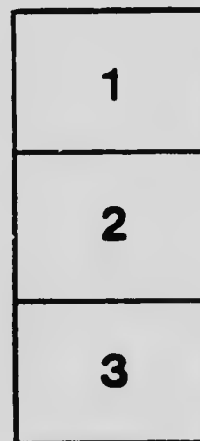
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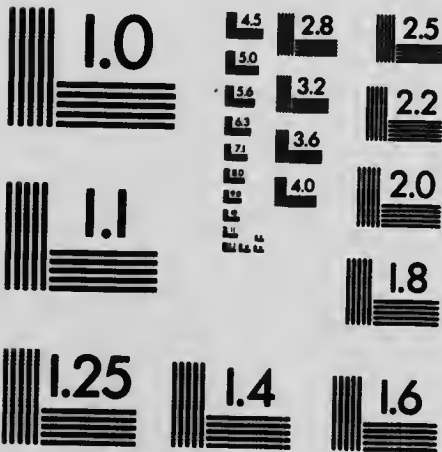
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**A GERMAN TO
GERMANS**

AN OPEN LETTER

BY

DR. HERMANN RÖSEMEIER, Ph.D.

**(Until September, 1914, Political Editor
of the *Berlin Morgenpost*).**

**HODDER & STOUGHTON
LONDON NEW YORK TORONTO
1917.**

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• A GERMAN TO GERMANS



**A G E R M A N T O
G E R M A N S**

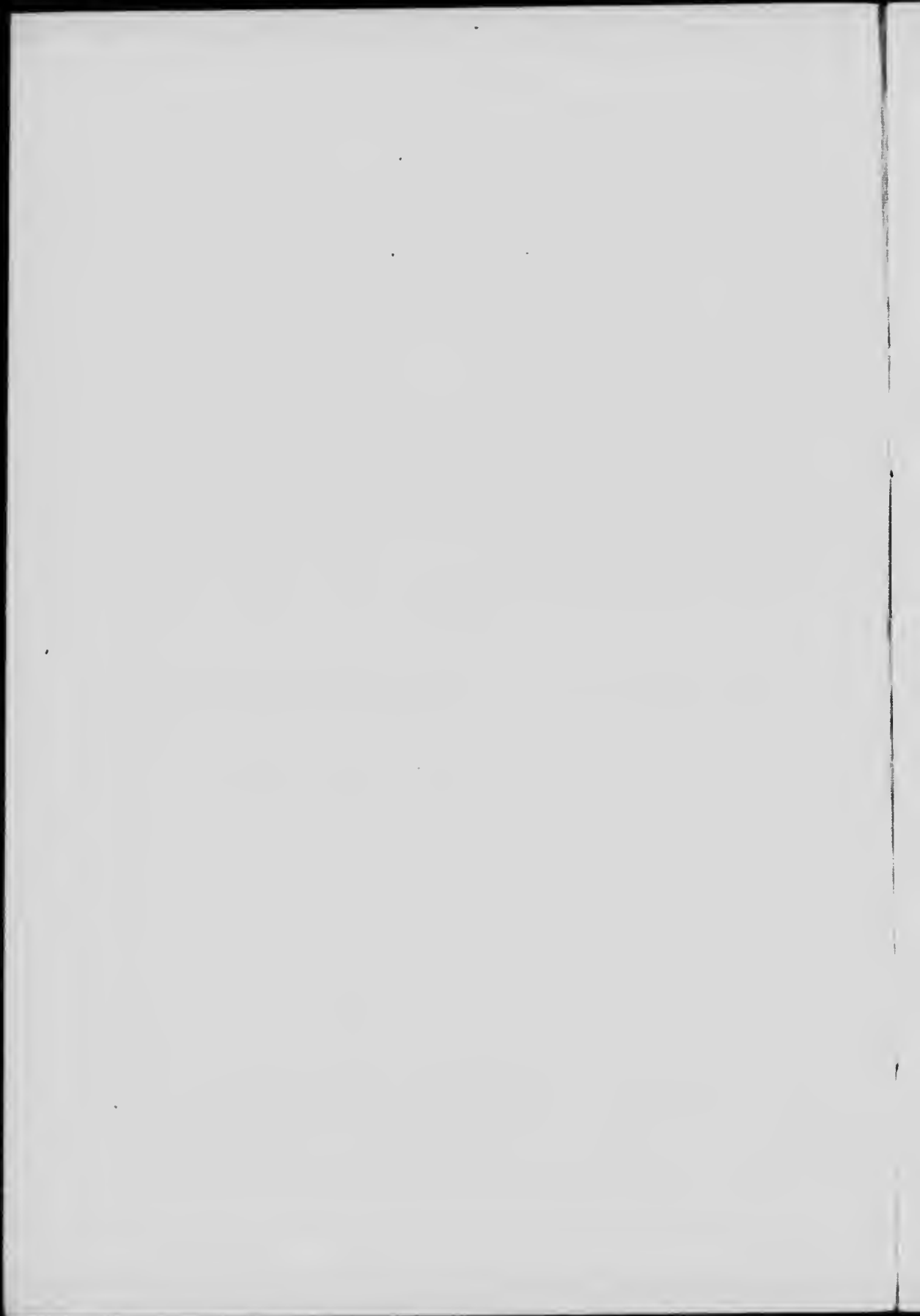
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TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

