

EDWARD CARPENTER

THE HEALING OF
NATIONS AND THE
HIDDEN SOURCES OF
THEIR STRIFE

Edward Carpenter

**The Healing of Nations and the
Hidden Sources of Their Strife**

«Public Domain»

Carpenter E.

The Healing of Nations and the Hidden Sources of Their Strife /
E. Carpenter — «Public Domain»,

Содержание

I	5
II	9
III	10
IV	18
V.	22
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	23

Edward Carpenter

The Healing of Nations and the Hidden Sources of Their Strife

I INTRODUCTORY

The following Studies and Notes, made during the earlier period of the present war and now collected together for publication, do not—as will be evident to the reader—pretend to any sort of completeness in their embrace of the subject, or finality in its presentation. Rather they are scattered thoughts suggested by the large and tangled drama which we are witnessing; and I am sufficiently conscious that their expression involves contradictions as well as repetitions.

The truth is that affairs of this kind—like all the *great* issues of human life, Love, Politics, Religion, and so forth, do not, at their best, admit of final dispatch in definite views and phrases. They are too vast and complex for that. It is, indeed, quite probable that such things cannot be adequately represented or put before the human mind *without* logical inconsistencies and contradictions. But (perhaps for that very reason) they are the subjects of the most violent and dogmatic differences of opinion. Nothing people quarrel about more bitterly than Politics—unless it be Religion: both being subjects of which all that one can really say for certain is—that nobody understands them.

When, as in the present war, a dozen or more nations enter into conflict and hurl at each other accusations of the angriest sort (often quite genuinely made and yet absolutely irreconcilable one with another), and when on the top of that scores and hundreds of writers profess to explain the resulting situation in a few brief phrases (but unfortunately their explanations are all different), and calmly affix the blame on "Russia" or "Germany" or "France" or "England"—just as if these names represented certain responsible individuals, supposed for the purposes of the argument to be of very wily and far-scheming disposition—whereas it is perfectly well known that they really represent most complex whirlpools of political forces, in which the merest accidents (as whether two members of a Cabinet have quarrelled, or an Ambassador's dinner has disagreed with him) may result in a long and fatal train of consequences—it becomes obvious that all so-called "explanations" (though it may be right that they should be attempted) fall infinitely short, of the reality.¹

Feeling thus the impossibility of dealing at all adequately with the present situation, I have preferred to take here and there just an aspect of it for consideration, with a view especially to the differences between Germany and England. I have thought that instead of spending time over recriminations one might be on safer ground by trying to get at the root-causes of this war (and other wars), thus making one's conclusions to some degree independent of a multitude of details and accidents, most of which must for ever remain unknown to us.

There are in general four rather well-marked species of wars—Religious wars, Race wars, wars of Ambition and Conquest, and wars of Acquisition and Profit—though in any particular case the four species may be more or less mingled. The religious and the race motives often go together; but in modern times on the whole (and happily) the religious motive is not so very dominant. Wars of

¹ Some people take great pleasure in analysing White Books and Grey Books and Orange Books and Yellow Books without end, and proving this or that from them—as of course out of such a mass of material they can easily do, according to their fancy. But when one remembers that almost all the documents in these books have been written with a *view* to their later publication; and when one remembers also that, however incompetent diplomatists as a class may be, no one supposes them to be such fools as to entrust their *most* important *ententes* and understandings with each other to printed records—why, one comes to the conclusion that the analysis of all these State papers is not a very profitable occupation.

race, of ambition, and of acquisition are, however, still common enough. Yet it is noticeable, as I frequently have occasion to remark in the following papers, that it only very rarely happens that any of these wars are started or set in motion by the mass-peoples themselves. The mass-peoples, at any rate of the more modern nations, are quiescent, peaceable, and disinclined for strife. Why, then, do wars occur? It is because the urge to war comes, not from the masses of a nation but from certain classes within it. In every nation, since the dawn of history, there have been found, beside the toiling masses, three great main cliques or classes, the Religious, the Military, and the Commercial. It was so in far-back ancient India; it is so now. Each of these classes endeavours in its turn—as one might expect—to become the ruling class and to run the government of the nation. The governments of the nations thus become class-governments. And it is one or another of these classes that for reasons of its own, alone or in combination with another class, foments war and sets it going.

In saying this I do not by any means wish to say anything against the mere existence of Class, in itself. In a sense that is a perfectly natural thing. There *are* different divisions of human activity, and it is quite natural that those individuals whose temperament calls them to a certain activity—literary or religious or mercantile or military or what not—should range themselves together in a caste or class; just as the different functions of the human body range themselves in definite organs. And such grouping in classes may be perfectly healthy *provided the class so created subordinates itself to the welfare of the Nation*. But if the class does *not* subordinate itself to the general welfare, if it pursues its own ends, usurps governmental power, and dominates the nation for its own uses—if it becomes parasitical, in fact—then it and the nation inevitably become diseased; as inevitably as the human body becomes diseased when its organs, instead of supplying the body's needs, become the tyrants and parasites of the whole system.

It is this Class-disease which in the main drags the nations into the horrors and follies of war. And the horrors and follies of war are the working out and expulsion on the surface of evils which have long been festering within. How many times in the history of "civilization" has a bigoted religious clique, or a swollen-headed military clique, or a greedy commercial gang—caring not one jot for the welfare of the people committed to its charge—dragged them into a senseless and ruinous war for the satisfaction of its own supposed interests! It is here and in this direction (which searches deeper than the mere weighing and balancing of Foreign policies and Diplomacies) that we must look for the "explanation" of the wars of to-day.

And even race wars—which at first sight seem to have little to do with the Class trouble—illustrate the truth of my contention. For they almost always arise from the hatred generated in a nation by an alien class establishing itself in the midst of that nation—establishing itself, maybe, as a governmental or dominant class (generally a military or landlord clique) or maybe as a parasitical or competing class (as in the case of the Jews in Europe and the Japanese in America and so forth). They arise, like all other wars, from the existence of a class within the nation which is not really in accord with the people of that nation, but is pursuing its own interests apart from theirs. In the second of the following papers, "The Roots of the Great War," I have drawn attention to the influence of the military and commercial classes, especially in Germany, and the way in which their policy, coming into conflict with a similar policy in the other Western nations, has inevitably led to the present embroilment. In Eastern Europe similar causes are at work, but there the race elements—and even the religious—constitute a more important factor in the problem.

