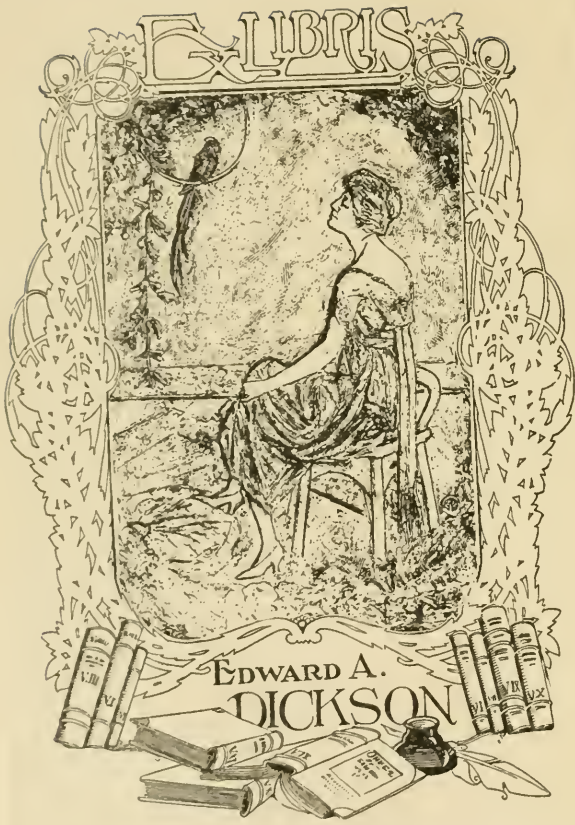




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WATCHING ON THE RHINE

VIOLET R. MARKHAM

"That which was to be done by war and arms in Latium has now been fully accomplished by the bounty of the gods and the valour of the soldiers. The armies of the enemy have been cut down. . . . It now remains to be considered how we may keep them in the observance of perpetual peace. . . . Ye can therefore ensure to yourselves perpetual peace so far as the Latins are concerned, either by adopting severe or conciliatory measures. Do ye choose to take harsh measures against people who have surrendered and who have been conquered? Ye may destroy all Latium. . . . Do ye wish to follow the example of your forefathers and augment the power of Rome by conferring the citizenship on the people you have beaten? Materials for extending your power by the highest glory are at hand. . . . But whatever determination ye wish to come to, it is necessary that it be speedy. So many states have ye in a condition of suspense between hope and fear."

Livy viii. 13.

WATCHING ON THE RHINE

BY

VIOLET R. MARKHAM

AUTHOR OF "SOUTH AFRICA PAST AND PRESENT,"
"THE SOUTH AFRICAN SCENE," ETC.



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FOREWORD

“Here then will we begin the story: only adding thus much to that which hath been said, that it is a foolish thing to make a long prologue and to be short in the story itself.”

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WATCHING ON THE RHINE



WATCHING ON THE RHINE

CHAPTER I

THE APPROACH

July 1919

FOUR A. M. : the slowly moving engine comes to a standstill with a jolt which wakes me from the uneasy half-sleep of a train journey. I lift a corner of the blind and look out. It is the grey hour before the dawn, when night still wrestles with morning for the possession of the coming day. A ruined building lit up by a station flare stares at me stark and desolate. In the quarter light a long street of battered houses is also dimly visible. Lille! We have come through the worst of the devastated area in the night, but the hall-mark of the invader lies stamped on the big industrial town, the very name of which is associated henceforth with suspense, with anguish, with triumph. The military train begins to move again cautiously over temporary bridges and a permanent way not as yet permanently repaired. We are far removed from the days when continental expresses and sleeping-cars swept in a few hours from one capital to another. The miracle is to be in this slow-

moving train at all which links the British base in France with the occupied German area. Ruined houses look in through the window, phantom buildings of which nothing but the outer walls remain. Yet, as I strain my eyes in the dim light, I see something else; something which was not visible when I last visited a devastated area in March—here and there a house already rebuilt, stacks of bricks neatly piled, rubbish sifted and cleared, stones laid in order for the mason's hand. Yes, there has been "cleaning up" during the last five months—the most tragic cleaning up which can ever befall a nation. And clearly France, with her amazing energy and recuperative powers, has already flung herself into the task of repairing the desolate places. It is a grim and mighty task which awaits our Ally.

Stricken though the towns, the land, desolate, barren, uncultivated, has a pathos all its own. As we move ever eastwards and the dawn comes up in the sky, the nakedness of the fields invaded by coarse grass and weeds symbolises the sufferings of France. But in the growing light evidences appear in the fields of the same brave spirit which is reclaiming the towns. Here and there a half-destroyed farmhouse has been patched up, and a thin cloud of smoke rises from the battered chimney. Across the silent fields a team of horses is being led out to work; a woman drives out her cows or is seen surrounded by clamorous poultry. France may be sorely wounded, but the spirit of France cannot be destroyed. France, for all her losses, has hope in her heart, and amid the desolation of war, hope, like some beautiful flower, blossoms once again.

Eastward, always eastward, for we are bound through

the lands of the conquering victim to those of the humbled oppressor. With every mile the visible signs of war grow less, though houses and buildings along the railway show marks of gunfire long after the land has regained its normal aspect. First and last, districts through which the railways pass have suffered most both in advance and retreat; a fact to which the scarred stations bear witness.

By the time the sun is shining brightly we have passed beyond the outer fringes of desolation and are again in a prosperous-looking land. The sight of Maubeuge recalled many an anxious moment during the great German invasion of 1914. Outwardly the town appeared to have suffered but little. As we crossed the Belgian frontier a general view of the country as seen from the carriage windows conveyed the same impression. The soil was well cultivated, the houses in good order. There are no evidences of the presence of a hostile army beyond the occasional destruction of a bridge blown up during the German retreat. The spiritual yoke of an enemy occupation for four and a half years must have been intolerable, but material damage was clearly confined to the first and last days of the war. And Belgium has the matter in hand. She is at work, working, working all the time. From countless buildings the Belgian flag waving in the sunshine proclaimed the glad tidings of a land released from its invaders and restored to its original place among nations. The little valleys of the Ardennes, the factory chimneys of Liège, seem at one in telling the same tale of liberty regained. There is an indescribable air of gaiety among the people on the roadside, a sense of laughter and merry-making. Aerschot, Dinant, Louvain would, of course, tell a different tale, but in southern

Belgium it would seem that the grip of the invader was of a different quality from his strangle-hold on France.

Still eastward, and now with a thrill of indescribable emotion we find ourselves at Herbesthal, the German frontier. Before us in the sunshine lie the broad fertile plains of the people whose rulers have deluged the world with blood and tears. One remembers with bowed head the many million lives laid down before we handful of British folk could journey thus far into the country of the enemy who had challenged our very existence. With the memory of shattered and devastated France before our eyes, we think with sternness no punishment can be too severe in expiation of the crime under whose consequences the world is staggering to-day. A train-load of German prisoners, homeward bound, runs into the station. They cheer, not very loudly or energetically, it is true, but nevertheless they cheer as once again they touch the soil of the Fatherland. From the windows we catch sight of eager, excited faces among the shabby men in their faded uniforms. Insensibly the heart softens. They too have gone through hardship and suffering, just ordinary men glad to be home again, eager to see wife and child and sweetheart. And then, as the train rolls forward, suddenly on the threshold of the enemy's land comes the remembrance of those noble words, one of the few great utterances which illumine the darkness and the passions of war, "Patriotism is not enough, I must have no hatred or bitterness in my heart."

The hands of brutal men could not touch the serenity of Edith Cavell's soul. On the threshold of a cruel death her spirit had soared above the hideous welter of passion and brutality all around. She saw these things in

the light of eternity; saw also the ultimate good of life express itself, not in the narrow terms of race, but in abiding spiritual values. The demand for vengeance which followed on her death has to a large extent obscured the greatness of her message. Yet Edith Cavell indicated expressly that vengeance was not the way. No individual during the war has thrown a ray of light more clear on the turmoil of the struggle. But the path she trod is not an easy one, and many who honour her name shrink from a task of self-conquest so great as what she indicates. . . . No hatred and no bitterness: and we are English people crossing the German frontier for the first time after the war. . . . What has Edith Cavell to say to each one of us?

Aix-la-Chapelle—Aachen—with its memories of Charlemagne, King of the Franks, lies some ten miles within the German frontier. Few outward signs of its venerable history survive in the busy manufacturing centre of today. The cathedral, founded by Charlemagne, where the ashes of the great monarch lie buried, rises—an incongruous and protesting relic—among factories, tall chimneys, and all the ugly apparatus of modern industry. Aachen is in Belgian occupation, and we stare from our carriage windows at a mixed throng of Belgian soldiers, British Tommies, and German civilians, with whom the station is crowded.