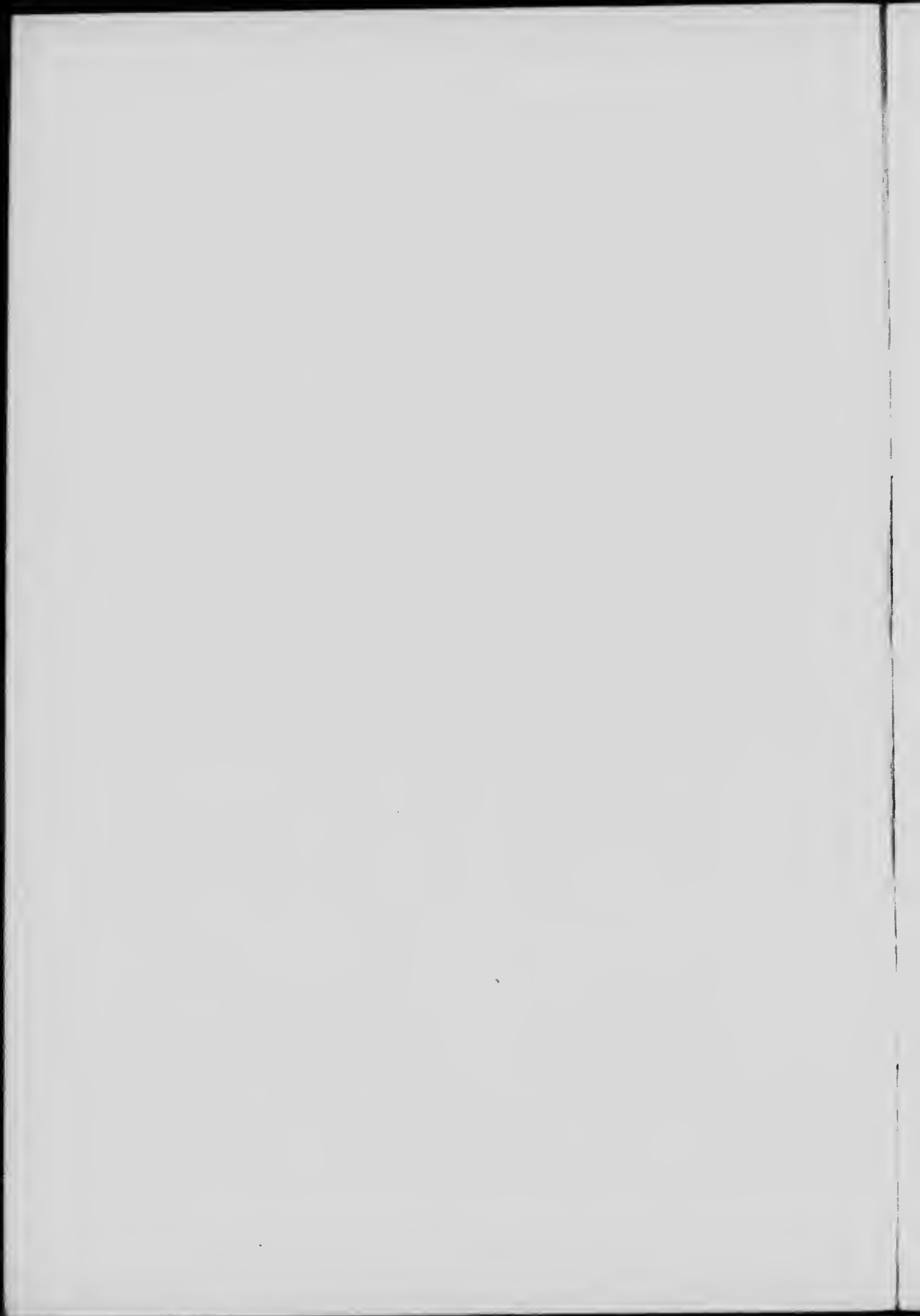
Dr. Hermann Rösemeier, formerly political editor of the Berlin "Morgenpost," succeeded a few months ago in leaving Germany for Switzerland, where he is now settled with his family. His first care after his arrival was to write this Open Letter, addressed to his fellow-countrymen in Germany, and more especially to the German working classes.

Of all the many publications issued since the war there is none which the German authorities have shown themselves more anxious to prevent from entering Germany than this Open Letter by Dr. Rösemeier. Nevertheless I know that, despite all their vigilance, a considerable number of copies have reached not only the Germans in Germany but the German soldiers in the trenches.

The author of this Open Letter is personally known to the translator, who wishes to put on record the fact that Dr. Rösemeier is not one of those men who are the friends of all countries save their own, still less is he what is known as a "peace at any price" man. He sees, however, the state to which the predominance of the military caste and the Pan-Germanists have reduced his country, and above all the mass of the German people.

JULIAN GRANDE.

Berne, Switzerland.
Christmas, 1916.



A GERMAN TO GERMANS.

By

DR. HERMANN RÖSEMEIER, Ph.D.

WHAT IS THE WAR COSTING GERMANY?

This fearful war has now lasted twenty months,* and as yet there is no sign of the end. Vast regions of Europe are devastated. Hundreds of busy industrial towns, thousands and thousands of peaceful villages, are reduced to dust and ashes. Some of the finest and most artistic buildings on which the eyes of mankind have rested with delight for centuries past, are now mere shapeless heaps of ruins. Fertile fields

* These words were penned in April, 1916.

A GERMAN TO GERMANS

and shady woods have become barren wildernesses and hideous wastes. The inhabitants of entire districts, sometimes of whole countries, have been driven into exile. Millions of widows are lamenting their dead husbands; millions of fatherless children are wandering about in despair; and what the sword has spared is falling a victim to starvation and contagious disease. The words once uttered by a great German thinker (Schopenhauer) have come true: the earth has been turned into hell and human beings are both the demons and the damned therein.

Now, there are people who say: "What you are telling us is quite true, but, thanks to God and to our brave troops, most of it does not apply to Germany. Our country is free from the enemy, for the little bit of Upper Alsace which is paying for its French sympathies by learning something of the horrors of war, scarcely counts. Belgium, Northern France, Poland, Lithuania, and Serbia are laid waste and desolate, but our Germany is practically untouched, and as for poor East Prussia, which has suffered so badly from the Russian invasion, it is already recovering."