By a curious fatality Germany has become the centre of this great war and world-movement, which is undoubtedly destined—as the Germans themselves think, though in a way quite other than they think—to be of vast importance, and the beginning of a new era in human evolution. And the more one considers Germany's part in the affair, the more one sees, I think, that from the combined influence of her historical antecedents and her national psychology this fatality was to be expected. In roughly putting together these antecedent elements and influences, I have entitled the chapter "The Case *for* Germany," because on the principle of *tout comprendre* the fact of the evolution being

inevitable constitutes her justification. The nations cannot fairly complain of her having moved along a line which for a century or more has been slowly and irresistibly prepared for her. On the other hand, the nations do complain of the manner and the methods with which at the last she has precipitated and conducted the war—as indeed they have shown by so widely combining against her. However right, from the point of view of destiny and necessity, Germany may be, she has apparently from the point of view of the moment put herself in the wrong. And the chapter dealing with this phase of the question I have called "The Case *against* Germany."

Whatever further complications and postponements may arise, there will certainly come a time of recovery and reconstruction on a wide and extended scale over Europe and a large part of the world. To even outline this period would be impossible at present; but in the sixth chapter and the last, as well as in the intermediate pieces, I have given some suggestions towards this future Healing of the Nations.

* * * * *

The Evil—huge and monstrous as it is—is not senseless, one may feel sure. Even now here in England one perceives an extraordinary pulling together and bracing up of the people, a development of solidarity and mutual helpfulness, a greater seriousness, and a disregarding of artificialities, which are all to the good. These things are gains, even though the way of their manifestation be through much of enmity and ignorance. And one may fairly suppose that similar results are traceable in the other nations concerned. Wounds and death may seem senseless and needless, but those who suffer them do not suffer in vain. All these shattering experiences, whether in a nation's career or in the career of an individual, cause one—they force one—to look into the bases of life and to get nearer its realities. If, in this case, the experiences of the war, and the fire which the nations are passing through, serve to destroy and burn up much of falsity in their respective habits and institutions, we shall have to admit that the attendant disasters have not been all loss—even though at the same time we admit that if we had had a grain of sense we might have mended our falsities in far more economical and sensible fashion.

If in the following pages—chiefly concerned as they are with Germany and England—I have seemed to find fault with either party or to affix blame on one or the other, it is not necessary to suppose that one harbours ill-feeling towards either, or that one fails to recognize the splendid devotion of both the combatants. Two nations so closely related as the Germans and the English cannot really be so hopelessly different in temperament and character; and a great deal of the supposed difference is obviously artificial and class-made for the occasion. Still, there *are* differences; and as we both think we are right, and as we are unable to argue the matter out in a rational way, there seems to be nothing for it but to fight.

War has often been spoken of as a great Game; and Mr. Jerome K. Jerome has lately written eloquently on that subject. It is a game in which the two parties agree, so to speak, to differ. They take sides, and in default of any more rational method, resort to the arbitrament of force. The stakes are high, and if on the one hand the game calls forth an immense amount of resource, skill, alertness, self-control, endurance, courage, and even tenderness, helpfulness, and fidelity; on the other hand, it is liable to let loose pretty bad passions of vindictiveness and cruelty, as well as to lead to an awful accumulation of mental and physical suffering and of actual material loss. To call war "The Great Game" may have been all very well in the more rudimentary wars of the past; but to-day, when every horrible invention of science is conjured up and utilized for the express purpose of blowing human bodies to bits and strewing battlefields with human remains, and the human spirit itself can hardly hold up against such a process of mechanical slaughter, the term has ceased to be applicable. The affections and the conscience of mankind are too violently outraged by the spectacle; and a great mass

of feeling is forming which one may fairly hope will ere long make this form of strife impossible among the more modern peoples.

Still, even now, as Mr. Jerome himself contends, the term is partly justified by a certain fine feeling of which it is descriptive and which is indeed very noticeable in all ranks. Whether in the Army or Navy, among bluejackets or private soldiers or officers, the feeling is certainly very much that of a big game—with its own rules of honour and decency which must be adhered to, and carried on with extraordinary fortitude, patience, and good-humour. Whether it arises from the mechanical nature of the slaughter, or from any other cause, the fact remains that among our fighting people to-day—at any rate in the West—there is very little feeling of *hatred* towards the "enemy." It is difficult, indeed, to hate a foe whom you do not even see. Chivalry is not dead, and at the least cessation of the stress of conflict the tendency to honour opponents, to fraternize with them, to succour the wounded, and so forth, asserts itself again. And chivalry demands that what feelings of this kind we credit to ourselves we should also credit to the other parties in the game. We do cordially credit them to our French and Belgian allies, and if we do not credit them quite so cordially to the Germans, that is *partly* at least because every lapse from chivalrous conduct on the part of our opponents is immediately fastened upon and made the most of by our Press. Chivalry is by no means dead in the Teutonic breast, though the sentiment has certainly been obscured by some modern German teachings.

While these present war-producing conditions last, we have to face them candidly and with as much good sense as we can command (which is for the most part only little!). We have to face them and make the best of them—though by no means to encourage them. Perhaps after all even a war like the present one—monstrous as it is—does not denote so great a deviation of the old Earth from its appointed orbit as we are at first inclined to think. Under normal conditions the deaths on our planet (and many of them exceedingly lingering and painful) continue at the rate of rather more than one every second—say 90,000 a day. The worst battles cannot touch such a wholesale slaughter as this. Life at its normal best is full of agonizings and endless toil and sufferings; what matters, what *it is really there for*, is that we should learn to conduct it with Dignity, Courage, Goodwill—to transmute its dross into gold. If war *has* to continue yet for a time, there is still plenty of evidence to show that we can wrest—even from its horrors and insanities—some things that are "worth while," and among others the priceless jewel of human love and helpfulness.

II WAR-MADNESS

September, 1914.

How mad, how hopelessly mad, it all seems I With fifteen to twenty million soldiers already mobilized, and more than half that number in the fighting lines; with engines of appalling destruction by land and sea, and over the land and under the sea; with Northern France, Belgium, and parts of Germany, Poland, Russia, Servia, and Austria drenched in blood; the nations exhausting their human and material resources in savage conflict—this war, marking the climax, and (let us hope) the *finale* of our commercial civilization, is the most monstrous the old Earth has ever seen. And yet, as in a hundred earlier and lesser wars, we hardly know the why and wherefore of it. It is like the sorriest squabbles of children and schoolboys—utterly senseless and unreasoning. But broken bodies and limbs and broken hearts and an endless river of blood and suffering are the outcome.

III

THE ROOTS OF THE GREAT WAR²

October, 1914.

In the present chapter I wish especially to dwell on (1) the danger to society, mentioned in the Introduction, of class-ascendancy and class-rule; and (2) the hope for the future in the international solidarity of the workers.