It is a little difficult to express in words the conflict of feelings in your mind as you enter Germany. You are certainly prepared for something dramatic. It is almost with a shock you realise that German civilians are not equipped with hoofs and horns or other attributes of a Satanic character. After all, they look just like any

one else: tidy, well-dressed, self-respecting people—the typical German crowd of old days. But certainly you expected to see some outward and visible signs of military occupation, apart from the familiar sight of khaki soldiers; visions of a Germany bristling with guns; of burgomasters and high officials walking about with halters, actual or metaphorical, round their necks; of a sullen, conquered people casting looks of hatred on conquerors who move among them in no small peril of their lives. If such is the anticipation, it proves to be ludicrously remote from the reality. The outstanding fact in the occupied territory, and one which fills an English visitor with ever-growing amazement, is the complete acquiescence of the Germans in the situation. Life is astonishingly normal. Khaki soldiers have replaced grey-coated soldiers. Otherwise everything seems to go on exactly as before. These amazing people, outwardly at least, do not appear to mind that their country is occupied by hostile armies. The Germans on the Aachen platform were moving about and talking in a placid, undisturbed manner. Their indifference to the British and Belgian soldiers appeared to be absolute. A picture rose before my eyes of an English station occupied by German troops: would equal apathy and indifference have been shown under such conditions? In this as in many other respects the German psychology is a riddle to which no answer seems forthcoming, and it is a riddle the perplexity of which will be found to deepen with every hour spent in the occupied territory.

Between Aachen and Cologne the train runs through a district rich in natural resources, both mineral and agricultural. We pass many large factories of modern con-

struction in which, thanks to smoke-saving apparatus, the dirt of our own industrial districts has been avoided. Those factories are not idle. It is true not every large chimney is smoking, but some chimneys in every group show that work is going on. The Rhineland industries are to a large extent independent of imported material, and the activities in this district cannot be taken as an index to the rest of Germany. Similarly with the soil. Agricultural experts tell us that taken as a whole the soil of Germany is naturally poor. Only immense scientific care and attention made it possible in pre-war days for the land to yield 85 per cent. of the nation's food. But here in the Rhineland the quality of the crops must strike the most casual traveller. With the thin English harvest in mind, I can only marvel at these bumper crops—the thick yellow corn, the potatoes, the roots, the mealies, the general impression of agricultural prosperity. The land is in perfect order. Every twig looks as though it had been put in splints. Whatever else has suffered, prisoners' labour, or labour of some kind, has kept the land clean and in order. Compare the large areas of devastation in France with this fat, smiling country bearing no visible signs of any kind of war, and the bitterness in many French hearts seems very natural. It is difficult to associate stories of want and starvation with a rich country like this. Yet it was quite clear that at the last Germany was brought to her knees by hunger. The surface impression of prosperity in one particular district may be misleading—the reality may prove on closer acquaintance to be of grimmer stuff!

Already a hundred questions beset my mind as Cologne Cathedral comes into sight. There is something typically

German about the unwieldy appearance of the Kölner Dom crowned with its preposterous spires. Many years had passed since I was last in Cologne. As the line ran through the clean, well-built suburbs, I remembered vaguely an hotel on the Dom Platz, and a general impression of tall, robust men drinking beer and eating large meals. From a dusty shelf in memory's cupboard came the recollection of some careless remark made to an English friend—I hoped there would never be war between England and Germany, because judging by the physique of the men, war with them would be no trifling affair. . . .

The train has drawn up in the fine Haupt Bahnhof. Two W.A.A.C. administrators, courteous and business-like, examine tickets and visas. A large German standing meekly, hat in hand, before the fair-haired English girl stamping his pass is eloquent as to some lessons taught by the Occupation. Amazing is the scene which breaks on the traveller on emerging from the railway station. Khaki-clad soldiers swarm in every direction. Soldiers, soldiers; they overflow the railway station, the square, the Hohenzollern bridge. The Dom rises grim and protesting from a sea of khaki. Government lorries lumber down the streets; the square in front of the Excelsior Hotel, where a modest Union Jack over the door proclaims the presence of G.H.Q., is crowded with cars. Every branch of the service is here in force. Uniformed women on whom the Boche gazes with peculiar annoyance are common. Selected W.A.A.C. administrators are carrying on responsible work of various kinds. Searching German women passengers whose clothes are found to be

stuffed with sausages must have its humours as well as its drawbacks.

The W.R.A.F. is here as a force. Army nurses in red and grey and the blue of the V.A.D.'s vary the monotony of the prevalent mustard colour. Here and there one sees the blue headdress of a British Empire Leave Club worker, the girls who do much for the entertainment of Thomas Atkins in a foreign town. Y.M.C.A., Church Army, and half a dozen other organisations are all to the fore. Atkins must be a much-amused man with so many willing workers to cater for his needs. This is the Army of Occupation as it came up from the fields of victory over 200,000 strong. Large numbers of troops are quartered, not only in Cologne, but throughout the occupied area and the bridgehead. But demobilisation has already laid its hand on this great force. The sluices are drawn and civilian life will shortly reclaim the lads who crowd the town and area. It is a wonderful sight to have seen, a wonderful moment in history to have experienced. The German goes about his work in the middle of this English crowd apparently as unconcerned as his fellow-countrymen at Aachen and Düren. But what at heart is he thinking of it all? What actions and reactions are likely to result from this strange assembly of people thrown together by the compelling force of the sword on the banks of the Rhine?

CHAPTER II

COLOGNE AND THE OCCUPATION

DURING the war we thought and talked with anguish daily of that line of trenches stretching from Switzerland to the sea where men suffered and died. Even the most unimaginative were stirred to emotion by stories of the strange semi-subterranean existence which modern conditions of warfare had imposed on the armies of Europe. To-day another line stretches for a distance nearly as great along the banks of the Rhine, but the men composing it are no longer compelled to dwell as troglodytes. The German word for Armistice, "Waffenstillstand," literally "the standing still of the weapons," expresses very graphically the conditions under which the Armies of Occupation live. The line has moved east from the horrors and desolation of devastated France to the rich provinces of the left bank of the Rhine. Cannons are silent; bombs drop no more. But the weapons, though standing still, are there, and determine the strange existence which we Allies lead among a conquered people.

Along the line of the Rhine, therefore, lie the armies of the conquering powers in a peace their guns have ensured and maintain. The French hold the southern end with their headquarters at Mainz, and Wiesbaden, most attractive of spas, as a centre of refreshment in the lighter moments of life. Next come the Americans at Coblenz, then the English at Cologne, finally the Belgians in the

north. As time has gone on the English occupation has become smaller and smaller, while the French has increased proportionately. Nobody quite knows what position the Americans hold at Coblenz, for America has not signed the Peace Treaty, and her forces remain in theory entirely independent of obligations which apply to the signatory powers. But, thanks to the wise and statesmanlike guidance of the American Commander-in-Chief, General Allen, an anomalous position has in practice worked without friction.

As for the life we lead in Occupied Germany, certainly during the early days very few people at home were able to appreciate the measure of its comfort and security. On returning to England for the first time on a visit from Cologne, I was met by many anxious inquiries from friends and relatives. Was it really safe for me to be in such a place? Of course I never walked about the town alone? Did the Germans spit at me? Perhaps out of fear they repressed that natural inclination, but of course they were as insolent as they dared under the circumstances? Had we machine guns at every street corner ready to fire? Others in the same breath, both militant and inconsequent—of course I never spoke to the brutes, but naturally I laid it across them if I did . . . it was to be hoped I had lost no opportunity of rubbing in their enormities. Two pictures out of many rose before my mind as I listened to these remarks.

A hot August evening in Cologne. A large crowd fills the Zoological Gardens, where an open-air concert is being held. Singers from Cologne and other opera houses have given us selections of German, French, and Italian music in a spirit entirely catholic. Equally cath-

olic is their reception by the large and appreciative cosmopolitan crowd. In front of the open-air stage, Germans, French, English, and Americans sit side by side at little tables drinking beer or Rhine wine. The music is heard in complete silence, even Thomas Atkins compelled thereto by the *genius loci*. On the terrace of the neighbouring restaurant dinner is proceeding. Numerous German families, the girls in muslin frocks and summer hats, are out together for the evening. At a table next to ours a small group of men, unmistakably soldiers, are dining together. They are all in plain clothes, but two of them wear in their buttonholes the minute, scarcely visible black-and-white ribbon of the Iron Cross. The German prima-donna sings the well-known air from *La Bohème*. She is loudly applauded by all present, by no one more energetically than by a French officer sitting near me. As darkness comes on, illuminations add their gaiety to the scene, pink and white lights shining among the dark leaves. A peaceful, happy gathering, with laughter, and music, and beer—the music and the beer both of excellent quality. Forget for a moment that the uniforms are khaki, not grey, put back the clock five years, and who would suspect the tragic bonds of blood and strife in which the company are united? Is the war a dream or a nightmare? Is Europe white with the bones of the millions who have died; is Germany itself staggering on the edge of ruin and starvation? If so, how can this musical fête, this peaceful bourgeois gathering, be possible; the enemies of yesterday eating and drinking and applauding side by side as though nothing had happened? What does it all mean? What is one doing there oneself?