Yes, I know that is what your Government says; and that is what your newspapers say, because they must write as those in power bid them. That the Belgians, Serbs, Poles, and the people of Northern France are your fellow-mor-

A GERMAN TO GERMANS

tals and brothers; that kindly folk feel for others' sorrows as for their own; and that Christ's command was to love thy neighbour as thyself—forcible attempts have been made since the beginning of this hateful war to drive all such thoughts and sentiments out of you. You have had to forget everything, Christianity, humanity, brotherly love, and fellow-feeling. This was what the Reventlows, the Heydebrands, the Zedlitzes and Co. wished. Herr von Heydebrand, in his speech delivered in 1915 on the occasion of the German Emperor's birthday, contended quite frankly that in reality none but the Germans were human beings. Count Reventlow, from his comfortable desk in the office of the "Deutsche Tageszeitung," tells "man sailors not to let Englishmen rescue them, even from being drowned at sea. "What do other people matter?" This is what is preached and taught by these apostles of international hatred, these professors of racial arrogance, who look on and applaud when the Turks, their allies and apt pupils, prepare to exterminate the whole Armenian nation, a defenceless people—exterminate them, man, woman, and child, and even the aged. The Germans must think only of themselves, they say, and confidently continue marching along the way which leads to those "glorious times" of which the Kaiser once talked in one of

A GERMAN TO GERMANS

his innumerable speeches.

Let us look a little more closely at these "glorious times." Do you know how great has been the loss of life to the German people in this war up till now? It is being carefully concealed, and it is forbidden, under pain of heavy penalties, to publish the total losses compiled from the figures in German casualty lists, in which for a long time past no particulars as regards place or date have been furnished. Moreover, the losses incurred in any special battle are distributed over dozens of different casualty lists, so as to mislead those who have time and inclination to wade through the terribly bulky volumes now necessary to contain these records of bloodshed. While fantastic figures are quoted as to the number of prisoners of war which the Germans say they have captured, care is taken that the number of "missing men" in German casualty lists should only increase very slowly.

Yet all these artifices are of no avail. Those who are "in the know" are aware of the facts, but all the German people ought to be aware of them too. At least one million and a quarter (1,250,000) dead;* about three-quarters of a million (750,000) prisoners, deserters or missing;

* These estimates it must be recollected were made in May, 1916.

A GERMAN TO GERMANS

about three million wounded, of whom something like one million are condemned to incurable and chronic ill-health—this is the sanguinary result of the war up to date. Of the sick I will say nothing, for there is no means of ascertaining their number. In any case it is enormous. Very serious persons, among them medical men of repute, estimate the number of those affected with venereal disease alone in the German army at one and a half million, an alarming figure, which may, of course, be somewhat of an exaggeration. But that syphilis and similar diseases are causing absolutely frightful ravages in the trenches is beyond all possibility of doubt.

What unspeakable misery these few dry facts and figures represent—many hundreds of thousands of widows and several millions of orphaned children; thousands upon thousands of aged mothers; feeble grey-haired parents deprived of the hope of their old age and their staff and support in life; broken up families without number, and ruined lives in far greater number still. Add to these the countless cripples—blind men who will never again behold God's beautiful world; deaf men, the drums of whose ears have been shattered by the deafening noise of the cannon; dumb men whom the terrors of the battlefield have deprived of their speech; mad men, thousands and tens of thousands of

A GERMAN TO GERMANS

whom are filling the German lunatic asylums and will continue to fill them.

How many a brave warrior who sacrificed his sound limbs on the Italian front, or in the swamps of Poland, or among the Karst mountains of Serbia, because the Prussian overlords would have it so, will after the war go limping about the gutters, perhaps turning a barrel organ, to the accompaniment of the words:

“What I am and what I have,
I owe to thee, my Fatherland.”

A grateful fatherland could not even manage to preserve from poverty or actual death from starvation the Franco-Prussian War veterans, although their number was nothing in comparison with that of the victims of the present hideous world-war. Not long before the war there died in the wealthiest part of Berlin, within sight of flaunting mansions, an old soldier, an 1870 veteran, literally starved to death, after he had asked in vain for bread and work.

This war, however, is costing not only in life, but also in treasure, infinitely, absolutely infinitely more than even the gloomiest pessimists ever for one moment imagined. In the autumn of 1915 Maximilian Harden, whose patriotism cannot be called in question, and who before the war positively clamoured for war, made a calcu-

A GERMAN TO GERMANS

lation that the German Empire, its various component States, and its municipalities, would already have to bear a burden of debt amounting to 70,000,000,000 marks (£3,500,000,000). Now, reckoning interest at 5 per cent.—and patriotic capitalists do not readily come forward if less is offered—this means an annual extra charge upon the German people of three and a half billion marks (£175,000,000). It is still fresh in the memory of Germans how heavily the burden of an extra 500,000,000 marks (£25,000,000) a year pressed upon the people, after the so-called “financial reforms” of 1909. And now, judging from the way matters stood in December, 1915, this burden has already risen to 3,500,000,000 marks (£175,000,000), in other words, to seven times as much. Who can tell how much greater it has grown since, and how much greater it will grow should this awful war last much longer? In December, 1915, the deputy Gothein (not a Social Democrat, be it observed, but a man who really knows something about such matters as finance) calculated that every German would in future be obliged to hand over to the State from one-third to two-fifths of his income in one form or another. This is probably an under-estimate. The burden of direct taxes will become unendurable, and still more unendurable will be that of the indirect taxes on foodstuffs and the modest

A GERMAN TO GERMANS

luxuries of the masses in general. The sheaf of taxes which the German Government recently presented to the Reichstag, is but a mild fore-taste of what is to come.

And what about the losses of private individuals? Of these there are no statistics available. Who can say how many people, from the richest bankers to the most poverty-stricken of labourers, have been ruined by this "glorious" war? Nothing is left of German export trade save a few pitiful remnants, and with it have vanished all the many industries which lived by and by means of export. The building trade is doing nothing. As for the textile industry, which was already suffering very badly, it was torn up by the roots by the commandeering of all textile fabrics ruthlessly ordered in February, 1916. Another heavy blow has been dealt to the already hardly hit tobacco trade by the taxation bill passed by the Reichstag in the spring of 1916. Numbers of the smaller shops and business houses are closed, either because the owners or their assistants are mobilised, or because the lack of raw materials makes business impossible or wholly unprofitable. Women of the lower middle-class, and the better off working-class women, who, owing to the general rise in the standard of living and the industriousness of their husbands, used to be able to manage to live

A GERMAN TO GERMANS

or were even comfortably off, are now forced to manage on the scanty grants doled out to them by Government and Municipality. With these doles they must often pocket rough and scornful treatment on the part of sulky "honorary officials" or overbearing police authorities.