Through all the mist of lies and slander created on such an occasion—by which each nation after a time succeeds in proving that its own cause is holy while that of its opponent is wicked and devilish; through the appeals to God and Justice, common to both sides; through the shufflings and windings of diplomats, and the calculated attitudes of politicians, adopted for public approval; through the very real rage and curses of soldiers, the desperate tears and agony of women, the murder of babes, and the smoke of burning towns and villages: it is difficult, indeed, to arrive at clear and just conclusions.

When the war first broke out no one could give an adequate reason for it. It all seemed absurd, monstrous, impossible. Then arose a Babel of explanations. It was that Germany desired to crush France finally; it was that she was determined to break Great Britain's naval and commercial supremacy; it was that she must have an outlet on the sea through Belgium and Holland; that she must force a way to the Mediterranean through Servia; that she must carry out her financial schemes in Asia Minor and the Baghdad region. It was her hatred of the Slav and her growing dread of Russia; it was her desire for a Colonial Empire; it was fear of a revolution at home; it was the outcome of long years of Pan-Germanist philosophy; it was the result of pure military ambition and the class-domination of the Junkers. Each and all of these reasons (and many others) were in turn cited, and magnified into the mainspring of the war; and yet even to-day we cannot say which *was* the main reason, or if we admit them all we cannot say in what exact proportions their influences were combined.

Moreover, they all assume that Germany was the aggressor; and we have to remember that this would not be admitted for a moment by a vast number of the Germans themselves—who cease not to say that the war was simply forced upon them by the hostile preparations of Russia, by the vengefulness of France, by the jealous foreign policy of England, and by the obvious threat embodied in the *Entente* between those three nations; and that if they (the Germans) made preparations for, or even precipitated it, that was only out of the sheer necessity of self-preservation.³

Thus we are still left without any generally accepted conclusion in the matter. Moreover, we are struck, in considering the list of reasons cited, by a feeling that they are all in their way rather partial and superficial—that they do not go to the real root of the subject.

Out of them all—and after the first period of confusion and doubt has passed—our own people at home have settled down into the conviction that German militarism in general, and Prussian Junkerdom in particular, are to blame, and that for the good of the world as well as for our own good we are out to fight these powers of evil. Prussian class-militarism, it is said, under which for so long the good people of Germany have groaned, has become a thing intolerable. The arrogance, the insolence, of the Junker officer, his aristocratic pretension, his bearish manners, have made him a byword, not only in his own country but all over Europe; and his belief in sheer militarism and Jingo imperialism has made him a menace. The Kaiser has only made things worse. Vain and flighty to a degree, and, like most vain people, rather shallow, Wilhelm II has supposed himself to be a second

² Reprinted by kind permission from the *English Review* for December, 1914.

³ As an example of this belief, read the manifesto of Professor Eucken, who represents such a large section of German opinion, and note the absolute sincerity of its tone—as well as its simplicity.

and greater Bismarck, destined by Providence to create the said Teutonic world-empire. It is simply to fight these powers of evil that we are out.

Of course, there is a certain amount of truth in this view; at the same time, it is lamentably insufficient. The fact is that in the vast flux of destiny which is involved in such a war as the present, and which no argument can really adequately represent, we are fain to snatch at *some* neat phrase, however superficial, by way of explanation. And we are compelled, moreover, to find a phrase which will put our own efforts in an ideal light—otherwise we cannot go on fighting. No nation can fight confessedly for a mean or base object. Every nation inscribes on its banner *Freedom, Justice, Religion, Culture* versus *Barbarism*, or something of the kind, and in a sense redeems itself in so fighting. It saves its soul even though bodily it may be conquered. And this is not hypocrisy, but a psychological necessity, though each nation, of course, accuses the other of hypocrisy.

We are fighting "to put down militarism and the dominance of a military class," says the great B.P., and one can only hope that when the war is over we shall remember and rivet into shape this great and good purpose—not only with regard to foreign militarism, but also with regard to our own. Certainly, whatever other or side views we may take of the war, we are bound to see in it an illustration of the danger of military class-rule. You cannot keep a 60-h.p. Daimler motor-car in your shed for years and years and still deny yourself the pleasure of going out on the public road with it—even though you know you are not a very competent driver; and you cannot continue for half a century perfecting your military and naval organization without in the end making the temptation to become a political road-hog almost irresistible.

Still, accepting for the moment the popular explanation given above of Germany's action as to some degree justified, we cannot help seeing how superficial and unsatisfactory it is, because it at once raises the question, which, indeed, is being asked in all directions, and not satisfactorily answered: "How does it happen that so peace-loving, sociable, and friendly a people as the great German mass-folk, as we have hitherto known them, with their long scientific and literary tradition, their love of music and philosophy, their lager beer and tobacco, and their generally democratic habits, should have been led into a situation like the present, whether by a clique of Junkers or by a clique of militarist philosophers and politicians?" And the answer to this is both interesting and important.

It resolves itself into two main causes: (1) the rise of the great German commercial class; and (2) the political ignorance of the German people.

It is obvious, I think, that a military aristocracy alone, or even with the combined support of empire-building philosophers and a jack-boot Kaiser, could not have hurried the solid German nation into so strange a situation. In old days, and under an avowedly feudal order of society, such a thing might well have happened. But to-day the source and seat of power has passed from crowned heads and barons into another social stratum. It is the financial and commercial classes in the modern States who have the sway; and unless these classes desire it the military cliques may plot for war in vain. Since 1870, and the unification of Germany, the growth of her manufactures and her trade has been enormous; her commercial prosperity has gone up by leaps and bounds; and this extension of trade, especially of international trade, has led—as it had already so conspicuously done in England—to the development of corresponding ideals and habits of life among the population. The modest, simple-living, middle-class households of fifty years ago have largely disappeared, and in their place have sprung up, at any rate in the larger towns, the very same commercial and parasitical classes, with their Philistine luxury and fatuous ideals, which have been so depressing and distressing a feature of *our* social life during the same period. Naturally, the desire of these classes has been for the glorification of Germany, the establishment of an absolutely world-wide commercial supremacy, and the ousting of England from her markets.

"Germany," said Peter Kropotkin⁴ a year or two ago, "on entering a striking period of juvenile activity, quickly succeeded in doubling and trebling her industrial productivity, and soon increasing it tenfold; and now the German middle classes covet new sources of enrichment in the plains of Poland, in the prairies of Hungary, on the plateaux of Africa, and especially around the railway line to Baghdad—in the rich valleys of Asia Minor, which can provide German capitalists with a labouring population ready to be exploited under one of the most beautiful skies in the world. It may be so with Egypt some day. Therefore it is ports for exports, and especially military ports, in the Adriatic, the Persian Gulf, on the African coast in Beira, and also in the Pacific, that these schemers of German colonial trade wish to conquer. Their faithful servant, the German Empire, with its armies and ironclads, is at their service for this purpose."