Again: near the house in which we live a chronic fair goes on every afternoon. Swing-boats, roundabouts, shooting-galleries, all the various side-shows of an English country feast are here. Drinks, ice-cream, and refreshments are no less to the fore. Music, that monotonous braying music which always accompanies a merry-go-round, goes on mechanically for many hours. Here Thomas Atkins gathers in force. The thrifty Boche, in fact, has created the whole fair for his entertainment at a modest price. It is characteristic of the race that they not only accept the British Occupation with entire acquiescence, but endeavour by every means in their power to turn it to good account. Notices in English explain the nature of the side-shows. All prices are marked in plain figures. Reprehensible though it may be, Gretchen not infrequently is to be seen on the roundabouts and in the swing-boats with the said Thomas. Picture-postcards, trinkets, souvenirs, are all for sale. The shooting-galleries are crowded by soldiers still anxious to let off their piece in a more harmless fashion than on the scarred battle-line far away to the west. The Germans are out to amuse, the English to be amused. Perfect good temper animates both buyers and sellers. Introspection is hardly the hall-mark of the soldier in the ranks, and the English lads who lounge about from booth to booth never give a thought to the amazing situation in which they find themselves. Many of them on demobilisation leave Cologne with real regret. It is a clean, decent place, with more than decent beer. After all Fritz is not such a bad fellow. . . . In the long and varied history of Britain's rule overseas has the Pax Britannica ever held sway under conditions so strange as these? As darkness falls the fair

is lit up by great flares, and the scene grows more and more animated. Cologne, with large resources in the shape of a cheap fuel supply in its immediate neighbourhood, is well off both as regards light and heat. But at last all is silent. Curfew has rung for the Germans, the Last Post for the English. That desperate tune repeated for hours by the merry-go-round is mercifully at an end for the night. To-morrow it will all begin again, and so on day after day.

What are we to make of the civility of these people among whom we live as conquerors? How can it be reconciled with their arrogance and brutality when they had the upper hand in France and Belgium? These middle-class families, these quiet, respectable working-class people enjoying their simple pleasures, what part did they take in the insults heaped on prisoners and captives? Did these parents and children rejoice and cheer when submarines sent other women and children to their deaths? What kind of conscience do they carry for the war? How can they outwardly at least bear so little grudge against the people who have beaten them? With whom does the responsibility for the war rest? During the struggle many of us would have vowed Burke was at fault in his great axiom that you cannot indict a nation. Germany seemed to us then to be the very spirit of wickedness incarnate. Here face to face it seems more difficult. What baffling chameleon-like quality do these people possess, that they can outrage the conscience of the whole world and yet give one the impression that as individuals many of them are kindly, decent folk?

The riddle seems insoluble, and I do not pretend to have any key to it. German mentality is so constituted

that it is violent and arrogant in success, chastened and polite in defeat. That the whole nation is consciously playing a part seems hard to believe. They are too clumsy in mind and body for so continuous an effort of deception, too thick about the ankles and too thick about the wits. Some of the English in Cologne call them servile. Personally the adjective hardly seems to me to meet the case. But they are curiously correct, even courteous. I went about Cologne, on arrival, Baedeker in hand, as any pre-war tourist might have done. Both in trams and trains I received, more than once, small civilities from Germans who put me on my way seeing that I was a stranger. As an Englishwoman I marvelled at their civility. It was the same in the shops. The family in whose house we were billeted on my first arrival, were, I am sure, far less embarrassed by my advent than I was at the prospect of using their rooms. I was haunted by a sense of the rage with which I should have endured the presence of a German woman in my house. But after a day or two I ceased to have scruples about a situation which apparently did not trouble them. It was a relief to accept their attitude to us, as it might be, of hosts and paying guests to whose comfort they desired to contribute. Daily we exchanged small civilities. Naturally we were careful to leave no ragged edges in such a situation. Often I speculated on the transformation scene which might have resulted from a change in our respective positions. The old housekeeper had the hall-mark of the Prussian on her. I should be sorry to be within her reach as a prisoner. But the lady of the house, who had lost two sons in the war, appeared to be a kindly soul. She was a good musician, and I furtively and un-

successfully ransacked the music she put at my disposal to find a copy of the Hymn of Hate.

A pleasant Fräulein comes to talk German with me daily, and from her, directly and indirectly, I have learnt much which interests me about the German attitude. I was fortunate in the chance which threw us together, for she is an attractive, broad-minded girl, singularly free from prejudice and bitterness. During an acquaintance extending over many months we have learnt to know and like each other, and have long since forgotten we are technically enemies. My Fräulein has lived both in England and France and has friends in both countries. Her lover and her brother were killed in the war. Another brother survives, more dead than alive. The hunger pinch was severe in the Rhineland, which was always better off than other parts of Germany. Of air raids she spoke with unmistakable horror. Bombs had fallen in her neighbourhood on one occasion, so she told me; it was a case of spending every night in the cellar. All this came as a surprise to me, because not a brick seems out of place in Cologne. Still more was I interested by her denunciations of evils which sounded strangely familiar. Profiteering, it was scandalous what had gone on! All the horrible people who had made money out of the war and the sufferings of the nation. The new rich were a disgrace. The Government had been very slack in dealing with them. And then the skulkers, the shameful young men who went to earth in reserved occupations and offices and did not go to fight. Food? They had starved in the towns, so ineffective was the system of distribution. The country people who grew the food took care not to part with it. The new Government? She shrugged her

shoulders in despair. Since the Revolution things had gone from bad to worse. Every one was discontented, especially all the work-people, who spend their time demanding higher wages and shorter hours. And servants, there were none left. No girls would go out to work; they had all been spoilt by high wages in munition works.

As I listened I rubbed my eyes, and wondered if I were sitting in London or Cologne. How often at home had one listened to complaints of this very type about the shortcomings of the working-classes, always pointed by the remark that, however wicked, the efficient Hun Government managed these things much better in Germany. And yet apparently every complaint with which we were familiar in England was also in full blast here. Always with one great difference, to which I must refer again in another chapter: the Germans for years were hungry, and they fought the war with starvation slowly eating out their hearts.

A remark current in England, and sometimes heard even on the Rhine, is to the effect that the Germans do not know they are beaten. Do not know they are beaten? Should we know we were beaten if great districts of our country were occupied by enemy armies; if we had German officers and their wives and families quartered in our houses; if our officials had to take their orders from occupying Prussians; if all our barracks and public buildings and places of amusement were taken over; if the opera and theatre had to conform to German rules; if the tennis courts, the golf club, the polo ground, the racecourse were all monopolised by Germans, and we obtained by an act of grace on the part of our conquerors such privileges as they might think well to bestow on us? If that

were our fate, should we labour under much doubt as to the hard facts of the situation?

Superficially it is true that life seems to flow in very normal channels in Cologne. But, in fact, the country is beaten flat and cannot at the moment stand alone. However bitter the cup of humiliation, better the presence of a conqueror who has kept order, provided food, administered even-handed justice, and dealt fairly between man and man, than the horrors of hunger and revolution. As for the French, it cannot be expected that France with the memories of 1870 and 1914 burnt deep into her very marrow, France dragged twice through the fire, can approach the tasks of occupation in the same spirit as the more detached Britons who have less to forget. Set an Englishman to administer the country of his worst enemy, and that country at once becomes an administrative problem, to be run on the best possible lines. The Watch on the Rhine yet again has proved the half-unconscious genius of our race for government, which is at one and the same time just, firm, and sensible.

We have been very fortunate in our military administration. Those in command are able, far-sighted men, who have known how to take a broad view and a long view of Germany's present position. The blood-thirsty old women of both sexes whose one object in life is to perpetuate the hatreds and violences of the war are civilian products. The fighting soldiers are at one and the same time more generous, and in the true sense more pacific. They realise the chasm on the brink of which Germany stands shivering. They also realise the truth, still but dimly grasped in England, that a general collapse on the part of Germany will be disastrous, not only for her, but

for the rest of the world. No one will benefit by a spread of anarchy through Central Europe, least of all ourselves. The men who have smashed the German war machine have taken the measure of their foe. No nonsense of any kind would be tolerated. When an order is given it has to be obeyed. They are equally devoid of sentimentality and false illusions. But they realise the appalling task with which the new German Government is struggling, and the importance of a successful outcome to that struggle. And it is their aim to make it possible for the country to stagger to its feet again, to put an end to starvation, to set industry going, to preserve law and order. Also they will admit frankly they have found many of the Germans with whom they have had to deal capable and amenable.

The German civilian officials and the police work under the military authorities, and have worked without difficulty or friction. The Occupation has a fine and honourable record. The behaviour of the troops has been good. Soldiers have won real popularity in the country districts. Incidents and brawls will of course occur from time to time among large bodies of men, but they have had no racial or political significance. The forces on the Rhine are at present one of the great factors making for peace and order in Europe. Not for the purposes of military adventure or conquest, but as a constructive administrative machine, the present British régime in the Occupied Area is an admirable instrument.