Food prices continue to rise, until they are twice, thrice, or even four times above the normal, and provisions are often unobtainable, even at these outrageous figures. Butter, fat, meat, and in many places even milk, have become luxuries. And this is not all. How many despairing mothers are confronted with a troop of starving children, yet have not even coarse bread or dried potatoes to give them?

The progress achieved with such difficulty during half a century is at stake. Sunday work goes on everywhere apace. Women's and children's labour is increasing to an alarming extent. In what a deplorably bad way the German working-classes find themselves is proved by the unimpeachable testimony of the leaders of the German Trade-Unions (which since the war have been absolutely under the thumb of the Government), that is, by the General Committee of German Trade Unionists. The "Korrespondenzblatt," the organ of this General Committee, has stated as a fact that the wages of masons, for instance, rose 2 per

A GERMAN TO GERMANS

cent. in one year, while food prices rose 47.6 per cent. Furthermore, it pointed out that in all occupations, except a few branches of the armaments industry, a heavy decrease in wages and working capacity will have to be accepted as permanent factors in the situation. It is added that the German working-classes after the war must be prepared for severe struggles, if they are again to attain to the standard of life they enjoyed before the war. "This," proceeds the German Trade Unionists' organ, "will be all the harder because there is every likelihood that after the war more burdens will be imposed upon the working-classes, in order to help pay interest and sinking-fund on the monstrous debt arising out of the war."

Such are the prospects to which, even in the opinion of the ultra-patriotic Social Democrats, the German working-classes have to look forward. Add to this the fact that the employers' associations are taking advantage of the present state of things in order to say that they can no longer be bound by the scales of wages wrested from them with such effort; and that working men suspected of "insubordination" are packed off without delay to the trenches; and it will be obvious what a set-back social progress has already received.

But let us look at the other side of the picture.

A GERMAN TO GERMANS

The landowners are coining more money from their crops than ever before. Their crops are a source of boundless prosperity to them, and with a satisfied smirk they will tell you how much money is being accumulated in the country savings banks. The higher and the lesser civil servants also are not doing badly. For instance, whereas in Italy it was decreed immediately after the outbreak of war that no official serving under the colours should be allowed to draw more than the salary he received in peace time, the German civil servants called up get double pay—their ordinary salaries as civilians and their army pay. It is no wonder, therefore, that the officials who sit in comfortable army quarters should be very well content with the long duration of the war. When the wife of one such official happened to remark in a railway train that, so far as she was concerned, the war might go on for another ten years, she received from a sturdy second line soldier, travelling in the same compartment, a couple of sound boxes on the ear; whereupon a gentleman also travelling in the same carriage presented the stalwart warrior with ten marks. It would be a good thing if his example were to be widely followed.

Best off of all, however, are the rabble of army contractors and army speculators, people for whom even such an arch Jingo as the deputy Erzberger (of the Roman Catholic or "Centre"

A GERMAN TO GERMANS

Party) said that, with the best will in the world, you could not feel anything but contempt. Such people are the parasites who, to quote Schiller, batten in perpetual idleness, and wax fat on the misfortunes of the people. A glance at the German papers will show what unheard-of dividends are now being paid by the big businesses. And the reports of the law courts' proceedings contain many cases such as that of the man (assuredly not working for the love of God) who received 200,000 marks (£10,000) for 10,000 knapsacks, for which same knapsacks the War Office paid 480,000 marks (£24,000). The balance of 280,000 marks (£14,000) was divided amongst the middlemen, the last of whom received 90,000 marks (£4,500) in cash for his "good offices." Another of the gentry mixed up in this affair received 4,000 marks (£200) cash for a telephonic conversation lasting exactly five minutes. This is only one instance among tens of thousands. On the one hand there is too much wealth, on the other a crushing load of poverty with a starving urban and industrial population, crowding outside the provision shops in snowy, stormy, and rainy weather alike, and often obliged to go home after all empty-handed. And yet there are the landowners and big farmers, with their pockets overflowing. Even in the wealthy west-end Berlin suburb of Wil-

A GERMAN TO GERMANS

mersdorf it has happened that mothers have brought their children to the Town Hall, because they could not see any way of procuring them food. Add to this the contagious diseases, the alarming increase in infantile mortality, and the rapid decrease in the birth-rate, which was recently admitted in the Prussian Diet by Herr von Löbell, Prussian Minister of Police, and this despite the eternal outcry about the necessity of bringing into the world a constant supply of new recruits for future trenches: and you have a true, honest, unvarnished description of the present time which thoughtless or ignorant or hireling newspaper scribblers and pamphleteers never weary of extolling as "great."

"HOLD OUT!"

Chancellor and Cabinet Ministers, deputies and newspaper writers, of all shades of opinion, from the Conservatives to the Social Democrats; Liberals and Agrarians, Jews and Anti-Semites, —all are preaching the same gospel to the German people. It must make all these sacrifices, take all this toil and trouble upon it, and patiently endure all this misery. "Hold out!" exclaims the Chancellor. "Hold out!" exclaims Herr von Heydebrand. "Hold out!" exclaims the *Kreuz-*

A GERMAN TO GERMANS

*Zeitung** and the *Morgenpost*. But loudest of all Herr Philipp Scheidemann enjoins upon the German people to "Hold out!"—that same Herr Scheidemann, the great Social Democrat, who not so very long ago, and not altogether without reason, maintained in the Reichstag that the breaking of oaths was among the sublimest traditions of the House of Hohenzollern. "Hold out!" they all insist, with sickening monotony. "Hold out!" until the great victory has been won, that great final victory, which "our military critics" in all the newspapers have now been promising the German people morning, noon and night since the beginning of the war. Tighten your belts, therefore, around your wasting bodies. Cease looking at the horrors of the battlefield; and trust in your Government and your army leaders, who will know how to manage everything for the best. Think how Germany was "ruthlessly attacked," and how she must avenge this attack, and make sure of the necessary "guarantees" for her "future." Meantime be patient, and if you have no butter, then spread your dry bread with the daily reports of victories.