It is this class, then, which by backing both financially and morally the military class has been chiefly responsible for bringing about the war. Not that I mean, in saying so, that the commercial folk of Germany have directly instigated its outbreak at the present moment and in the present circumstances—for many, or most of them, must have seen how dangerous it was likely to prove to their trade. But in respect of the general policy which they have so long pursued they are responsible. One cannot go on for years (and let England, too, remember this) preaching militarism as a means of securing commercial advantage, and then refuse to be answerable for the results to which such a policy may lead. The Junker classes of Prussia and their Kaiser might be suffering from a bad attack of swelled head; vanity and arrogance might be filling them with dreams of world-empire; but there would have been no immediate European war had not the vast trade-interests of Germany come into conflict, or seemed to come into conflict, with the trade-interests of the surrounding nations—had not the financial greed of the nation been stirred, as well as its military vanity.

And talking of general trade and finance, one must not forget to include the enormous powers exercised in the present day by individual corporations and individual financiers who intrude their operations into the sphere of politics. We saw *that* in our own Boer War; and behind the scenes in Germany to-day similar influences are at work. The Deutsche Bank, with immense properties all over the world, and some £85,000,000 sterling in its hands in deposits alone, initiated financially the Baghdad Railway scheme. Its head, Herr Arthur von Gwinner, the great financier, is a close adviser of the Kaiser. "The railway is already nearly half built, and it represents a German investment of between £16,000,000 and £18,000,000. Let this be thought of when people imagine that Germany and Austria went to war with the idea of avenging the murder of an Archduke.... All German trade would suffer if the Baghdad Railway scheme were to fail."⁵ Then there is Herr August Thyssen—"King Thyssen"—who owns coalmines, rolling mills, harbours, and docks throughout Germany, iron-ore mines in France, warehouses in Russia, and *entrepôts* in nearly every country from Brazil and Argentina to India.⁶ He has declared that German interests in Asia Minor must be safeguarded at all costs. But Russia also has large prospective commercial interests in Asia Minor. The moral is clear and needs no enforcing. Such men as these—and many others, the Rathenaus, Siemens, Krupps, Ballins, and Heinekens—exercise in Germany an immense political influence, just as do our financial magnates at home. They represent the peaks and summits of wide-spreading commercial activities whose bases are rooted among the general public. Yet through it all it must not be forgotten that they represent in each case (as I shall explain more clearly presently) the interests of a *class*—the commercial class—but not of the whole nation.

One must, then, modify the first conclusion, that the blame of the war rests with the military class, by adding a second factor, namely, the rise and influence of the commercial class. These two classes, acting and reacting on each other, and pushing—though for different reasons—in the same

⁴ *Wars and Capitalism*, by P. Kropotkin. (Freedom Press.)

⁵ See *Nash's Magazine* for October, 1914, article by "Diplomatist."

⁶ *Ibid.*

direction, are answerable, as far as Germany is concerned, for dragging Europe into this trouble; and they must share the blame.

If it is true, as already suggested, that Germany's action has only been that of the spark that fires the magazine, still her part in the affair affords such an extraordinarily illuminating text and illustration that one may be excused for dwelling on it.

Here, in her case, we have the divisions of a nation's life set out in well-marked fashion. We have a military clique headed by a personal and sadly irresponsible ruler; we have a vulgar and much swollen commercial class; and then, besides these two, we have a huge ant's nest of professors and students, a large population of intelligent and well-trained factory workers, and a vast residuum of peasants. Thus we have at least five distinct classes, but of these the last three have—till thirty or forty years ago—paid little or no attention to political matters. The professors and students have had their noses buried in their departmental science and *fach* studies; the artisans have been engrossed with their technical work, and have been only gradually drifting away from their capitalist employers and into the Socialist camp; and the peasants—as elsewhere over the world, absorbed in their laborious and ever-necessary labours—have accepted their fate and paid but little attention to what was going on over their heads. Yet these three last-mentioned classes, forming the great bulk of the nation, have been swept away, and suddenly at the last, into a huge embroilment in which to begin with they had no interest or profit.

This may seem strange, but the process after all is quite simple, and to study it in the case of Germany may throw helpful light on our own affairs. However the blame may be apportioned between the Junker and commercial classes, it is clear that, fired by the Bismarckian programme, and greatly overstretching it, they played into each other's hands. The former relied for the financing of its schemes on the support of the commercials. The latter saw in the militarists a power which might increase Germany's trade-supremacy. Vanity and greed are met together, patriotism and profits have kissed each other. A Navy League and an Army League and an Air League arose. Professors and teachers were subsidized in the universities; the children were taught Pan-Germanism in the schools; a new map of Europe was put before them. An enormous literature grew up on the lines of Treitschke, Houston Chamberlain, and Bernhardi, with novels and romances to illustrate side-issues, and the Press playing martial music. The students and intellectuals began to be infected; the small traders and shopkeepers were moved; and the war-fever gradually spread through the nation. As to the artisans, they may, as I have said, have largely belonged to the Socialist party—with its poll of four million votes in the last election—and in the words of Herr Haase in the Reichstag just before the war, they may have wished to hold themselves apart from "this cursed Imperialist policy"; but when the war actually arrived, and the fever, and the threat of Russia, and the fury of conscription, they perforce had to give way and join in. How on earth could they do otherwise? And the peasants—even if they escaped the fever—could not escape the compulsion of authority nor the old blind tradition of obedience. They do not know, even to-day, why they are fighting; and they hardly know whom they are fighting, but in their ancient resignation they accept the inevitable and shout "Deutschland über Alles" with the rest. And so a whole nation is swept off its feet by a small section of it, and the insolence of a class becomes, as in Louvain and Rheims, the scandal of the world.⁷

And the people bleed; yes, it is always the people who bleed. The trains arrive at the hospital bases, hundreds, positively hundreds of them, full of wounded. Shattered human forms lie in thousands on straw inside the trucks and wagons, or sit painfully reclined in the passenger compartments, their faces grimed, their clothes ragged, their toes protruding from their boots. Some have been stretched on the battlefield for forty-eight hours, or even more, tormented by frost at night, covered with flies by day, without so much as a drink of water. And those that have not already

⁷ In order to realize how easy such a process is, we have only to remember the steps by which the outbreak of the Boer War in 1899 was engineered.

become a mere lifeless heap of rags have been jolted in country carts to some railway-station, and there, or at successive junctions, have been shunted on sidings for endless hours. And now, with their wounds still slowly bleeding or oozing, they are picked out by tender hands, and the most crying cases are roughly, dressed before consigning to a hospital. And some faces are shattered, hardly recognizable, and some have limbs torn away; and there are internal wounds unspeakable, and countenances deadly pallid, and moanings which cannot be stifled, and silences worse than moans.

