

ENGLAND'S BLOOD-GUILT IN THE WORLD WAR.

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HORRIFIED, overwhelmed, the civilized world has, during the past week, been prostrated by one of the greatest catastrophes in all history, the sudden outbreak of a world war, the fearful consequences of which no man can predict. All that suffering humanity has hitherto endured in the misfortunes of war, all the horrors of wholesale massacre, devastation, and the destruction of families, that wars have entailed in the past, fade into insignificance before the universal world-conflagration which threatens to engulf the laboriously acquired culture of six thousand years. This terrible fact is driven home to every enlightened and clear-thinking man on unbiased consideration of the present situation, especially considering the astonishing strides that modern science and technology have made in the last half-century, even during the last thirty years.

It can no longer be doubted that this dreaded "European War" which, directly or indirectly, must also affect all other parts of the earth and thus develop into the first real "World War," will far eclipse in its course and character all wars of the past. We need but remember the modern perfection of arms of all sorts, rapid-firing artillery, air craft, the conquest of time and space through the modern development of machinery and electricity, and the various agents, formerly undreamed of, which the mighty advance of science, and above all of physics and chemistry, has placed in the hands of the belligerents. The sacrifice in blood and wealth, in human lives and potentialities that we must now make, will far eclipse all such sacrifices of the past. And immediately we ask ourselves, and with right, what the real causes are of this frightful world-conflagration, what people, or what guiding spirit, will have

to bear the unprecedented blood-guilt of this international war of annihilation.

The parliament and the press of the hostile Triple Entente, the English, French and Russian newspapers, are endeavoring at present, but in vain, to throw the whole blame upon Germany. The falsity of this accusation is so patent to every one who knows the facts, that it needs no refutation. Emperor William II has, in the twenty-six years of his reign, done everything within his power to preserve for the German people the blessings of peace, and rightly was he celebrated, at the twenty-fifth jubilee of his reign, last year, as the "Emperor of Peace." Time and again he has even been charged with having carried too far his policy of concession and reconciliation toward revengeful France, arrogant England, and Panslavistic Russia. Similarly, the other two members of the Triple Alliance, Austria-Hungary and Italy, have ever endeavored to preserve the precious blessing of peace and avoid European complications. Rather does the whole responsibility for the outbreak of this world war fall on that mighty triple coalition, the *Entente Cordiale*, arranged some years ago, that freak trio of brigands in which Russia, France and England have sworn to destroy the Triple Alliance of Middle Europe, and above all, Germany's position among the great powers.

In the splendid speech from the throne with which Emperor William II opened the German Reichstag on August 4, he showed, in a terse and striking manner, the real causes that drive the enemies of our German empire to their insidious attack: envy of the prosperity of our dear fatherland, jealousy of its growing power, chagrin at our successful competition in the arts of peace.

When we consider the unprecedented sacrifice of life and property, the prolific loss of the treasures of culture, which this world war will inflict on all civilization, the author of this calamity is, in these fateful days, rightly considered as the greatest criminal in all history. So it is important for us to establish clearly in the beginning on which of the mighty members of this cursed band of brigands the greater part of the blood-guilt falls. Is it the French or the Russian or the English nation that bears the burden of responsibility and that we have most to fear?

At present, fourteen days after the outbreak of the war, the greater part of the responsibility is commonly imputed to Russia, because of its having in the beginning of August opened the attack on the mid-European Triple Alliance and, in fact, its having been the first to declare war. But the weak Czar Nicholas, who, as abso-

lute autocrat, the people believe is before all others responsible, is but an involuntary tool in the hands of the blood-thirsty grand dukes and officers in coalition with the Russian bureaucracy, an institution which for its corruptibility and greed bears the worst reputation in European government circles. The Russian people is, by far the greater part, even to-day so uninformed that it is incapable of forming a judgment of the war which its government has forced upon it. Even hatred for Germany (to which country, however, it owes the best of its culture) is not so powerful as is Panslavism, which would bend all Eastern Europe under the Russian knout. The protection of the Serb band of murderers which, directly, through the assassination of the heir to the Austrian throne, and his wife, gave the first impetus to the war, is likewise for Russia only the natural corollary of her egoistic, Panslavistic principles.