* One of the leading Junker newspapers of Germany.
—TRANS.

A GERMAN TO GERMANS

WHAT YOU ARE TOLD ABOUT THE CAUSES OF THE WAR.

The German people is good-natured and credulous. Its confidence in its "divinely appointed" leaders is boundless, and anyone who does not put his trust in Princes puts it, at any rate if he is a Social Democrat, in his leaders. Now, these gentry, men with incomes of from £300 to £500 a year, and besides this entitled to a pension, the Scheidemanns, Legiens, Davids, Südekums, and other comrades, are this time, albeit in slightly different words, saying the same thing as the Pastor, and as that lanky pedant Bethmann Hollweg, and as all the other pedants. Thus pretty nearly all the German people have been believing the following fairy tale, which unfortunately most of them believe to this day :—

THE GERMAN FAIRY TALE.

"Beyond the German frontiers, in the West, in the East, across the sea, are nations who do nothing else day or night but think how they can best fall upon the good peaceful Michael, skin him, and divide up his body among themselves. A vindictive man, Uncle Edward VII., King of England, succeeded by his diabolical

A GERMAN TO GERMANS

arts in forming a great League, to which England, France, and Russia belonged, in order to compass this ruthless attack upon poor Michael. As accomplices these Powers had Belgium, besides Serbia and crafty Italy, who was still Germany's and Austria's ally, but who was plotting with their enemies behind their unsuspecting backs. To find a pretext for bringing matters to a head, Serbia sent forth assassins, who murdered the heir to the Austrian throne, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, and his wife in the city of Serajevo, in broad daylight. Now, as our poet Schiller says, even the most pious man cannot live in peace if he has a wicked neighbour who will not let him do so. Accordingly Austria-Hungary asked Serbia to make amends for what had been done, and to keep the peace in future. But Serbia, instead of complying with this just demand, returned a pert answer, egged on thereto by Russia. Whereupon there was nothing for Austria to do but, with a breakin art, to bombard the open town of Belgrade. awhile Russia must needs interfere. She mobilised, and sent her Cossacks to East Prussia, in order to punish Germany for remaining faithful to her ally. This of course Germany could not possibly tolerate, and so she declared war upon Russia, after the Emperor William's fatherly exhortations to the "bloody Tsar" had been unsuccessful.

A GERMAN TO GERMANS

ful. Meantime a French airman had flown to Nuremberg, and dropped bombs upon it; and a French doctor had poured cholera bacilli into a well in Metz.* Moreover, French aeroplanes had been seen over Belgium and French troops had marched into Alsace.

“Despite all this, Germany demanded of France, in the friendliest manner, that she should remain neutral, and did not declare war upon her until she failed to reply. Now, as the nearest, or at any rate the most convenient way to Paris is via Belgium, and moreover, as Belgium was flirting with France, a demand was sent to her to allow the German army to march through her territory. As King Albert declined to do this, pleading futile excuses about his duty as a neutral, there was nothing for it but to bounce through Belgium, and shoot down any of the inhabitants who were impudent enough to take up arms. England now made this a pretext for declaring war upon Germany, and she began to

* These tales about a French airman flying to Nuremberg and a French doctor poisoning a well at Metz with cholera bacilli were spread broadcast during the first days of August, 1914, not only in the German newspapers, but also in German-controlled organs in neutral countries. The entire fairy tale is an absolutely veracious summary of the history of the war as it has been presented to the German people by its press and leaders.
—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

A GERMAN TO GERMANS

starve out the German people. And so the world-war began."

Honour bright, is not that what you have been told by everyone, by the Emperor, the Crown Prince, and the Chancellor; by your spiritual pastors and masters; by press, pulpit, and platform; by rural agitators and by working-class leaders?

And the German people believed this clumsy, impudent piece of humbug, and a great many of them believe it still, although happily in all classes there is an ever-growing number of persons who have seen through this tissue of lies, or are beginning to see through it.

THE TRUE CAUSES OF THE WAR.

Has the German people, then, so short a memory? Before the war, indeed, up to its outbreak, we used to be told that in Germany there were ambitious, ill-balanced, self-seeking persons, who, owing to their overbearingness, racial arrogance, lust of gain, fanaticism, or stupidity, would like nothing better than to embroil Germany with all her neighbours. We used to read this in all the Social Democratic newspapers, in many Liberal and Roman Catholic organs, and even in a number of Govern-

A GERMAN TO GERMANS

ment journals, as well as in countless weekly and monthly periodicals, pamphlets, and books. We used to hear it in Parliament, from the mouths of members, sometimes from those of Ministers, and even from the Chancellor himself. Old Bismarck knew these ambitious, ill balanced, self-seeking persons, and never wearied throughout his life of uttering warnings against them. But all in vain; they were always increasing in numbers. They formed associations, such as the Pan-Germanist Association, the Defence League, the Navy League, and the Ostmarken League;* and raged and stormed about the slackness of the Government, never missing an opportunity of demanding that Germany should bang with her fist upon the table, or, still better, should draw her sword. Whenever and wherever there was a dispute, whether about colonies, commerce, or some boundary differences such as are constantly occurring in the life of Governments and peoples, these folk were certain to turn up at once, shouting for war. Only think of those days in 1911 when already the dark thunder clouds of the coming world war hung so loweringly over Europe. How furiously certain of the pro-war newspapers then raged! The "Post,"

* An anti-Polish League.

A GERMAN TO GERMANS

of Berlin, a paper which always used to clamour for the Crown Prosecutor if a Democrat or Social Democrat happened to make a slip of the tongue or to be accused of having done so; a paper with the big Iron and Steel factory owners and the arms and ammunition makers behind it, with their countless millions of capital, published an article reeking with disloyalty to the Emperor.* And the top-hatted rabble, doctors and lawyers among them, paraded Unter den Linden, the show street of Berlin, calling out all manner of insults about the Monarch, who had not then made himself over body and soul to the War Party.