Yes, the agony and bloody sweat of battlefields endured for the domination or the ambition of a class is appalling. But in many cases, though more dramatic and appealing to the imagination, one may doubt if it is worse than the year-long and age-long agony of daily life endured for the same reason.

Maeterlinck, in his eloquent and fiery letter to the *Daily Mail* of September 14th, maintained that the whole German nation is equally to blame in this affair—that all classes are equally involved in it, with no *degrees* of guilt. We may excuse the warmth of personal feeling which makes him say this, but we cannot accept the view. We are bound to point out that it is only by some such analysis as the above, and estimation of the method by which the delusions of one class may be communicated to the others, that we can guard ourselves, too, from falling into similar delusions.

I mentioned that besides the growth of the commercial class, a second great cause of the war was the political ignorance of the German people. And this is important. Fifty years ago, and before that, when Germany was divided up into scores of small States and Duchies, the mass of its people had no practical interest in politics. Such politics as existed, as between one Duchy and another, were mere teacup politics. Read Eckermann's *Conversations*, and see how small a part they played in Goethe's mind. That may have been an advantage in one way. The brains of the nation went into science, literature, music. And when, after 1870, the unification of Germany came, and the political leadership passed over to Prussia, the same state of affairs for a long time continued; the professors continued their investigations in the matters of the thyroid gland or the rock inscriptions in the Isle of Thera, but they left the internal regulation of the State and its foreign policy confidently in the hands of the Kaiser and the nominees of the great and rising *bourgeoisie*, and themselves remained unobservant and uninstructed in such matters. It was only when these latter powers declared—as in the Emperor's pan-German proclamation of 1896—that a Teutonic world-empire was about to be formed, and that the study of *Welt-politik* was the duty of every serious German, that the thinking and reading portion of the population suddenly turned its attention to this subject. An immense mass of political writings—pamphlets, prophecies, military and economic treatises, romances of German conquest, and the like—naturally many of them of the crudest sort, was poured forth and eagerly accepted by the public, and a veritable Fool's Paradise of German supremacy arose. It is only in this way, by noting the long-preceding ignorance of the German citizen in the matter of politics, his absolute former non-interference in public affairs, and the dazed state of his mind when he suddenly found himself on the supposed pinnacle of world-power—that we can explain his easy acceptance of such cheap and *ad hoc* publications as those of Bernhardt and Houston Chamberlain, and the fact that he was so easily rushed into the false situation of the present war.⁸ The absurd *canards* which at an early date gained currency, in Berlin—as that the United States had swallowed Canada, that the Afghans in mass were invading; India, that Ireland was plunged in civil war—point in the same direction; and so do the barbarities of the Teutonic troops in the matters of humanity and art. For though in all war and in the heat of battle there are barbarities perpetrated, it argues a strange state of the German national psychology that in this case a heartless severity and destruction of the enemy's life and property should have been preached beforehand, and quite deliberately, by professors and militarists, and accepted, apparently, by the general public. It argues, to say the least, a strange want

⁸ Of course we must remember that there has been all along and is now in Germany a very large party, Socialist and other, which has *not* been thus carried away; but for the moment its mouth is closed and it cannot make itself heard.

of perception of the very unfavourable impression which such a programme must inevitably excite in the mind of the world at large.

* * * * *

It is, no doubt, pleasant in its way for us British to draw this picture of Germany, and to trace the causes which led the ruling powers there, years ago, to make up their minds for war, because, of course, the process in some degree exonerates us. But, as I have already said, I have dwelt on Germany, not only because she affords such a good illustration of what to avoid, but also because she affords so clear an example of what is going on elsewhere in Europe—in England and France and Italy, and among all the modern nations. We cannot blame Germany without implicitly also blaming these.

What, indeed, shall we say of England? Germany has for years maintained that with her own growing population and her growing trade she needs a more extended seaboard in Europe, and coaling stations and colonies in other regions of the globe, but that England, jealous of commercial supremacy, has been determined to deny her these, and, if possible, to crush her; that she (Germany) has lived in perpetual fear and panic; and that if in this case she has been the first to strike, it has only been because to wait England's opportunity would have been to court defeat. Allowing for the exaggerations inseparable from opposed points of view, is there not some justification for this plea? England, who plunged into the Crimean War in order to *prevent* Russia from obtaining a seaboard and her natural commercial expansion, and who afterwards joined with Russia in order to plunder Persia and to prevent Germany from getting her railways along the Persian Gulf; who calmly appropriated Egypt, with its valuable cottonlands and market; who, at the behest of a group of capitalists and financiers, turned her great military machine on a little nation of Boer farmers in South Africa; who, it is said,⁹ sold 300,000 tons of coal to Russia to aid her fleet against Japan, and at the same time furnished Japan with gold at a high rate of interest for use against Russia—what trust can be placed in her? "England," says Bernhardt, "in spite of all her pretences of a liberal and philanthropic policy, has never sought any other object than personal advantage and the unscrupulous suppression of her rivals." Let us hope that this "never" is *too* harsh; let us at least say "hardly ever"; but still, are we not compelled to admit that if the rise of commercial ambition in Germany has figured as a danger to *us*, our far greater commercial ambitions have not only figured as a danger to Germany, but, in conjunction with our alliance with France and Russia, her ancient foes, may well have led to a state of positive panic among her people? And if, as the Allies would doubtless say, there was really no need for any such panic, the situation was obviously sufficiently grave to be easily made use of by a military class for its own ends, or by an armaments ring or a clique of financiers for theirs. Indeed, it would be interesting to know what enormous profits Kruppism (to use H.G. Wells' expressive term) *has* already made out of this world-madness. Nor can it be denied that the commercial interest in England, if not deliberately intending to provoke war with Germany, has not been at all sorry to seize this opportunity of laying a rival Power low—if only in order to snatch the said rival's trade. That, indeed, the daily Press reveals only too clearly.

From all this the danger of class-domination emerges more and more into relief. In Prussia the old Feudal caste remains—in a decadent state, certainly, but perhaps for that very reason more arrogant, more vulgar, and less conscious of any *noblesse oblige* than even before. By itself, however, and if unsupported by the commercial class, it would probably have done little harm. In Britain the Feudal caste has ceased to be exclusively military, and has become blended with the commercial class. The British aristocracy now consists largely or chiefly of retired grocers and brewers. Commercialism here has become more confessedly dominant than in Germany, and whereas there the commercial class may *support* the military in its ambitions, here the commercial class *uses* the military as a matter

⁹ See Kropotkin's *War and Capitalism*, p. 12.

of course and for its own ends. We have become a Nation of Shopkeepers having our own revolvers and machine-guns behind the counter.