France is, indeed, fired even yet to a large extent by her national thirst for revenge and, at the same time, as creditor of deeply indebted Russia, is closely bound up with Russian interests. Yet the greater part of the French people are in no way animated by a desire for war, and would even now have gladly avoided the outbreak of the world-conflict, especially as their preparation for it is still inadequate. In France, as in Russia, it is, at the bottom, only a small but powerful party that now urges war with Germany, especially the ambitious generals and officers and those narrow Chauvinists who consider the *Grande Nation* alone as entitled to world sovereignty and even look with disdain upon their ally (but so profoundly different in her national character!), England.

So on England, and on England alone, plainly rests the greater part of the burden of responsibility for the outbreak of this world war. On the same fourth of August, on which day the German Reichstag unanimously voted the necessary money for the defense of the empire, England, a few hours later, declared war on Germany,—ostensibly because of the violation of the neutrality of Belgium, but, in reality, because the longed-for moment appeared at last to have arrived for the carrying out of the long-planned attack on the German empire. “Perfidious Albion,” whose hypocritical politics reflect most clearly her inconsiderate “nationalism,” her brutal egotism, has thus once again exercised her “practical morality,” solely and alone to strengthen her world-power, with no application whatever of that Christian altruism which she theoretically inscribes on her banners, with absolutely no thought of the weal or woe of the rest of mankind, and especially of her German sister nation. Protected by her isolated geographical position, sup-

ported by the greatest sea power, almighty in her widespread colonial possessions, she can laugh at all appeals to justice and righteousness.

Our imperial chancellor, whose strong and clear course of action in these troublous times is deserving of special praise, said, in conclusion, in the memorable session of the Reichstag: "The fourth of August will rank for all time as the greatest day in the history of Germany"—and rightly did he say this, for in those fateful hours all party differences, all distinction of class or creed, came to an end in the solemn pledge to sacrifice life and property for the preservation of the dear fatherland which has been so treacherously attacked.

With equal justification we can say, likewise, of our formidable enemy, Great Britain: "The fourth of August will rank for all time as one of the darkest days of England,"—for on that day the English government issued its declaration of war against Germany, a declaration which had long been in readiness, and on the very next day the British Parliament was induced by the hypocritical speeches of its intriguing minister, Sir Edward Grey, to vote, almost unanimously, the money necessary for waging war against Germany. Only a solitary member of Parliament had the courage to raise a dissentient voice. Yet, doubtless, many thousands of sensible, thoughtful and honorable Englishmen share his opinion and would preserve neutrality. Among them are numbered three of the leading members of the British Cabinet, including the famous John Morley, and these resigned their positions a few days later, washing their hands of responsibility for this mad war.

On the fourth of August the fate of the entire world hung in the balance. It was in England's power and in that of her government and parliament, in their epoch-making decision, to cast the die for peace, justice, and right, or to cast it for war, crime and evil. On the fourth of August—on that memorable day—England decided for the latter, and thus incurred the responsibility for the greatest crime mankind has known, the terrible and far-reaching results of which no one can foresee. The curse of millions of unhappy human beings is on the head of Britain, whose boundless national egotism knows no other aim than the extension of British dominion over the whole world, the exploitation of all other nations for her own advantage, and the swelling of her insatiable coffers with the gold of all other peoples.

And yet this proud British nation dares, in its hypocrisy, to parade in the guise of Christianity! It is proud of its innumer-

able missionaries, its pious Bible societies which are supposed to bless all peoples with the light of the gospel, the gospel of the brotherhood of man, the altruism of which stands out in the sharpest contrast with the British egotistic principles of world-domination and world-exploitation.

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And not only for us Germans but for the whole civilized world is this unholy decision of England's of tremendous significance. When Russia in the beginning of August declared war on Germany and Austria, it meant for us but a difficult European war, with its front on two borders, the east and west. Yet serious as this war would have been, we should still have had every hope of victory, defended by our keen and tried sword, and in the consciousness of a just cause and a clear conscience. By England's declaration of war against us, however, on August 4, the political and strategic situation was entirely changed. Now we are compelled to carry on a death-struggle on three frontiers; we must face two mighty armies, in the east and west, and in addition we must combat the world's greatest sea power which threatens our fleet, our sea coasts, our foreign colonies, with destruction. For this reason—through England's fault alone—the dreaded European war has grown to a universal world war of unprecedented extent. For now all other nations on the globe, whether they will or not, must also become more or less directly involved.