When once more the clouds dispersed without the storm breaking, and the Chancellor concluded an agreement with France, what must Herr von Heydebrand, the leader of the Junker and the uncrowned King of Prussia, needs do but stand up and deliver in the Reichstag an insulting,

* Author's Note. The valiant Teuton who wrote this abusive article attributed his insulting expression to the French. In Paris, he asserted, scornful remarks were being made about "William the Coward," and "William the Bully." When this abuse became too much for even decent Conservatives such as Prince Hatzfeld, the proprietors of the "Post" sent their "summer correspondent," as they called him, as a scapegoat into the wilderness. In other words, they turned him out into the street.

A GERMAN TO GERMANS

sword-rattling speech against England, just such another one as he has not long ago delivered in the Prussian Diet against the United States. And the heir to the throne, the Crown Prince, in the uniform of the Death's Head Hussars, sat in the Imperial box clapping his hands delightedly at the wild attacks on his father's still peaceful policy.*

All this, however, would not have been so very bad, for there were war parties in every country, and they all talked very "big." So long as the peace party in Germany remained strong and the Government firm, it was still possible to put up with all these sword rattlings, even though they did help to poison international relations and to increase distrust between nation and nation—a distrust which was already quite great enough. But as ill fate would have it, nowhere else in the world was the power of the war party so great and that of the peace party so slight as in Germany.

Now, Germany is ruled by Prussia, and Prussia is ruled by the Junker. The Hohenzollerns are more powerful than any individual Junker, but all the Junker taken together are

* The Crown Prince, it is estimated, has since sacrificed 800,000 men in an attempt, lasting eight and a half months, to take Verdun.—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

A GERMAN TO GERMANS

much more powerful than the Hohenzollerns in the ruling classes and—what in this case is of far more moment—among the officers, it is the Junker and they alone who give the tone. The Upper House (the Prussian Herrenhaus) is entirely in the hands of the Junker, who take the helm even in the Chamber of Deputies, thanks to the power of the purse and the system of suffrage. As they have contrived to win the allegiance of a large section of the landowners, especially the wealthy among them, and as until quite lately they used to lead their day-labourers and tenants like sheep to the polling-booth, they were very powerful, even in the Reichstag, despite democratic suffrage. The Centre Party, in which the Roman Catholic Junker are very influential, if not predominant, generally sides with the Conservative Junker, and thus the reactionary elements had the majority up till the last Reichstag elections. This majority they utilised in order to free themselves of as many burdens as possible, and to put them on the shoulders of the masses. By so doing the Junker and large land-owners have been able to pocket a fine sum from the profits due to the rise in the prices of provisions.

Finally the German people lost patience, and in 1912 elected to the Reichstag 110 Social Democrats, so that the opposition were in the majority.

A GERMAN TO GERMANS

In South Germany the suffrage for the different Diets had been steadily put upon a broader and more popular basis, and there arose a more and more insistent demand that the Prussian suffrage should be also put upon a more democratic basis. It was no longer possible to meet the ever-growing burden of expenditure on increases of the army and navy entirely by taxation imposed upon the needs of the masses of the people. Consequently steps began to be taken, although very gently and gradually, to get hold of property and income, and impose death duties, as is done in England. The Junker began to feel uncomfortable, for they saw that the end of their glory was approaching. One thing only could save them: a war, a "lively, merry war," to use their own wantonly wicked words. "The fate of the Germans at home will be decided on the battlefields of France," wrote Herr Paul Liman, whose real name is Saul Lippmann, and who is therefore not a Junker by birth, although he has made it his business in life to defend the policy of the Junker.

The Junker were joined by other and also very influential classes, who likewise all wanted war. They included the wealthy industrial magnates, the mining lords, the Iron Kings from the Rhine Provinces and Westphalia, oppressors of their work-people, and enemies of every independent trade-union organisation, who were thirsting

A GERMAN TO GERMANS

after the French mines at Briey, the coal mines of Charleroi in Belgium, and the mineral wealth of Morocco. They were all convinced that the war would mean large profits for them, and all promised themselves besides that it would be the means of weakening the hated Social Democrats. Other capitalists again coveted overseas conquests, by which they hoped to increase the profits from their export trade and business generally. Others yet again had cast covetous eyes at Turkey and Mesopotamia. Add to them the officers, who were beginning to become bored with garrison life, and who were consumed with the desire to put their "knowledge" to a "practical" test, and to obtain promotion in war. And as if here were not enough war enthusiasts, the professors, teachers, and journalists must go to swell their ranks, men who had been bred up on a diet of national and racial arrogance; Viennese newspaper scribblers, baptised and unbaptised, who swagger about in the offices of the leading Berlin newspapers, viewing everything with the eyes of Austrian Jingo; all sorts and conditions of hustlers and hustlers yearning for adventures; men with criminal tendencies, whose senses were agreeably tickled with the idea of wholesale bloodshed; boy scouts, and finally all the horde of portly professional scribes, who thought that a war, with its accompaniment of

A GERMAN TO GERMANS

excitement, was going to procure them a pleasant diversion in their Philistine existences, especially as they were firmly convinced that they would never need to expose their own precious persons to the fire, but would be able to enjoy the telegrams announcing victories from the depths of well-padded easy chairs.

And this crowd of heterogeneous individuals succeeded in getting only too much power into their hands. It was an open secret that at the head of them all was the Crown Prince, with his everlasting "Go for them, boys!" Now the Crown Prince is an ignorant youth, with no fixity of purpose and without character, who had simply grown tired of playing tennis, shooting defenceless animals, or inventing buttons with two shanks. The crowd of flatterers loafing about him, led by Saul Lippmann, had persuaded him that he was destined to revive the martial renown of the House of Hohenzollern; it was for him firmly to re-establish the monarchy endangered by those mischievous Democrats and Republicans and Socialists, and re-establish it like a "rock of bronze," to quote the words of one of his ancestors, the "Thrashing King," Frederick William I.

There are very many signs that it had long ago been decided to bring matters to a head, in any case, towards the close of the summer of 1914.