And yet not really a Nation of Shopkeepers, but rather a nation ruled by a shopkeeping *class*.

[This is the point in the text referred to by Footnote 25 below]

People sometimes talk as if commercial prosperity and the interests of the commercial folk represented the life of the whole nation. That is a way of speaking, and it illustrates certainly a common modern delusion. But it is far from the truth. The trading and capitalist folk are only a class, and they do *not*, properly speaking, represent the nation. They do not represent the landowning and the farming interests, both of which detest them; they do not represent the artisans and industrial workers, who have expressly formed themselves into unions in order to fight them, and who have only been able to maintain their rights by so doing; they do not represent the labourers and peasants, who are ground under their heel. It would take too long to go into the economics of this subject, interesting though they are.¹⁰ But a very brief survey of facts shows us that wherever the capitalist and trading classes have triumphed—as in England early last century, and until Socialistic legislation was called in to check them—the condition of the mass of the people has by no means improved, rather the contrary. Japan has developed a world trade, and is on the look out for more, yet never before has there been such distress among her mass-populations. Russia has been lately moving in the same direction; her commercial interests are rapidly progressing, but her peasantry is at a standstill, France and Italy have already grown a fat *bourgeoisie*, but their workers remain in a limbo of poverty and strikes. And in all these countries, including Germany, Socialism has arisen as a protest against the commercial order—which fact certainly does not look as if commercialism were a generally acknowledged benefit.

No, commercial prosperity means only the prosperity of a class. Yet such is the curious glamour that surrounds this, subject and makes a fetish of statistics about "imports and exports," that nothing is more common than for such prosperity to be taken to mean the prosperity of the nation as a whole. The commercial people, having command of the Press, and of the avenues and highways of public influence, do not find it at all difficult to persuade the nation that *they* are its representatives, and that *their* advantage is the advantage of all. This illusion is only a part, I suppose, of a historical necessity, which as the Feudal regime passes brings into prominence the Commercial regime; but do not let us be deluded by it, nor forget that in submitting to the latter we are being nose-led by a class just as much as the Germans have been in submitting to the Prussian Junkers. Do not let us, at the behest of either class, be so foolish as to set out in vain pursuit of world-empire; and, above all, do not let us, in freeing ourselves from military class-rule, fall under the domination of financiers and commercial diplomats. Let us remember that wars for world-markets are made for the benefit of the merchant *class* and not for the benefit of the mass-people, and that in this respect England has been as much to blame as Germany or any other nation—nay, pretty obviously more so.

What is clearly wanted—and indeed is the next stage of human evolution in England and in all Western lands—is that the people should emancipate themselves from class-domination, class-glamour, and learn to act freely from their own initiative. I know it is difficult. It means a spirit of independence, courage, willingness to make sacrifice. It means education, alertness to guard against the insidious schemes of wire-pullers and pressmen, as well as of militarists and commercials. It means the perception that only through eternal vigilance can freedom be maintained. Yet it is the only true Democracy; and the logic of its arrival is assured to us by the historical necessity that progress in all countries must pass through the preliminary stages of feudalism and commercialism on its way to realize the true life of the mass-peoples.

To-day the uprising of Socialist ideals, of the power of Trade Unions, and especially the formation of International Unions, show us that we are on the verge of this third stage. We are shaping our way towards the real Democracy, with the attainment of which wars—though they will not cease

¹⁰ See note *infra* on "Commercial Prosperity," p. 167. (Chapter XI below)

from the world—will certainly become much rarer. The international *entente* already establishing itself among the manual workers of all the European countries—and which has now become an accepted principle of the Labour movement—is a guarantee and a promise of a more peaceful era; and those who know the artisans and peasants of this and other countries know well how little enmity they harbour in their breasts against each other. Racial and religious wars will no doubt for long continue; but wars to satisfy the ambitions of a military clique or a personal ruler, or the ambitions of a commercial group, or the schemes of financiers, or the engineering of the Press—wars from these all too fruitful causes will, under a sensible Democracy, cease. If Britain, during the last twenty years, had really favoured the cause of the People and their international understanding, there would have been no war now, for her espousal of the mass-peoples' cause would have made her so strong that it would have been too risky for any Government to attack her. But of course that could not have happened, for the simple reason that Conservatism and Liberalism are not Democracy. Conservatism is Feudalism, Liberalism is Commercialism, and Socialism only is in its essence Democracy. It is no good scolding at Sir Edward Grey for making friends with the Russian Government; for his only alternative would have been to join the "International"—which he certainly could not do, being essentially a creature of the commercial regime. The "Balance of Power" and the *ententes* and alliances of Figure-head Governments *had* to go on, till the day—which we hope is at hand—when Figure-heads will be no more needed.

IV THE CASE AGAINST GERMANY;

November, 1914.

With every wish to do justice to Germany, to whose literature I feel I owe such a debt, and among whose people I have so many personal friends; allowing also the utmost for the general causes in Europe which have been for years leading up towards war—and some of which I have indicated already in the pages above—I still feel it is impossible not to throw on her the *immediate* blame for the present catastrophe.

However we distribute the indictment and the charges among the various parties concerned, whether we accuse mainly the sway of Prussian Militarism or the rise of German Commercialism, or the long tradition and growth of a *Welt-politik* philosophy, or the general political ignorance which gave to these influences such rash and uncritical acceptance; or whether we accuse the somewhat difficult and variable personal equation of the Kaiser himself—the fact still remains that for years and years this war has been by the German Government most deliberately and systematically prepared for. The fact remains that Britain—though for a long period she had foreseen danger and had on the naval side slowly braced herself to meet it—was on the military side caught at the last moment unprepared; that France was so little intending war that a large portion of the nation was actually still protesting against an increase in the size of the standing army; and that Russia—whatever plans she may have had, or not had, in mind—was confessedly at the same period two years or so behind in the organization and completion of her military establishment.

Whether right or wrong, it can hardly be denied that the moment of the precipitation of war was chosen and insisted on by Germany. After Austria's monstrous and insulting dictation to Serbia (23rd July), and Serbia's incredibly humble apology (25th), Austria was still not allowed to accept the latter, and the conference proposed (26th July) by Sir E. Grey—though accepted by France, Russia, and Italy—was refused by Germany (27th). On the 28th Austria declared war on Serbia. It was perfectly clear to every one that Russia—after what had happened before in 1908-9, with regard to Bosnia and Herzegovina—could not possibly allow this insult to Serbia to pass. Germany, therefore, by this move forced Russia's hand; and at a moment when Russia was known or supposed to be comparatively unprepared.¹¹ France had been involved in some military scandals and was still debating as to the two years' instead of three years' period for her normal military service. The German Ambassador at Vienna had openly said that France was not in a condition for facing a war. England was currently supposed in Germany to be seriously hampered by domestic troubles at home—chiefly of course among the Irish, but also amongst the Suffragettes(!) and by widespread disaffection in India. It was thought, therefore, that England would certainly remain neutral—and I think we may fairly say that the extent to which Germany counted on this expected neutrality is evidenced by her disappointment and public rage when she found that she was mistaken.