To an island race like ourselves, dwelling in a land long inviolate, there is something peculiarly humiliating in the thought of an enemy occupation. But it must be remembered that the German, in this as in many other

respects, is made of tougher stuff. Invasion is to him an old and familiar story. The Rhineland in particular has been overrun time after time. Neither is it any novelty for the French to find themselves again in provinces on which in the past French armies have left their mark repeatedly. It is an old story, this quarrel between France and Germany, and to date it from 1870 is to err in historical perspective.

Yet disciplined and submissive though the German is to the harsh verdicts of war—never harsher than when applied by himself—there must be some peculiar sting in the presence of the enemy on the banks of the Rhine. For every national sentiment the nation possesses centres round the river famed in song and story. German patriotic literature of the “Wacht am Rhein” type is mediocre in quality, but it is eloquent of the spirit of the people. Even Heine, cynic and often anti-patriot, sings proudly of “der heilige Strom.” In periods of defeat and oppression Germans of an older date have found in the cleansing waters of the great stream a symbol of hope and regeneration. Few foreigners even can resist the spell of the Rhine. Mighty rivers have a message to give to the restless heart of man as their waters sweep by, eternal yet ever changing. Cradled in mountain snows virginal and remote, destined in the end to know the final purification and joyousness of the ocean, the course of any famous river as it flows from mountain to plain, from village to town, becomes an image of the flight of time and the vicissitudes of human life.

The romantic stretches of the Rhine lie south of Bonn. Here are castles and vineyards, and scenes of many a legendary exploit. At Bonn the long gorge beginning at

Bingen comes to an end, and the Rhine enters the broad plain in which Cologne is situated. Often sullied and defiled by the factories on its banks, nothing can destroy the sense of grandeur as the great volume of water sweeps forward to its fate. A hard lot for such a river to be caught in the end by the mud shallows and flats of Holland, and to make its final way to the sea broken up into countless minor streams!

At Cologne the Rhine is still untroubled by any sense of the doom which awaits it. The river takes a wide bend as it approaches the town, a lucky chance which is admirable from the aesthetic point of view. The traffic is very considerable. Huge barges bearing coal, iron, and all manner of merchandise are dragged up stream by powerful tugs. At night the view from the banks is mysterious and beautiful. A great net of twinkling lights cast over town and quays is reflected a hundredfold in the dark waters. Lights from the barges, anchored alongside the banks after the day's work, twinkle back in reply to the messages from the shore. Everything seems astir, as though town and river were moved by some dim half-earthly emotion. When morning comes it will reveal that many of these fairy lights only mark the presence of factories and workshops. But night with her indigo mantle has given another and more mysterious turn to the scene. The massive Hohenzollern bridge which spans the river exactly opposite the Dom is a typical expression of the spirit of modern Germany—strong, powerful, practical. It is a fine bridge, and I have so much to say in criticism of German taste that I am glad for once in a way to note the entire success with which they have handled an architectural problem concerned with the car-

rying, at one and the same time, of railway lines, trams, and passenger traffic. Especially fine is the bridge at night, when it hangs like a chain of light across the river; trams and trains passing like swift-moving constellations among the firmament of the illuminated spans and pillars. The awkward mass of the Dom lies in close proximity to the bridge, but they do not interfere with one another.

The bronze equestrian figures of the four Hohenzollern kings which guard the two ends of the bridge are among the few satisfactory examples of modern monuments which I have seen in Germany. Generally speaking, the country is bespattered with statues of the Hohenzollerns, the artistic merit of which is nil. Never did a reigning house impose itself so mercilessly, in bronze, stone, and iron, on a docile people. Cologne, needless to say, has an ample share of imperial statues. The Emperor William I. had a head which in particular did not lend itself to plastic treatment; his whiskers, which jump at one from innumerable squares, have a tendency to rouse my worst passions. There is little humorous in the state of Germany to-day, but the onlooker can extract some minor entertainment from the squabbles which rage in official and unofficial German circles as to the fate of the Hohenzollern statues. The Socialists, in fiery language, complain that the mind of young Germany is being corrupted by these flaunting images of an oppressive autocracy, and demand that the statues be consigned to the decent obscurity of the cellars of the local museum. The bourgeoisie are equally loud in the demand that the statues should be treated as historical relics and left where they are. The topic bids fair to become the hardy annual

of Socialist perorations. Meanwhile there is other work to be done and the Hohenzollerns remain.

Life in Cologne is very pleasant for the occupying army. As with the Hohenzollern bridge, so with the town itself—it is typical of the material excellence which before the war marked the German organisation of practical life. German local authorities throughout the country have kept a firm and admirable grasp on the town-planning of their large modern cities. The individualism of the speculative builder is not allowed to run riot here. Not only are the new quarters in Cologne well and solidly built, but open spaces abound. Fortifications can have their sanitary uses, for near the antiquated forts in the suburbs stretches a broad belt of open country devoted to allotments and market gardens. There are no signs of the jerry-builder running up shoddy houses to the detriment of future generations. Except in the old quarters of the town along the Rhine there are no obvious slums. Yet Germany, like all the rest of the world, is feeling the shortage of houses which has been an economic consequence of the war, and complaints of overcrowding are common.

But the real interest of Cologne lies elsewhere than in the prosperous latter-day development of the town. The wide streets and boulevards encircle the kernel of a famous mediaeval city. And mediaeval Cologne goes back to a still older foundation. The modern buildings and opulent dwelling-houses of the Ring smother, but cannot wholly obliterate, the memories of the Empress Agrippina and the settlement, called after her, Colonia Agrippina—subsequently Colonia—Köln.

My friend, Mr. John Buchan, always declares that

countries which have been romanised stand in a wholly different category from savage lands, such as Prussia, which have never known that great civilising influence. The Rhineland, with its more liberal culture and gentler manners than Germany east of the Elbe, is a good illustration of this theory. Rome has been here, and where Rome has passed some element of quality abides. Famous among the Roman settlements, Cologne played a part no less important in mediaeval history. A leading member of the Hanseatic League, the relations between Cologne and London in the fifteenth century were close. If we rule Cologne to-day, Cologne at an earlier date has dictated to us. In the reign of Edward III. foreign trade in the city of London was largely conducted through the corporation of Cologne merchants established in the Steelyard. The internal life of Cologne was torn in mediaeval times by fierce dissensions. Nevertheless, mediaeval German art owed much of its development in painting and architecture to the artists and master builders of the lower Rhine.

After the sixteenth century Cologne, like other cities of the Hanseatic League, lost much of its importance, and the place fell to a low ebb for more than two centuries. Its rise into new prosperity during the nineteenth century registers various phases in the great national revival which took place throughout Germany, and also the considerable social improvements which, it must be admitted, followed on Prussian rule.

The traces of mediaeval Cologne are sadly obliterated. Of the Roman period practically nothing remains. The Germans are desperate people in all matters concerning the upkeep and restoration of ancient buildings. They

are terribly painstaking and have the best intentions, unhappily with dire results. No words in Baedeker lay so cold a hand on my heart as the frequent phrase, "the church has in recent times undergone a thorough restoration." Thorough in their vandalism such efforts are. Meagrely endowed with artistic taste, no nation in the world lays hands so heavy and so obliterating on the monuments of the past. The one idea apparently is to make everything clean and tidy. To this end interiors of ancient Romanesque churches are covered with a pitiless layer of reinforced concrete on which lines are scratched to represent stones. German taste further revels in modern mosaics of a gross and gaudy character sprawling over wall and vault. Church after church in the Rhineland have I seen ruined in such fashion. In Cologne the noble proportions of ancient Romanesque buildings, such as the Apostelkirche, the Gereonskirche, Santa Maria im Capitol, stagger under the weight of the artistic atrocities they are forced to carry.

The ex-Emperor was one of the worst offenders in these matters. His vain and restless spirit exacted incense as connoisseur and art critic no less than as war lord. An entourage of docile snobs hastened to encourage him in this view, and he was allowed to destroy at will the beauty of various churches which, thanks to his fiat, have lost all their essential quality. The Altenberger Dom in the Bergische Land, a model in miniature of Cologne Cathedral and an exquisite example of early Gothic, was immolated in this way thanks to a visit from the Emperor. He declared that the church must be restored, as it did not look clean. To-day the interior presents the appearance of a bathroom.

This being the typical German spirit in matters artistic, it is hardly surprising that many precious relics of the past have gone under in Cologne. The fine old Rathhaus still remains, but the mediaeval town walls have inevitably succumbed to the needs of modern traffic and expansion. At several points the old gates have been left standing, forlorn-looking objects marooned among the substantial buildings of the last twenty years. Broad though the highway of the Ring, beyond which modern Cologne spreads outwards, the principal streets in the neighbourhood of the Dom Platz are unusually narrow. The mediaeval houses have vanished; the cramped space of the mediaeval street remains.

