

GERMAN CIVILIZATION THE HOPE OF THE FUTURE.

BY R. A. COE.

SINCE the outbreak of the present war it is almost impossible to obtain in the American press a presentation of the German side of the case. Very few journals in this country have the impartiality to give due space to the German side of the question, and, although a few able statements of the German case have appeared in this country, they have mostly been academic in character; so I have attempted to present the question in such a way as to appeal to the rank and file of Americans. I feel so deeply on the question that I would like, if such a thing were possible, to say to all American people what I know and feel about the German people, in this their greatest struggle for the maintenance of their civilization.

My ancestors were English who came to America in colonial times. Several of them served in the American armies in the Revolutionary War. I mention this, not that it is of the slightest importance to any one, but simply to show that I am one of perhaps a few of those of English descent who have sympathy with Germany in this fight of the fatherland for what I consider the preservation of the greatest civilization that has ever arisen upon this earth. I read a great deal about the Germany of Goethe and Schiller, and about German science, German industry and thrift, from the pens of many writers who in the same articles denounce the German government and what they term German militarism. They tell us in effect that this war is to overthrow the German government and German militarism. In other words, what they propose to do is to have the Russian teach the German how to be clean and sanitary; the Latin teach him sanity and stability of character, and how to be truthful; the Japanese teach him how to be honest; the Englishman teach him diplomacy, Christianize him, liberalize him. These things in effect are what so-called writers in

the American press and periodicals are actually telling the American people. Even some people of German descent express these views. It seems to me, when I read much of the stuff that has been written about Germany recently, that many writers who have been considered persons of unquestioned sanity and judgment have been turned topsy-turvy and have lost every sense of reason and sobriety when they come to deal with the present war. As before said, they eulogize German progress and denounce the very thing that made German progress a possibility.

What I admire in the German people is their honesty, their stability of character, their solid qualities, their love of order and system, their ability to establish just government. The fact that in Germany they have solved, or nearly solved, so many governmental and social problems has only been possible because of a strong government. We could not have had the modern Germany of science, industry and progress but for the constructive work of statesmen like Bismarck. All the things which Germany has attained would have been utterly impossible but for her strong government and her ability to defend this because of her military system. It seems so strange to me that even men like Oswald G. Villard overlook this fact.

I have just received and read in the December *Open Court* the article by Poultney Bigelow. His analysis of the situation appears to me to be as erratic as most of the other stuff I have read from English pens. Let me briefly sum it up: The superiority of the English form of government over that of the German—England a liberal, democratic country composed of 400,000,000 patriotic citizens. This is his point of view, and the current one too. But among these 400,000,000, let me ask, what is the percentage of illiteracy? With the exception of Canada and Australia, what is the condition of the native population of her colonies? India, the principal of her possessions, with 300,000,000 population, exports an annual average of about 100,000,000 bushels of wheat. What percentage of the native population have ever eaten wheat in any form? What percentage of them, as compared with other portions of the world, die of famine and starvation; what percentage of them are any the less illiterate since they have been under the English government? And again, what percentage of them are in the slightest degree any better off than they were, since they have been under the English government? Now the English army—of what is the rank and file composed? Are they patriotic English citizens enlisted for the defense of their country? Rather, are they not hire-

lings of all shades of complexion, of all kinds of religion and of various nationalities, many of them bloodthirsty savages who enlist for a meagre monthly salary because it is the easiest way open to them to eke out an existence? At home in England are they turning away volunteers for service in the English army? The average Tommy Atkins, from other points of view, what sort of chap is he? The best thing about him is what there is of Teutonic blood in his veins. This has left him a foundation out of which better stuff might be developed than he is at present. Is he at present well-educated, well-trained, efficient, intelligently patriotic? Has his individual progress been a marvel in this age? He has his good qualities, but he is coarse, vulgar, egotistic, overbearing, certainly very much lacking in all the qualities that culture gives. He believes the gold brick handed out to him in England in the name of liberty is genuine. He is given certain licenses, it is true, which he thinks are liberties. We must judge the English system and the English government by the fruit that it bears, and we must measure the German system and the German government by the same measure. From the *Encyclopædia Britannica Year Book*, 1913, we learn that the German percentage of illiteracy is a very small fraction of one per cent. I learn from the issue of the *New York Nation* of April 2, 1914, that Germany doubled her wealth in ten years—something never approached by any other nation. We know that every German citizen can provide against want for his family by insurance at a minimum of cost not attained in any other country, under any other system. We know that he has a physical, moral and intellectual training superior to any other nation. We know that Germany, in proportion to population and area, produces more and provides better for her people than any other country. A number of years ago I learned that the average length of life was greater in Germany than in any other country, that the average German exceeded other peoples in chest expansion, in physical development.