And if we would point to the one person of place and power at whose door lies this responsibility in blood and lives, it is neither the weak Czar Nicholas II, nor is it the ambitious president of the French republic, Poincaré, but singly and alone the intriguing British minister, Sir Edward Grey, who, through long years, has been weaving his net of steel by which Germany is to be surrounded and strangled. And now he deems the appointed time is at hand to tighten the noose, employing as his accomplice in the murder of detested Germany the natural arch-enemy of England, Slavic Russia.

Sir Edward Grey is, however, but the executor of the late King Edward VII, that execrable prince of German blood whose momentous activity during the whole of his reign consisted in the complete "isolation of Germany." Through many long years this prince of Coburg resorted to every possible means to bring about the coalition against the hated German empire,—this same brother of the German Empress Frederick and nephew of Duke Ernest II of Coburg who earned much praise for his part in the

foundation of the German empire, and, in 1860, at the first German *Turnfest* (which I attended personally in Coburg) was celebrated as champion shot, and, indeed, as heir apparent to the German imperial throne. The "Christian morality" of this talented Edward VII was indeed of a peculiar variety, according to our ideas, for he enjoyed himself best in luxurious Parisian restaurants with charming French coquettes and in gambling in the "best" English society. That he chanced to be caught at professional gambling (baccarat), and brought before court, did not hurt his great popularity in England, for he was such a "blameless gentleman"; he pursued with ability every prominent sport, and on countless occasions delivered brilliant speeches in which he impressively reminded his British people of their God-given mission of world-domination.

The dazzling goal of a British universal empire found vigorous expression two years ago in the English Parliament, when the leading ministers declared, amid loud applause, that Great Britain not only now possessed the best and most powerful of all fleets, but would maintain for all time sole domination of the seas. That brings to mind vividly the proud words of the last (blind!) King of Hanover, who declared, in 1866, at the outbreak of the Prusso-Austrian war: "My house and my kingdom shall stand forever" (!). A few weeks later they were swept away at the battle of Langensalza.

History teaches us with sufficient clearness that a world-domination by one people is not possible. How long did the Grecian empire of Alexander the Great endure? How long the world empire of the Roman Cæsars, the Spanish empire of Philip II, or the Gallic empire of Napoleon I? In the twentieth century, when the national interests of peoples, and their international relations, are more manifold and complicated than ever before, and when the greater civilized states are endeavoring to bring about a tolerable equilibrium, the dream of an all-dominating universal empire seems more chimerical than ever.

Finis Germaniac! The annihilation of the independent German empire, the destruction of German life and works, the subjection of the German people to British domination, that is the proud dream of the English government, and for its realization it has allied itself with a hostile Slavdom, a power that seriously threatens its own supremacy in Europe as well as in Asia. Germans against Germans! A people that has produced Bacon and Shakespeare, Newton and Darwin, at war with a related people that counts Luther and Copernicus, Schiller and Goethe among its own!

But the inspiring unanimity with which the German people, forgetful of all political and religious differences, have rallied around their Kaiser, the boundless spirit of self-sacrifice with which all ranks and classes are offering their lives and property for the protection of house and home, community and country, are sure auguries of victory. But should victory, in spite of the justice of our cause, not rest with us, then will we still seek to free ourselves from the English tyranny, fortified by the same perseverance with which our fathers a hundred years ago shook off the despotism of France. Better death than slavery.

Finis Britanniae! The annihilation of an independent England, the destruction of her particular nationality and her contribution to civilization, we wish none of these things; but complete liberation from the unbearable yoke under which the British empire would bend all other peoples, this we demand. And in this we shall find powerful allies among all those nations which already bear this yoke and know so well its dangers. Just as the United States of North America, in 1789, freed themselves from their tyrannical mother country, so will Canada and Ireland, India and Australia, Egypt and South Africa, sooner or later follow their example. To what end should all these rich countries which naturally are developing their own individual characters ever further from the parent stock, why should they sacrifice their powers and resources for their self-seeking mother-land, that but sinks deeper and deeper in her national egotism, and, as mistress of the seas, would bend all nations under her will?