Germany's initiative in the matter is further evidenced by her *instant readiness* to attack. She was in Luxemburg within a few hours of the declaration of war with Russia; and it was clearly her intention to "rush" Paris and then turn back upon Russia.

It may be said that from her own point of view Germany was quite right to take the initiative. If she sincerely believed that the *Entente* was plotting her downfall, she was justified in attacking instead of waiting to be attacked. That may be so. It is the line to which General Bernhardi again returns in his latest book (*Britain as Germany's Vassal*, translated by J. Ellis Barker). But it does not alter the

¹¹ It is said that Russia took some steps towards mobilization as early as the 25th. If she did, that would seem quite natural under the circumstances.

fact that this was an immense responsibility to take, and that the immediate onus of the war rests with Germany. If she under all the above circumstances precipitated war, she can hardly be surprised if the judgment of Europe (one may also say the world) is against her. If she has played her cards so badly as to put herself entirely in the wrong, she must naturally "dree her weird."

There remains the case of her treatment of Belgium. Britain certainly—who has only lately assisted at the dismemberment of Persia, and who is even now allowing Russia (in the face of Persian protests) to cross neutral territory in the neighbourhood of Tabriz on her way to attack Turkey, who has uttered, moreover, no word of protest against the late Ukase (of mid-November) by which the independent rights of Finland have been finally crushed—Britain, I say, need talk no cant about Belgian neutrality. Britain, for her own absolute safety, has always required and still requires Belgian neutrality to be respected. And that by itself is a sufficient, and the most honest, reason. But in the eyes of the world at large Germany's deliberate and determined sacrifice of Belgium, simply because the latter stood in the way of the rapid accomplishment of her warlike designs against France (and England), can never be condoned—little Belgium who had never harmed or offended Germany in any way. Add to this her harsh and brutish ill-treatment of the Belgian civilian people, her ravage of their ancient buildings and works of art, and her clearly expressed intention both in word and deed to annex their territory by force should the fortunes of war favour her—all these facts, which we may say are proven beyond the shadow of a doubt, form a most serious indictment. They substantiate the charge that Germany by acting throughout in this high-handed way has deeply violated the natural laws of the Comity of Nations, which are the safeguards of Civilization, and they confirm the rightful claim of Europe to sit in judgment on her.

I say nothing at the moment about the charges of atrocities committed by German troops, partly because such charges are always in warfare made by each side against the other, and partly because their verification should be the subject of a world-inquiry later on. It may be said, however, that the Belgian and French Commissions of inquiry have certainly presented material and evidence which *ought* to be investigated later—material which would hardly be credible of so humane and cultured a people as the Germans, were it not for the fact, alluded to already, of such severities having been deliberately recommended beforehand by the philosophical writers, military and political, who have during the last half-century moulded German public opinion.

England, as I say, is in no position herself to sit in judgment on Germany and lecture her—much as she undoubtedly enjoys doing so. England's long-standing policy of commercial greed, leading to political grab in every part of the world; her infidelity in late years towards small peoples, like the Boers and the Persians; her neglect of treaty obligations and silence about them when they do not suit her; her most dubious alliance with a military despotism like Russia: all render it impossible for her to accuse Germany. The extraordinary thing is that in the face of such prevarications as these, which are patent to the whole world, Britain at any moment of serious crisis always comes forward with the air of utmost sincerity and in an almost saintly pose as the champion of political morality! How is it? The world laughs and talks of *heuchlerei* and *cant Britannique*. But I almost think (perhaps I stretch a point in order to save the credit of my country) that the real cause is not so much British hypocrisy as British *stupidity*—stupidity which keeps our minds in watertight compartments and prevents us perceiving how confused and inconsistent our own judgments are and how insincere they appear to our neighbours. At any rate, whether the cause is pure hypocrisy or pure stupidity, or whether a Scotch mixture of these, it cannot be denied that its result is most irritating to decent-minded people.

It is curious how a certain strain or vein of temperament, like that just mentioned, will run through a nation's whole life, and colour its actions in all departments, recognized and commented on by the whole outside world, and yet remain unobserved by the nation itself.

Every one who has known the Germans at home—even years back—has been conscious of a certain strain in the Teutonic character which has had a like bearing in the German national life. How shall I describe it? It is a certain want of tact, unperceptiveness—a kind of overbearing simplicity of

mind. Whether it be in the train or the hotel or the private house, the German does not always seem to see the personal situation. Whether you prefer to talk or remain silent, whether you wish the window open or shut, whether you desire to partake of such and such a dish or whether you don't—of such little matters he (or she) seems unaware. Perhaps it is that the Teutonic mind is so vigorous that it overrides you without being conscious of doing so, or that it is so convinced of its own Tightness; or perhaps it is that the scientific type of mind, depending always on formulae and statistics, necessarily loses a certain finer quality. Anyhow, the fact remains that sociable, kindly, *gemüthlich* and so forth as the Germans are, there is a lack of delicate touch and perception about them, of gentle manners, and a certain insensitiveness to the opinion of those with whom they have to deal. The strain may not be without its useful bearings in the direction of strength and veracity, but it runs curiously through the national life, and colours deeply, not only the domestic and social relations of the people but their foreign politics also, and even their war tactics and strategy.

I have spoken before of the political ignorance of the German mass-people, which, dating from years back, caused them to be easily led by their empire-building philosophers to a certain very dangerous pinnacle of ambition, and there tempted. The same want of perception of how their actions would be viewed by the world in general caused the Government to act in the most egregiously high-handed manner in the matter of the precipitation and declaration of the war itself, and subsequently likewise in the ruthless invasion of Belgium and treatment of her people and her cities. The want of discernment of what was going on outside the sphere of her own psychology led her into fatal delusions as to the attitude of England, of Ireland, of Belgium, Italy, India, and so forth. It caused her generals to miscalculate and seriously under-estimate the strategic forces opposed to them, both in France and Russia; and in actual battles it has caused them to adopt, with disastrous results, tactics which were foolishly inspired by contempt of the enemy. Without insisting too much on the stories of atrocities—which are still to a certain extent *sub judice*—it does rather appear that even those excesses which the Commissions of inquiry have reported (and which occurred, be it said, chiefly in the early days of the campaign) were due to an intoxication, not merely of champagne but of excited self-glorification and blindness to the human rights of peoples at least as brave as themselves.¹²

However that last point may be, it is certainly curious to think how—whether it be in the case of the German or the English or any other people—a vein of temperament or character may decide a nation's fate or colour its history quite as much as or even more than matters of wealth and armament.