The Höhe Strasse, the principal thoroughfare, is crowded with people throughout the day. In the evening it is almost impossible to elbow your way through the dense mass of sightseers. A pedestrian must make up his mind to float along with the great stream of traffic and reach his destination when borne there on the current. Here are the principal shops, and shopping and bargains have played a considerable part in the life of the Army of Occupation. Bargains were certainly to be had in the early days before old stocks were exhausted, but their elusive delights have long since vanished from the scene. Prices have soared as the mark fell in value, and did not fall in turn when the mark improved. They stand to-day at a high level even for the English, who benefit by the exchange. How the German population can afford to buy anything at figures so exaggerated in marks is a mystery.

The fluctuation of the exchange is another matter in which the Army of Occupation takes a deep interest. We inquire with real concern daily as to the health of the

mark, the caprices of which baffle most forecasts. These constant fluctuations in the value of money are very demoralising for every one concerned. Naturally such a situation is a premium on speculation, and for the German merchant and shopkeeper the lack of stability has disastrous consequences.

The real necessities of Germany to-day lie below the surface, and it is very difficult to associate at first sight any ideas of poverty or disaster with the crowds of well-dressed people in the streets. The overflowing population of the big German towns is very striking. It is hard to believe they have had any real losses in the war. Men, women, and children; children, women, and men: it is always the same story. The Germans are a very plain race; few of them have any pretensions to good looks. But, men and women alike, they are tall and powerfully built, and convey an outstanding impression of physical strength and vigour.

And what have they done with their wounded? That is a perpetual puzzle to the English. It is a matter of very rare exception to see a lamed, or maimed, or blinded man. One poor wreck without arms or legs who frequented the Höhe Strasse in a little trolley was a familiar figure. But the injured lads who have become too sad a feature of our town and village life seem to be non-existent here. Yet the heavy German casualties must have left their mark on the people. Why, therefore, are there so few signs of wounded men? I have heard it said that with the removal of the German military hospitals following on the Occupation, other arrangements had to be made for the disabled, and that many left the district. Whether this is true or not I cannot say. Germans are proverbially

skilful at tucking out of sight all signs of their drunken and disreputable classes. Something of the same kind has happened apparently with the wounded. When one comes to the children, the toll of the war becomes apparent in a very different way. As regards adults, the superficial impression received is that neither physique nor population has suffered. I should add that all superficial impressions of German life to-day require to be discounted heavily. All the evidence goes to prove that the very real suffering in the country lies beneath the surface, and that the rich people and the profiteers who crowd shops and cafés give no true measure of the condition of the masses.

Overwhelmingly military though the aspect of Cologne in the early days of the Allied victory, the civilian character of the town has re-emerged, as during the course of months the great Army of the original Occupation has shrunk to a moderate garrison. To-day the impression is merely that of an English reserve in a foreign land. The garrison conducts itself, officers and ranks alike, after the ordinary fashion of garrisons all the world over. Work is done and done thoroughly; for the rest there are the normal amusements, dancing, sports, and games.

The Deutsches Theater, which is in English hands, has made a spirited and successful attempt to bring first-rate English drama within reach of the Occupying Army. But the greatest factor in recreation undoubtedly has been the Opera. The opportunity of hearing night after night the best music of all schools, classical and modern, is one for which we have had much cause to be thankful. The repertoire is not only large, but wholly catholic in spirit. No foolish demand exists to place French and Italian

music under a ban: the Germans have the good sense to recognise that genius transcends all boundaries of race. The great classical masterpieces of Beethoven, Mozart, Gluck can be heard as well as those of Wagner, Strauss, and the lighter works of Puccini, Bizet, Massenet, Mascagni, Offenbach, Gounod. The performances of the Ring are particularly fine; and the passion of the Kapellmeister, Herr Klemperer, for Mozart makes the production of these exquisite operas specially interesting. If the Germans have not eyes to see, no nation in the world have ears so fine to hear. In matters musical they are doubly and trebly gifted—the whole artistic expression of the race appears to have found an outlet in this direction. The Cologne Opera House lives up to the best pre-war standards. There are no stars, but, what is infinitely preferable, a high level of ensemble and a unity of artistic expression between the singers and the instrumentalists which can never exist in scratch companies held together by celebrities. The scenery and staging are excellent and show real artistic merit of a kind unusual in Germany. The orchestra too is first-rate—a fine and flexible instrument in the hands of its conductor.

It is unfortunate that the English have to no small extent imported the bad English habit of talking during orchestral passages. In the early days of the Occupation not a sound was ever heard in the body of the house. As time went on a familiar and unpleasant murmur became from time to time more noticeable. Explanations as to the involved relationships of the Wagner heroes and heroines when sought and given in the course of a performance are peculiarly exasperating to other people in the near vicinity of the earnest inquirer. It is a curious

sight during the intervals to see the German audience in couples promenading solemnly round the large "foyer" while the English and French look on. But even casual meeting-places between the two races are rare. Life in Cologne flows in two distinct channels, between which there is no communication of any kind. For the large majority of the English, Germans have no existence—what's Hecuba to them or they to Hecuba? There is nothing aggressive about the British Occupation. The Army goes about its business, acts justly, and avoids unnecessary pinpricks and irritations. The bitterness of the war has left a considerable aftermath which colours conversation, but the inherent British sense of decency and fair play rules the situation in practice. It would offend that sense of fair play to keep kicking a man, however much disliked, when he was down and out.

The Germans on their side have learnt fully to appreciate the merits of the British rule. Well-to-do people have a lively sense of the protection and security afforded by the Occupying Army. The German bourgeoisie live in terror of the new might of the working-classes. Though the first impression on arrival may be one of comfort and prosperity, there is in fact but a very thin veneer of order covering anarchy below. Germans speak with dismay of the appalling increase in crime and theft since the war. Hunger is responsible for much of the petty pilfering which goes on, but it is clear that all manner of violent elements hide their heads out of fear and fear alone. The German police are responsible for the normal daily life of the town and area, but Thomas Atkins, good-natured and indifferent, is the power behind the throne, and it is thanks to his presence that the

German writ runs and is obeyed among the Rhinelanders.

At the same time I am sceptical as to the spread of Bolshevik ideas on any large scale among the German nation outside certain industrial circles. The genius of the race is essentially law-abiding and orderly. If it is allowed to eat and to work, and is not kept artificially in a state of hunger and unemployment, the country will, I believe, in time settle down. Bolshevism is a disease drawing its strength from hunger and despair. It is only dangerous when such conditions exist or are provoked by a short-sighted policy of fear and reprisals. "Oh, I should like to see Germany go Bolshevik for a time and all the people killing one another," was the genial remark I overheard once in England, the speaker being an English civilian. I do not think this wish will be gratified, but what the speaker and his kind forget is that Bolshevism is a disease which can be treated by no *cordon sanitaire*, and that the spread of ruin and confusion in Central Europe means that the same evil spectres will knock assuredly at our own doors. The fatal habit of "thinking war" still dominates whole classes of people throughout the Allied countries. But the business of the hour is peace, and to be a laggard about peace to-day is as criminal as to have been a laggard about war when Europe and civilisation stood menaced.

CHAPTER III

THE KÖLNER DOM

IN the Wallraf-Richartz Museum, where, after the manner of German collections, pictures and antiques, both good and bad, jostle each other with small regard to quality, a series of modern frescoes execrable in colour and design decorate the main staircase. The artist has been at pains to cover the walls with various incidents, allegorical and otherwise, in the long history of Cologne. The final fresco is the most entertaining of the series. It represents the scene in 1842 when Frederick William IV. visited Cologne on a memorable occasion. In this year work was resumed on the ruined and neglected shell of the cathedral, and the citizens of Cologne dedicated themselves anew to the task of making a success of the failure of centuries. The King attended in person to inaugurate the great effort. Frederick William had many of the showy and histrionic qualities for which his great-nephew was conspicuous, and like William II. was by way of having a great deal of taste in artistic matters—most of it bad. Blessed with the gift of fluent speech, he adored ceremonial occasions, especially those on which he could pose before Europe as a patron of the Muses.

In the Wallraf-Richartz Museum fresco the foundation stone of the new building has been well and truly laid. Brawny workmen in the foreground haul about imposing blocks of stone and deal purposefully with a

huge floral decoration. Frederick William, on a platform raised above the assembled company, is looking heavenwards with rapt expression, as though following through the clouds the flight of some fiery chariot. Particularly impressive is a row of city fathers in full evening dress, wearing decorations, who with hands tightly clasped across their stomachs stand meek and simpering in the royal presence.

This ludicrous painting is an unworthy memorial of what was in fact a high and spirited adventure. The completion of the Dom after centuries of failure and decay was a great task, finely conceived and finely carried through. The wave of national feeling and national self-consciousness, which developed and spread through Germany from the middle of the last century onwards, found a practical symbol to which it could rally in this work of reconstruction. As year by year columns and towers rose higher on the banks of the Rhine, and the great neglected fane began to assume the lines dreamt of centuries before by its long-dead architect, the German saw in this miracle an image of the resurrection of his own country. Germany had been a ruin, destroyed and at the feet of a conqueror. Germany too had triumphed over destruction and failure. Through her new-found unity she was rising, like the walls of the cathedral, to a position of power and authority undreamt of before. Little wonder that the rejoicings held in honour of the final completion of the work in 1880, a date following closely on the Franco-Prussian War, assumed a national character and were invested with considerable pomp and circumstance.