A GERMAN TO GERMANS

Possibly when the Archduke, the heir to the throne, was in Bosnia attending the manœuvres, some dispute between the Austrians and Serbians was to be trumped up, which would serve as an excuse for everyone going to war. This may or may not have been the case. At any rate the German War Party, and with them the German and Austrian Governments, whether of their own free will or no, contrived that the world-war should come about as an aftermath of the Serajevo murder.

This is not the place to recount in detail the dramatic history of the sultry weeks preceding this European storm.* This much, however, I will say. When Austria sent her infamous ultimatum to Serbia on July 23rd, 1914, no one who saw through the whole affair ever doubted that it was the intention of the Cabinet in Vienna to force Serbia into war. The Appeal to the German Social Democratic leaders, which appeared in the *Vorwaerts* of July 25th, 1914, called a spade a spade with refreshing plainness. It said:—

“The fields in the Balkans are still steaming

* The most complete account of them will be found in “The History of Twelve Days, July 24th to August 4th, 1914,” by J. W. Headlam. Fisher Unwin.—TRANSLATOR’S NOTE.

A GERMAN TO GERMANS

from the blood of thousands of slain. The ruins of desolated cities and devastated villages are still smoking. Workless men, widowed women, and orphaned children are still wandering half-starved about the country. THE DOGS OF WAR LET LOOSE BY AUSTRIAN IMPERIALISM, are again making ready to spread death and destruction over all Europe.

“ We may condemn the efforts of the ‘ Greater Serbia ’ Nationalists,* but the light-hearted way in which the Austro-Hungarian Government has brought about a war calls for the sharpest protest, for never in the history of the world have such brutal demands been presented to an independent State, and they can have but one result, that of directly provoking war.”

The *Vorwaerts* Appeal concluded that not a drop of German soldier's blood ought to be shed in order to further the lust of power of the Austrian ruling classes. This was then the opinion of the leaders of the German Social Democratic Party. It has, however, long since begun the march to Canossa, and appears with

* Author's Note. What really brought the Greater Serbia movement into life was not Serbian Nationalism, but the despotism of the Austro-Hungarian officials, who did everything possible to oppress and ill-treat the Serbian populace in Croatia, Bosnia, Dalmatia, and other territories under their rule.

A GERMAN TO GERMANS

virile pride before the princely thrones wearing the livery of Herr von Bethmann Hollweg. The Social Democrats have had no influence upon the course of German and Austrian policy. That Germany and Austria either declined or did not acknowledge the suggestions for the peaceful settlement of the dispute which were offered by the Entente Powers is proved by the White, Blue, Red, and Yellow Books, the by the collections of diplomatic despatches and correspondence which have been published by the Governments concerned. It is proved, indeed, by the German White Book alone, by what it contains and still more by what it does not contain. For instance, in the German White Book the following telegram sent by the Tsar on July 29th, 1914, to the Emperor William is not included:—

“Thanks for your telegram, which is conciliatory, whereas the official message presented by your Ambassador to my Minister was conveyed in a different tone. I beg you to explain the divergency. It would be right to refer the Austro-Serbian problem to the Hague Conference. I trust in your wisdom and friendship.”*

* The Russian Government published this telegram on January 31st, 1915, and the German Government has admitted that it was received.—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

A GERMAN TO GERMANS

But of what avail were all the proposals of the Entente? Perhaps in Vienna they might have ended by yielding, when matters really began to look grave and the nice little punitive expedition to Serbia threatened to become an extremely serious war with Russia. In Berlin, however, "they" were determined either to humiliate the Entente or to force them into a war, the absolutely absurd hope being cherished that England would stand aloof and watch France being brutally crushed and Belgian neutrality violated. The Government may have privately desired that the Entente Powers should humble themselves, and that a diplomatic victory might ensue, without any bloodshed. This, however, is not quite certain, and there are very weighty reasons for believing that Bethmann Hollweg did desire war with Russia, although not with England, and perhaps not with France either. As for the War Party proper—the Crown Prince, the War Office and the General Staff—they did wish for war, and particularly for a war with France, she being a Republican Democracy. Why else did they work out such fine plans for finishing off France in a fortnight, or at most in four weeks, and for marching straight away through Belgium, and being done with her? And why else were the magnificent 42 centimetre Mörser guns in readiness, if war were not contemplated? Possibly

A GERMAN TO GERMANS

the Kaiser may have opposed it, either from considerations of humanity, as we will do him the credit of supposing, or from prudence, because in a world-war many fine things may be destroyed, among them crowns. In any case his opposition was of no practical effect, and on the 1st of August he declared war on Russia. His son and heir now had his heart's desire. Comfortably leaning back against the cushions of his motor-car, with a cigarette stuck between his lips and a pleased smile on his insipid countenance, the Crown Prince drove through the streets of Berlin on the day of Germany's declaration of war on Russia.

Such is the true history of the events leading up to the war, reduced to their smallest compass. It is not the German nation who desired this war, but the German War Party, which had the Government in tow. They it was who brought it about, whether with criminally conscious intent or from no less criminal negligence. People who afterwards allowed no one to outdo them in uproarious advocacy of the war, then admitted to the writer in so many words that the war was brought about by Germany with the object of securing a predominant position in Europe. Among those who made this startling admission were the influential manager of the "Vossische Zeitung," a man who had the entry at

A GERMAN TO GERMANS

all hours to Ministerial offices; Georg Bernhard, the ex-Social Democrat; and Rudolf Cuno, the editor of the Berlin *Morgenpost*, the most widely read newspaper in Germany.

Yet these same persons, the Chancellor at their head, who know precisely what took place, are not ashamed to continue everlastingly telling the German people the fairy tale about Germany having been "ruthlessly attacked." Every expression of opinion about the causes of the war is carefully suppressed should it contain the remotest hint that Germany herself is not so entirely innocent of the catastrophe which has overwhelmed mankind. Lying and deceit are positively glorified as a moral duty. Characteristic of all this witches' Sabbath, all this crazy and criminal fraud, which Government, Parliament and Press have been and still are perpetrating upon the German people, is the household word which Rudolf Cuno, already mentioned, Editor of the Berlin "*Morgenpost*," coined when speaking to the writer of this Open Letter:—

"C 'y a scamp does not now help to deceive the people with lies."*

* The author, who until September, 1914, was political Editor of the Berlin "*Morgenpost*," resigned his position because he declined to take part in the war agita-

A GERMAN TO GERMANS
WHAT ARE YOU GERMANS
FIGHTING FOR?