Personally one feels sorry for the great and admirable German people—though I do not suppose it will matter to them whether one feels sorry or not! And I look forward to the day when there will come a better understanding between them and ourselves—better perhaps than has ever been before—when we shall forgive them their sins against us, and they will forgive us our sins against them, one of which certainly is our meanness and shopkeeperiness in rejoicing in the war as a means of "collaring their trade." I feel sure that the German mass-people will wake up one day to the knowledge that they have been grossly betrayed at home, not only by Prussian militarism but by pan-German commercial philosophy and bunkum, as well as by their own inattention to, and consequent ignorance of, political affairs. And I hope they will wake up to the conviction that Destiny and the gods in this matter are after all bringing them to a conclusion and a consummation far finer than anything they have perhaps imagined for themselves. If, indeed, when the war is over, they are fortunate enough to be compelled by the terms of settlement to abandon their Army and Navy—or *all* but the merest residue of these—the consequences undoubtedly will be that, freed from the frightful burdens which the upkeep of these entails, they will romp away over the world through an era of unexampled prosperity and influence. Their science, liberated, will give them the lead in many arts and industries; their philosophy and

¹² There may possibly be found another explanation of these excesses—namely, in the galling strictness of the Prussian military regime. After years and years of monotonously regulated and official lives, it may be that to both officers and men, in their different ways, orgies of one kind or another came as an almost inevitable reaction.

literature, no longer crippled by national vanities, will rise to the splendid world-level of former days; their colonizing enterprise, unhindered by conscriptionist vetoes, will carry them far and wide over the globe; and even their trade will find that without fortified seaports and tariff walls it will, in these days of universal movement and intercommunication, do fully as well as, if not much better than, ever it did before. In that day, however, let us hope that—the more communal conception of public life having prevailed and come to its own—the success of Trade, among any nation or people, will no longer mean the successful manufacture of a dominant and vulgar class, but the real prosperity and welfare of the whole nation, including all classes.

And in that day, possibly, the other nations, witnessing the extraordinary prosperity and success of that one which has abandoned armaments and Kruppisms, will—if they have a grain of sense left in them—follow suit and, voluntarily divesting themselves too of their ancient armour, give up the foolishness of national enmities and jealousies, and adopt the attitude of humanity and peace, which alone can be the worthy and sensible attitude for us little mortals, when we shall have arrived at years of discretion upon the earth.

[Just after writing the above I received the following remarks in a letter of a friend from South America, which may be worth reprinting. He says: "In spite of the events of 1815 and 1870, French 'culture' is supreme to-day over all South America. South America is a suburb of Paris, and French culture has won its triumphs wholly irrespective of the defeat of French arms. Therefore I incline to think that true German culture in science and music will gain rather than lose by the destruction of German arms. Not only will that nation cease to spend its time writing dull military books, but other nations will be more likely to appreciate what there is in German thought and culture when this is no longer offered us at the point of the bayonet! German commerce in South America has suffered rather than gained by talk of 'shining armour.' And the poet, scientist and business man will gain rather than lose if no longer connected with Potsdam."]

V. THE CASE FOR GERMANY

Having put in the last chapter some of the points which seem to throw the immediate blame of the war on Germany, it would be only fair in the present chapter to show how in the long run and looking to the general European situation to-day as well as to the history of Germany in the past, the war had become inevitable, and in a sense necessary, as a stage in the evolution of European politics.

After the frightful devastation of Germany by the religious dissensions of the early part of the seventeenth century and the Thirty Years War, it fell to Frederick the Great, not only to lay a firm foundation for the Prussian State but to elevate it definitely as a rival to Austria in the leadership of Germany. Thenceforth Prussia grew in power and influence, and became the nucleus of a new Germany. It would almost seem that things could not well have been otherwise. Germany was seeking for a new root from which to grow. Clerical and ultra-Catholic Austria was of no use for this purpose. Bavaria was under the influence of France. Lutheran Prussia attracted the best elements of the Teutonic mind. It seems strange, perhaps, that the sandy wastes of the North-East, and its rather arid, dour population, *should* have become the centre of growth for the new German nation, considering the latter's possession of its own rich and vital characteristics, and its own fertile and beautiful lands; but so it was. Perhaps the general German folk, with their speculative, easygoing, almost sentimental tendencies, *needed* this hard nucleus of Prussianism—and its matter-of-fact, organizing type of ability—to crystallize round.

The Napoleonic wars shattered the old order of society, and spread over Europe the seeds of all sorts of new ideas, in the direction of nationality, republicanism, and so forth. Fichte, stirred by Napoleon's victory at Jena (Fichte's birthplace) and the consequent disaster to his own people, wrote his *Addresses to the German Nation*, pleading eloquently for a "national regeneration." He, like Vom Stein, Treitschke, and many others in their time, came to Berlin and established himself there as in the centre of a new national activity. Vom Stein, about the same time, carried out the magnificent and democratic work by which he established on Napoleonic lines (and much to Napoleon's own chagrin) the outlines of a great and free and federated Germany. Carl von Clausewitz did in the military world much what Stein did in the civil world. He formulated the strategical methods and teachings of Napoleon, and in his book *Vom Krieg* (published 1832) not only outlined a greater military Germany, but laid the basis, it has been said, of all serious study in the art of war. Vom Stein and Clausewitz died in the same year, 1831. In 1834 Heinrich von Treitschke was born.

The three Hohenzollern kings, all named Frederick William, who reigned from the death of Frederick the Great (1786) to the accession of William I (1861) did not count much personally. The first and third of those mentioned were decidedly weakminded, and the third towards the close of his reign became insane. But the ideas already initiated in Germany continued to expand. The Zollverein was established, the Teutonic Federation became closer, and the lead of Prussia more decided. With the joint efforts of William I and Bismarck the policy became more governmental, more positive, and more deliberate—the policy of consolidation and of aggrandisement; and with this definite programme in view, Bismarck engineered the three wars of 1864, 1866, and 1870, against Denmark, Austria, and France. They all three had the effect of confirming the military power of Prussia. The first war gave her a much desired increase of access to the North Sea; the second led to the treaty with Austria, and ultimately to the formation of the Triple Alliance; the third ended in the definite establishment of the Prussian hegemony, the crowning of William I as Emperor, and the union and consolidation of all the German States under him; but alas! it left a seed of evil in the wresting of Alsace-Lorraine from France. For France never forgave this. Bismarck and Moltke knew she would not forgive, and were sorely tempted to engineer a *second*

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.