No cathedral in the world has had so strange and

chequered a history as that of Cologne. The hearts of many master builders were broken over it. The mediaeval difficulties of construction were enormous. The building even of the beautiful thirteenth-century choir suffered severely from the fierce civic and ecclesiastical feuds which raged at that time between the town and the archbishops. Many legends are connected with the name of Meister Gerhard, the architect whose main ideas are embodied in the Dom as it stands to-day. Germany is under debt to France for the greatest of her Gothic churches. To Amiens, where Gerhard lived and studied, Cologne Cathedral owes its inspiration. The thirteenth-century choir, an architectural gem of the first order, follows closely the lines of Amiens Cathedral. Few examples of early Gothic are more pure or more perfect. Meister Gerhard, in despair at the delays which beset his work, entered, so the story runs, into a very unsuccessful wager with the devil as regards the completion of the cathedral. When the bet was lost he flung himself, to save his soul, from the scaffolding. There is no evidence to show that Meister Gerhard came to a violent end, but the story is significant as a testimony to the difficulties from which the building of the Dom suffered. These difficulties became accentuated in the time of Meister Gerhard's successors. The choir fortunately struggled to completion, and in 1322 the bones of the Three Kings, the most precious of all Cologne relics, were deposited with great pomp in their new shrine. But the noble design of the nave fell on evil days, and after the varying vicissitudes of several generations work was finally abandoned, leaving a great torso instead of the church as originally planned. For centuries the half-completed aisles mocked

the vision of the early master builders. Little by little the nave, which was shut off by a wall from the choir, fell into complete decay. In 1796 it was used by the occupying French Army as a magazine and stable. Some progress had been made with the south tower before work was finally abandoned. But in modern times trees were growing in the ruins of the tower, and a derelict crane, stranded high aloft on a pile of stones and rubbish, was an object of interest to casual visitors.

Withal a vague hope persisted through the centuries that some day, somehow, Cologne Cathedral would stand on the banks of the Rhine in the majesty of the completed design of which Meister Gerhard had dreamt. For centuries the hope seemed vain indeed. When some years after the War of Liberation the architect Zwirner championed the idea of a completed Dom, the response of popular enthusiasm was immediate and complete. The building as finished follows faithfully the ideas of the mediaeval architect, a fact for which we have to thank an extraordinary chapter of accidents.

The story of the original plans, which were recovered in the loft of an inn, reads like a fairy tale. Before the Napoleonic wars the plans of the cathedral were kept in the chapter-house. During the French occupation, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, they were removed for greater safety to a Benedictine monastery. The monastery was broken up and the forgotten and neglected designs came eventually into the possession of a private family, who used the great sheets of parchment for drying beans. Subsequently the son of the house went to Darmstadt for educational purposes. His anxious mother thought the young man's clothes would be kept clean and

dry if his box were lined with the stout parchment sheets which had rendered useful service in the case of the beans. The youth took up his residence in Darmstadt at the Gasthaus zur Traube. Internal evidence shows that, once away from the vigilant maternal eye, the care of his clothes must have suffered. The coverings intended to protect his garments from dust and damp were cast aside with youthful recklessness. The scrolls, still carrying their hidden treasure of the great design of the west end of the cathedral, were thrown away and consigned as litter to the loft of the inn. There they were discovered by a carpenter sufficiently intelligent to appreciate their importance. From his hands they passed into those of a painter, and eventually after a journey via Paris were returned to Cologne. They hang to-day in a chapel of the choir.

The stone from which the cathedral is built is quarried in the Drachenfels. Unfortunately it is soft and perishable, and constant repairs are necessary. Nearly a million sterling was spent on completing the building, a modest sum for so considerable a work judged by the spacious standards of our own spendthrift time. The funds were raised from pious founders, from state help, and from lotteries. Whether or not you admire the exterior of the cathedral—personally the answer is in the negative—there can be nothing but praise for the enterprise which made a success of the failure of the centuries and the fine solid work to which the completed Dom bears witness. In 1880, six hundred years after the original founding of the cathedral by Archbishop Conrad, the final stone of the giant blossom crowning the south tower was swung into place in the presence of the Emperor William I.

Not only in Cologne, but throughout the whole of Germany, the completion of the cathedral was a signal for an outburst of pride and joy. National enthusiasm knew no bounds. There were festivals and feastings and pageants. Looking back on the rejoicings from our own standpoint of a stricken world, we can recognise of what tragic events they were the starting point. To keep a cool head when steering on a full tide of success is a test of character more severe in its searching than the patient bearing of adversity. Under that test the new-made German Empire broke down rapidly. By 1880 Germany was launched on the career which, soon transcending all that is legitimate in national virility and self-consciousness, was to bring her ultimately, through pride and aggression, to defeat and downfall.

From the cannon captured in the French war a bell known as the Kaiser-Glocke was cast, which became in a special sense the tutelary genius of the cathedral. Only on rare and solemn occasions was the Kaiser-Glocke heard. Then as its deep note boomed across the waters of the Rhine, the citizens of Cologne thrilled with proud memories of conquest and restored national life. The cannon of a conquered foe are symbols of death, destruction, and defeat. To convert them as trophies of victory into bells which call men and women to the service of God and the worship of the Prince of Peace, is an act of paganism removed as by the poles from rudimentary Christian ethic. But though the mills of God grind slowly they grind exceeding small, as the fate of the great bell was to prove.

In the spring of 1918, owing to the acute shortage of metal, the Kaiser-Glocke shared the doom of many other of the fine Cologne church bells. To-day its great cham-

ber stands bare and empty. The people of the town were in despair. The passing of the bell was to them a symbol of the passing of victory. But the grim needs of the hour in the matter of munitions had to be met at any cost. Born of the things of death, to the things of death the bell returned. Reconverted into a gun, and lost on the Western Front—was ever warning more sombre as to the vanity of human desires and the perils which wait on human arrogance?

As to the architectural merits of the cathedral, opinion is and is likely to remain divided. To me at least the exterior is thoroughly unsatisfactory. Especially when viewed from a distance the proportions though massive are ungainly. It dominates the plain by its size, an unwieldy colossus too high for its length. The openwork spires sit heavily on the towers, and lack the great élan and heavenward spring of buildings such as Chartres or Salisbury. But the interior is a different matter. I cannot explain why proportions which externally fail to satisfy are harmonious and beautiful within. The choir, the apse, the long forest of columns carrying the nave, the spring of the vast western arch between the towers—all this is Gothic in its strength and beauty. The splendid glass of the north aisle has vanished temporarily. It was taken down during the air-raids period, and the hour of its restoration is likely to tarry. Much of the remaining glass is poor and modern, and the general effect of the nave suffers severely from this fact.

In the course of months I have learnt to know Cologne Cathedral intimately and under many different aspects. It is what a cathedral should be, the central pulse of the religious life of the town. Unlike the barren preaching

houses to which Protestantism has reduced the old Gothic churches, the great building has warmth and atmosphere. Before the shrines and altars, at all hours throughout the day, rich and poor alike may be found at prayer. Sometimes I have seen three or four little children come in shyly, hand in hand, and kneel down before the High Altar. Then, having fulfilled the duty with which they have been clearly charged by their elders, they may be found outside a moment later, chattering and playing, on the great flight of steps leading down to the square. Sometimes peasant women with their market baskets will come in for a moment and bend low before the Mother of God. Under the coloured scarves are humble patient faces, lined with care and want. The heavy baskets rest for a brief space on the broad pavement of the aisle as these poor children of the soil, kneeling among the fruits of their labours, raise inarticulate prayers to heaven.

At no point can the German character produce contradictions so supreme as over the question of religion. The extent to which the practice of religion, however exact and devout, can remain external to a man's life is an unhappy fact with which all religious systems and creeds are too familiar. Germany perhaps supplies the supreme example. But to any one like myself who has seen a good deal of Catholic worship in Germany, the puzzle is necessarily acute. In no country of the world, certainly in no Catholic country, have I ever found myself among congregations so earnest and so devout. Catholicism in the Rhineland has a touch of almost Protestant austerity, thanks to which its services are wholly devoid of the tawdry fripperies which will often make the hearing of Mass, say in Italy or in parts of France, seem perfunctory

and insincere. In Catholic Germany the services strike a note of great dignity and reverence. There is no talking, no moving about, no coming and going. Among the thousands of English people who have passed through Cologne since the Occupation, few have any knowledge of the extraordinary congregations which, Sunday after Sunday, fill the cathedral to overflowing; congregations three parts composed of men of all ages and conditions. A Franciscan monk, Father Dionysius, whose fame is widely spread throughout the Rhineland, holds these great congregations spellbound week by week.