Government and Press still continue to cheat and deceive the German nation, persisting in telling it that Germany's "enemies" want to "destroy" her. Possibly there may be some crazy Chauvinists in France, or crazy Jingoës in England, or crazy Pan-Slavists in Russia who cherish such dreams. Germany has not the monopoly of madmen. But no reasonable person, whether in England, France, Russia, or

tion. He will perhaps be reproached for publishing to the world what was said to him in a private conversation. To this he would reply: first, that he gave no promise not to make use of this expression. Secondly, Herr Cuno always argued that in political controversy it might well happen that anything was excusable. Thirdly, it is just such men as Rudolph Cuno and Georg Bernhard who deserve the severest condemnation. They used to be Democrats or even Social Democrats; they are thoroughly well versed in the history of what led up to the war; they know how wickedly guilty was the German Government, and yet, not content with helping in the war, since after all it was there, they even went further than the most pronounced Government newspapers in systematically deceiving the German people and inciting them to war. As far as in them lay they helped to create that state of popular feeling which has enabled the War Party to continue this wholesale murder until the present day. It is impossible to feel bound to treat such traitors to the German people and to humanity with any consideration.—AUTHOR'S NOTE.

A GERMAN TO GERMANS

Italy, thinks of wanting to destroy Germany. Quite recently the Italian Reformed Socialist Canepa, a zealous supporter of the war, declared that Germany's thirst for domineering over other nations and forcing them to do her bidding could not for a moment be tolerated, but that no one denied "great Germany" (his very words) that place in the light and the sun which was her due. M. Briand in the French Chamber of Deputies, Mr. Asquith in the English House of Commons, and M. Sasonow in the Russian Duma, have repeatedly insisted that it is Prussian militarism which must be combated. It will be urged that that is the business of the German people, and has nothing to do with Messrs. Sasonow, Asquith, and Briand. It is certainly not the business of Russian, French, or English Ministers to liberate the German people. Prussian militarism, in so far as it oppresses the Prussian and the German peoples, undoubtedly concerns Germany alone; but her armies being in Flanders, Poland, Courland, and Serbia,* it concerns all Europe: and the Ministers of the Entente would be guilty of gross dereliction of duty were they not to exert themselves to the utmost to free not only their

* And now Roumania.—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

A GERMAN TO GERMANS

own countries but Europe from this nightmare.

The deluded German people is fighting not for its existence, and not for its proper place in the Council of nations. It is fighting for the phantom of the foremost position in the world, of which a whole host of unfortunately only too influential persons think they have caught a glimpse — dreamers, fortune-hunters, speculators, and adventurers. It is likewise fighting for the very practical object of the setting up of a relentless and unscrupulous reign of brute force in its own country. The first object has well nigh vanished. In reality the period of visions of world-domination was already over when the battle of the Marne was fought, and the "Go for them, boys" Crown Prince, who in his haste to attack had forgotten his ammunition, was woefully thrashed, when in September, 1914, his grotesquely grandiose plan of brutally falling upon France and crushing her to death fell to pieces, like a house of cards, and old Häselser had to spend the anniversary of Sedan not in the Café de la Paix in Paris, but in a little "pub" in an out-of-the-way Argonne village. The War Party, however, is as yet unhappily a long way from abandoning the hopes and plans which it built upon the outbreak of the world-war.

The hard-won liberties of the German people,

A GERMAN TO GERMANS

in short, are in danger of having to be won all over again, after the war. Not only are many restrictive measures in force, such as press censorship and limitation of the right of free speech and free public meeting, measures which in war time are doubtless necessary, but every effort is being made by the powerful reactionary elements in Germany to continue press censorship and other infringements of ordinary liberties even after the war. Absolutism, naked and unashamed, has established itself anew, leaving the mass of the people merely the right to grant millions and millions of money for investment in such appliances of destruction as poisonous gases and submarines. The soldier lords it over the civilian. It must not be objected that this is altogether too black a picture, for in the various Diets and in the Reichstag not only members of the Social Democratic minority, but out and out Government supporters have given just such a description of matters as they are now in the German Empire.

German people, when will you awake from your sleep? When will your eyes be opened and when will you cease to be patient as lambs? Do you still not realise that it is for your deadliest enemies that you are fighting? You are fighting for the factory magnates, who would fain crush your organisations under foot. You

A GERMAN TO GERMANS

are fighting for the lords of the soil, who send up the prices of every morsel you put into your mouths. You are fighting for the speculators battenning upon your poverty. You are fighting for an officers' corps whose ranks are sealed up, so that your sons cannot enter them. You are fighting for a Government which is the tool of your oppressors. You are fighting for a Chancellor who, by speaking of solemn treaties as "scraps of paper," has destroyed Germany's moral prestige throughout the world. You are fighting for an Emperor who, as Bismarck foresaw and foretold, by his irresponsible, boundlessly ambitious foreign policy has brought about the fatal tension between Germany and England, and whose thoughtless, defiant speeches have created the atmosphere of suspicion and distrust which weighed heavily on Europe long before this war. You are fighting for a Crown Prince of Prussia for whom the war is a pleasant excitement; for a Crown Prince of Bavaria who is not ashamed to utter scarcely veiled hints that defenceless prisoners should be murdered; and for a whole pack of princely families who are a useless burden upon the country's purse. You are fighting for a General Staff and an Admiralty whose cruel and barbarous methods of warfare in flagrant violation of international law, have made your once good

A GERMAN TO GERMANS.

name abhorred by all the world of to-day and will make it abhorred by that of to-morrow. You are fighting that the rule of the Prussian Junker may be strengthened anew, and that the Prussian corporal's stick may thrash out of the men of Southern and Western Germany what little freedom and individuality they have with difficulty succeeded in preserving. In brief, you are fighting for the perpetuation of your own slavery.

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