Now, about the question of patriotism,—has the world ever before witnessed a spectacle like that when the German emperor invited to his presence in the royal palace the members of the German Reichstag, and placed before them the correspondence between the governments of the various nations relative to the present war?—and from his view of the situation there was not one single dissenting voice. Has the world ever seen a spectacle like the unanimity of the German people—men, women and children—as to the justness of their side in this war, and their willingness

to make any sacrifice for their fatherland—property, life, everything they possess? Does that argue average dissent or general dissatisfaction with the kind of government they have? Or, not to be too lengthy and tiresome, if we judge a tree by the fruit that it bears, it seems to me preference must be given to Germany rather than to any of the nations with whom she is at war. To this I might add a quotation from an article on the "Wealth of Germany," in the *New York Nation*, April 2, 1914: "German wealth is estimated to be \$99,000,000,000, and fully one-tenth of this belongs to the state,—that means to the people—chiefly in the form of railways, mines, buildings, factories and canals. From this government-owned property a considerable percentage of revenue is realized, lessening the burden of taxation upon the people. A continuation of this system will, in time, bring the German government into a position in which no taxes need be collected from the people."

Now, as to the question of government, the right of suffrage, when properly understood, is as fairly distributed as in any other country. In proof of that, there have been as many as 12,000,000 votes polled in Germany out of a population of 66,000,000. In what other country has that percentage ever been polled? Has it been even in our own country? The proper adjustment of the governmental machinery is indicated by the equilibrium between the representatives of the various classes and interests involved. Germany has one hundred and ten socialist members in her representative body, and a proportionate representation is maintained for wealth, labor, and different religious parties, as in no other country. Let me ask Mr. Poultney Bigelow what percentage of England's 400,000,000 he supposes will volunteer for service in England's armies. Is the percentage large, even in Canada or Australia? Is it large at home? On the other hand, does he not realize that there are very few Germans in any country, under any clime, that are not ready to render any service in their power for their fatherland? I believe Germany could raise an army (if it were possible to get them home) in America alone larger than will volunteer for service for England out of her 400,000,000. Does this argue any lack of patriotism, sympathy or satisfaction with the government of the fatherland?

Now, there is one more question, that is being very much discussed—English writers attribute the causes of the war to Germany or to German militarism. Owing to German good sense and their maintaining a military equipment sufficient for defense, too strong prior to 1914 to be attacked, we had peace in Europe for forty-

four years, with France all the time preaching revenge and, through her press and from many sources, insulting the German people. There have been a number of times during that interval when circumstances and interests would have held German alliances intact. At the time of the Russo-Japanese war she could easily have crushed France, owing to Russia's inability to assist; or she could have easily and safely attacked both Russia and France had she had any designs such as are at present attributed to her; or might she not have conquered Belgium at the time of the Boer war? Has she not been at peace during a period of forty-four years with all the small nations adjoining her? And she would to-day be at peace with Belgium but for English intrigue. Not only has Germany, prior to this war, been at peace for forty-four years, but her efficient military system and citizen soldiery have especially kept France at peace. Read French history prior to forty-four years ago. Has she ever so nearly had stability of government? Did she ever before make any such percentage of progress along all lines as she has during the last forty-four years?—and in my opinion she owes it wholly to the fact that a big policeman was just across the border, who made her behave herself. And so the progress of Germany's allies has been made possible by the protection of her so much denounced military system (her efficient citizen soldiery).

I might write at length on what German industrial development has done for all mankind. Take only one item, sugar. What would be the price to-day to the consumer in any part of the world, if you deduct what German enterprise has done for that industry?

How about England's relationship to the peace of the world? Deduct her intrigue for the last hundred years and most of the calamitous wars could have been averted. We need only mention the Crimean war, the Russo-Turkish war, the Russo-Japanese war, as well as the present world calamity, all of which we owe to English international politics and intrigue. Nor has English meddling with the affairs of other nations been alone confined to Europe. No other nation has ever attempted to meddle with American affairs. Her intrigue during the Civil War was an endeavor to bring about the division of the nation. Without any real friendship for either section, her object was to separate them in order to weaken them. Americans should remember the Sackville incident of October, 1888, as an illustration of English meddling with our domestic affairs. They should not forget the Venezuelan controversy, or things more recent—the jingoist English methods em-

ployed to defeat the American-Canadian reciprocity measure, and our strained relations with Japan, no longer ago than last winter, when President Wilson made a personal appeal to the American Congress to repeal the Free Tolls measure because there were diplomatic reasons necessitating it. It will be recalled that shortly after the repeal of the measure our friction with Japan ceased. We can never have international peace until English intrigue is given a black eye. This can only be done by some other power building a navy large enough to compel England to attend to her own affairs. It is not very hard to show that she has been the international trouble-maker. These are statements, but by going into detail I can verify them.

As before stated, I am of English ancestry, yet I have an intense sympathy with and for the German people, and believe that although so greatly outnumbered by the allies in men and resources, Germany is going to win in this fight, and that the greatest civilization that has ever arisen on this earth is going to be preserved for the continued betterment, not only of those who love the German fatherland, but for all mankind. German honesty, morality, scientific, social and cultural development, protected by her strong government made possible only by her citizen military system, are going to continue to hold in check and keep a brake on Russian savagery, French hysteria and want of balance, English political trickery and intrigue, and, because of the intelligent patriotism and individual efficiency of her people for whatever duty calls upon them to do, they are going to win this fight.