Men of God, those sons of the Spirit who arise wherever the Spirit listeth, transcend all limits of race and creed and clime. To that rare company this German monk belongs. An orator of the first rank, it is not his oratory which compels, but the nobility of his personality and the purely spiritual appeal of his doctrine. The face is not typically ecclesiastical—it is too broad, too fine, too human. It has humour also, for the Father can use at will the lash of a fine irony.

It may not be popular to attribute such qualities to a German. "How can you go and listen to one of these brutes?" is a remark more than once addressed to me in Cologne. But in putting on record my impressions of Germany, it is not my object to minister to race hatreds, but to describe things good and bad alike as I saw them. The riddle of the German at prayer is difficult indeed. We write him off as a brute and a materialist. Yet will our own countrymen, artisans, professional men, shopkeepers, stand for hours and listen to doctrines dealing with the first principles of faith and of the things which concern a man's soul? What would be the feelings of the average

Church of England clergyman if, instead of a thin and depressing congregation mainly composed of elderly ladies, men in the prime of life crowded out his church? For great though the reputation of Father Dionysius, there is nothing peculiar in the Dom services. Other churches are equally well attended and equally full. The atmosphere is perfectly genuine and sincere. There is nothing hypocritical about it. The people mean what they are saying at the time they say it. And then before one's eyes rises the memory of a whole series of evil and ugly deeds—cruelty to prisoners, callousness to suffering, arrogance, brutality, a cynical disregard of the first principles which in any decent society regulate the relations between man and man. Where has the application of religion gone wrong? I have often wondered what the services in the Dom must have been during the weeks when the full agony of defeat and surrender fell upon the Germans—black hours for preacher and for congregation alike.

The service at which Father Dionysius preaches on Sunday morning is a short sung mass following on High Mass. There is no choir, but the congregation themselves sing old German chorales while mass is going on. Every seat in the nave is filled nearly an hour before the service begins: to obtain standing room in the neighbourhood of the pulpit it is necessary to be there at least twenty minutes beforehand. By the time mass begins, the vast nave and side aisles of the cathedral are crowded from the doors to the altar. The effect of the thousands of voices singing the fine old German music in unison is without parallel in my experience. No act of congregational worship in which I have ever taken part can be compared with it. The music, soaring under the great vaulted roof,

seems to be caught up in the forest of arches and to echo back again to earth.

“Hier liegt vor Deiner Majestät
Im Staub die Christenschaar,
Das Herz zu Dir, o Gott, erhöht,
Die Augen zum Altar.”

The service begins with this ancient chorale, and as voice after voice joins in the effect is indescribable. During the solemn moments of the mass practically the whole congregation kneels. Often as I have watched some fat square-headed German singing the words of petition and penitence, or bending humbly before the Host, I have asked myself in utter bewilderment what it all means. How are we to reconcile the discrepancy between the sincerity and devotion of such worshippers, and the darker, more sinister sides of the German character? The Rhineland, a Catholic country civilised originally by ancient Rome, is not Prussia. But it is thoroughly German in sentiment and outlook. “Pious Cologne” had a bad reputation for the treatment of our prisoners. I have known personally two officers who were spat upon by well-dressed women in the railway station. Stories well attested were told me of wounded prisoners who were insulted when marched through the streets. Many cases of cruelty, often of gross cruelty, are proved. To shut our eyes to such facts, or to minimise them, is as foolish as to write off the whole German people as bred of Beelzebub. The passions roused by years of bitter warfare do not subside with any formal signing of peace. Yet to see things steadily, and to see them whole, is of all difficult principles the most essential in our relations with Germany.

The future of Europe and of Western civilisation largely turns on our power to place these discrepant facts side by side, to recognise that both are true and then to strike some balance between them. It is extraordinarily difficult to judge what the incidence of brutality was among the Germans during the war; how far it was natural, how far deliberately stimulated by those in authority. Our own gallant Hun hunters, who glowed with patriotic pride and satisfaction over the persecution of some wretched hairdresser or inoffensive nursery governess, are a sorry proof as to the ease with which vile instincts can be cultivated and spread. The overwhelming majority of the English in Cologne arrive with rigid ready-made ideas about the country and people, and they do not part from them willingly. They feel it below their dignity to study the Boche dispassionately, to watch him at work, at play, at prayer. But if we are concerned in this distracted world not to rest perpetually in the barren measures of strife, then it may be worth while to consider dispassionately what qualities the Germans possess which hold out some hope for the future. From this aspect it seems to me that Cologne Cathedral and its congregations are worthy of attention. The heart of every man is an altar, neglected, desecrated perhaps, but never forfeiting its right to serve the divine purpose. The sacred fire may burn low, but so long as one votary remains, holden though his eyes may be, the fire can never know extinction. A spark from heaven may fall again upon the ashes so that they blaze upwards into a pure light of truth and knowledge. Is it for us to say that no such spark can fall, that the shrine must remain for ever unworthy?

CHAPTER IV

ON THE DOM PLATZ

IF the Dom is the central point of the religious life of Cologne, the Dom Platz is no less the central point of official and ceremonial life in the town. During the last eighteen months the massive towers of the cathedral have looked down on strange and, to German eyes, unwelcome scenes. It is all part of the German temperament to have a great affection for reviews, and parades, and processions. What is obvious and pompous makes a real appeal. When in old days the Uhlans clattered down the street and sabres were rattled, the average German standing meekly on the pavement was filled with pride at this visible demonstration of "Weltmacht." Among the minor trials of the Occupation, the absence of the great military displays common under the old régime has been a sorrow to the natives of Cologne. One morning a military band struck up under the windows where I was talking with my Fräulein. She nearly jumped from her seat and I saw her eyes fill with tears: "We had such wonderful bands in old days," she said sadly. But the large majority of her fellow-citizens are less sensitive. "Quand on n'a pas ce que l'on aime il faut aimer ce que l'on a"—a sensible doctrine on which apparently the Boche acts. For his habit of turning up in large numbers at every function held by the English on the cathedral square is sufficiently surprising.

Can we imagine a German parade held in front of Buckingham Palace to which the inhabitants of London would flock? We should, full of rage and mortification, be burying our heads and ears in the remotest quarters of the suburbs. But the Germans, in this as in other respects so strangely constituted, have apparently no feelings on the subject. They attend in large numbers and follow the proceedings with deep interest. On occasions when I have been among the crowd myself, I have not seen or heard any signs of hostility. In early days the conscript Army of the Occupation was hardly up to the standard which Prussianism had exacted of its legions. But criticism at least was never audible. There have been reviews in later times on the Dom Platz which could hold their own with any of the past. Often have I longed to see what was going on inside the shaved square heads of the spectators as the British troops marched by. What were the Germans thinking about these trained and disciplined men belonging to the conquering Army they had been taught to despise? For how great a gamut of failure and disillusion these khaki-clad ranks must stand!

The Tanks are always impressive as they lumber along, menacing as some prehistoric monster. They must be unpleasant objects to meet on the battlefield if your side does not happen to hold the counter to them. Many German eyes follow them as they waddle about the square. In lighter vein, the Highlanders, as always abroad, excite a great deal of interest. "We saw your Scottish troops," is the invariable remark after a review, and then follow endless inquiries as to the why and wherefore of such extraordinary clothes. A ring of Germans at a race meeting collected round the very excellent band of the

Black Watch and applauding the music is a memory which survives. In the early days of the Occupation it was an order to salute the colours and remove hats when God Save the King was played. But though the order has long since been repealed the habit persists. The large majority of German hats come off when the National Anthem begins. With a different government and ideals a people so tractable might have been led in a direction widely different from that which has overwhelmed themselves and others in ruin.

Many striking ceremonies have been held in the Dom Platz under English rule. Great figures and great names concerned with the making of history have played their parts in them. We have welcomed the generals to whom France owes her salvation—Joffre, who came unofficially and seemed a little bored at being shown off; Foch, the conqueror, who arrived early one cold spring morning only to find Germans, anxious to have a look at him, clinging figuratively to every crocket of the cathedral. Photographers are busy on these occasions; very interesting is a picture of Marshal Joffre and Sir William Robertson standing alone together on the north terrace of the cathedral. The steps were strewn at the moment with unhewn blocks of stone brought there for restoration purposes. The stone, solid and rugged, seemed to symbolise the characters of both men—soldiers not easily moved from their purpose or their duty. We have received the Army Council in state, and the politicians have looked at the crowd and the crowd at the politicians. Mr. Winston Churchill—grey frock coat and top hat to match—has been duly admired. We have commemorated great events and decorated our brothers in arms among the Allied

Armies. Then on the morrow, in sharp contrast to the military display; may follow some great Catholic ceremonial, wholly German in character.

Religious processions lend much variety and colour to street life in Cologne. Throughout the summer months each parish has a procession every Sunday morning; long rows of priests, nuns, children, and parishioners walk through the streets carrying banners, flowers, and emblems. The central point of the procession is the canopy under which the priest carries the Host. Red-robed acolytes swing censers as they move slowly along. Altars are erected at convenient halting points in the streets, where prayers are said and hymns chanted. The pavement is strewn with green boughs, houses are decorated, and the faithful erect shrines with crucifixes, sacred images, candles, flowers, etc. These local festivals culminate in the most famous of all Cologne processions—that of Corpus Christi. On that day every ecclesiastic, great and small, from the Archbishop downwards, as well as every Catholic guild and society, take part in an elaborate and impressive tour of the town. The vestments are of a gorgeous character. The uniforms worn by the guilds are of quaint design and many-coloured. The centuries roll backwards, and for a brief space the finger of the Middle Ages touches the modern city. The procession concludes with a service in the cathedral, and the great company of people winding across the square with banners and emblems and passing up the steps suggests some mediaeval picture. Religious processions are the only German pageants which survive to-day on the Dom Platz. One event alone on the square, brief but memorable, has concerned conquerors and conquered alike—

the first commemoration of the Armistice on 11th November 1919. Yet of all my recollections of the square it remains the most impressive.

A bitter morning with a blizzard driving across the river; snowflakes drift disconsolately over the square, as though doubtful of trying conclusions with the sombre pile of the cathedral surveying the scene with gloomy aloofness. Under foot dirt and slush. From every corner of the square whistles a wind which pierces through furs and coats. Yet the usual crowd of German spectators are there, pressing as is their wont on the ranks of the men in khaki who line the square. No less crowded are the cathedral steps, on which stand a row of trumpeters. I came late, to find to my surprise that my neighbours are nearly all Germans. In spite of the dreadful weather there is little movement among the crowd. People speak under their breath, as though in the presence of some great solemnity. English and Germans alike, we are thinking of our dead. For a moment we draw near to one another in the consciousness of common sorrow, common loss, common pride. The snow drives in our faces, the merciless wind searches out the shivering crowd cowering under its umbrellas.

Then the hour strikes, and a word of command rings out from the half-obliterated square, where the khaki lines can be seen dimly through the driving snow. Umbrellas are lowered; cruel though the weather, German hats are all removed. A lad standing near me, obviously cold and shivering, shows signs of keeping his cap on; an older German man has it off in a moment. The trumpeters step forward on the cathedral steps, and in a silence

broken only by the moaning of the wind the Last Post is heard. For most British folks those familiar notes, which salute the sinking sun and say farewell to the dead, are at all times full of poignant memory. But never surely have they been heard under conditions more poignant than in the heart of an enemy town on the first anniversary of the Armistice. Is it two minutes or two hours that we stand in that unbroken silence—no sound, no murmur, no movement from the dense crowd? For the men and women on the square, be they British or German, what memories are packed into those tense moments! The snow falls fitfully: again a word of command is heard: the brief ceremony is over.

So we salute our glorious dead, and who is ungenerous enough in such an hour to withhold respect from the brave men among our foes who fell in the service of their country doing their duty as simply as those whose names and memories we cherish? "So long as men are doing their duty, even if it be greatly under a misapprehension, they are leading pattern lives," writes Robert Louis Stevenson. Strife and bitterness belong to the things temporal. We may rest assured that the heroes of all races who meet and greet each other in Valhalla will drink without hatred in their hearts from the cup of reconciliation.

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Felix von Hartmann, Cardinal Archbishop of Cologne, is dead. For a week he has lain in state in the crypt of the Gereonskirche, watched by day and by night by monks and nuns who pray unceasingly for the repose of his soul. Round the bier ablaze with candles pours a steady stream of spectators and mourners. The faithful have come in

their thousands to bid farewell to the chief shepherd of the flock. For the Archbishop of Cologne is the greatest ecclesiastical dignitary in Germany. Cologne is the premier See, and in old days the rank of its Archbishop stood second only to that of the Emperor; Cardinal von Hartmann's death must have stirred some painful memories in the breast of the Amerongen exile. Emperor and Cardinal, despite their differences of faith, were firm friends. Felix von Hartmann was a Prussian of the Prussians, and united by many personal ties to the Kaiser. Even in death the face had lost nothing of its pride and haughtiness. He looked every inch of a Prince of the Church and a ruler of men as he lay at the last on his bier. The gorgeous vestments, the pastoral staff, the great ring worn on the red gloves covering the nerveless hands: all this was impressive and dignified. But it was not a countenance even in the great calm of death which bore much trace of the milder Christian virtues.

Cardinal von Hartmann took a violently pro-national line about the war. Race hatreds and animosities were fanned, not discouraged by him. His correspondence with Cardinal Mercier shows how perfunctory were his efforts as regards any alleviation of the lot of prisoners or the civilian victims of the struggle. Bitterly anti-English, the proud Prussian Cardinal must have suffered a full measure of humiliation when he lived to see his cathedral city in British Occupation. Some Tommies unacquainted with Catholic ritual, who saw him in the street one day wearing a mitre and greeted him as Father Christmas, roused his special ire. A man of war rather than a man of peace, the British authorities were under no obligations to him as regards any assistance with their task. Now

he lies dead it falls to their lot, by an irony specially cruel in the Archbishop's case, to keep order at his funeral.

In old days, so my Fräulein tells me, the funeral of an Archbishop of Cologne was a tremendous event. The Emperor in all probability would have attended in person. The occasion would have lent itself to a great military display, soldiers lining the route, the Prussian Guard adding lustre to the scene. Shorn of all its pomp and ceremony must the occasion necessarily be in view of the Occupation. But it was the weather which conspired to make a melancholy event still more depressing. Never have I seen a more dismal ceremony than that of the Archbishop's funeral, which was held, of course, within the Dom. Rain and sleet descended mercilessly, while squalls of wind swept the square. The long procession of priests, monks, nuns, students, and children was wet and draggled. The white-robed choristers and the acolytes carrying ineffectual candles were no less dripping. Particularly miserable looked a detachment of unfortunate orphan children whose thin clothes and shoes were soaked by the penetrating rain. The monks and nuns and other ecclesiastics had provided themselves sensibly with umbrellas, but withal the wonderful vestments with their lace and embroidery must have suffered severely. There is always a wind on the Dom Platz, and to-day the angry gusts led to many struggles between umbrellas and their holders. In default of soldiers the numerous student guilds in their many coloured uniforms had turned out in force. They alone with their banners struck a note which varied the drabness of the scene. But the pitiless rain beat down on them and caused the gay flags to hang faded and colourless. It was as though some wind devil had established

itself opposite the main entrance of the cathedral and was bent on plaguing the Archbishop's mourners. Banner after banner was caught by the wind and overthrown at that point; portly ecclesiastics were swept off their feet; nuns held on despairingly to their great white caps which threatened to fly away. Despite the leaden sky and pouring rain the square was crowded with spectators.

Keeping the line were a few British Military Police mounted on their fine grey horses. England is not given to pompous advertisements of her strength, and the might of the Empire is symbolised rather than represented by this handful of men. At the head of the whole procession, as it wound its way singing solemn chants from the Gereonskirche to the cathedral, rode a detachment of the same mounted police. As the familiar grey horses appeared, who could fail to reflect on the ironical staging of events in which Fate so often seems to delight? It is not only that the accounts are balanced. A spirit of fine mockery appears not infrequently over the audit. That the police of the detested enemy power should clear the way when Cardinal von Hartmann of all men was carried to his last resting-place, is a circumstance to give pause to the proud when life flows apparently in prosperous channels.

At last came the modest black bier, drawn by two decrepit-looking horses, in which the coffin of the Cardinal was placed. As was becoming in a Prince of the Church, there were no flowers or decorations of any kind. A group of high ecclesiastics surrounded the bier, and the melancholy chanting of the choristers, together with the prayers of the priests, rose like incense to the grey unfriendly heaven. Everything was wet and cold and drab and

shabby. Perhaps the most dismal touch in a dismal ceremonial was the unusual sight of two German officers in full uniform who walked behind the coffin. They had come by permission from the Bridgehead to do honour to the Archbishop. These forlorn-looking representatives of the broken military power, what bitter memories the situation must hold for them as they find themselves face to face with the khaki police keeping order in Cologne!

The bier halted before the west door of the Dom. Black-robed monks carried the coffin swiftly up the steps. As it passed within the great main portal the thick black line of the spectators broke at last, and a vast crowd of people poured across the square and followed the procession through the open doors into the cathedral. The crowd was so dense that you might have thought all Cologne was on the square. Yet the vast Dom had no difficulty in absorbing the mass of men and women who flocked up the steps and disappeared within. When shortly afterwards I made my own way across to the cathedral, there was still ample room in the nave to move about freely. The choir was hung in black and silver and myriad electric lights defined the exquisite outlines of the pointed arches. The coffin rested under a black and silver catafalque. Everything was severe and dignified without one tawdry note. The solemn funeral mass was very lengthy. A brother bishop preached about the virtues and qualities of the dead Cardinal. Then at a given moment all the bells—those that remain of the cathedral—were tolled, and from every church in Cologne bells tolled in reply. The coffin had been lowered to its resting-place near the High Altar; Felix von Hartmann had vanished forever from the scene of his labours. The weather,

whimsical to the last, had changed its mind while the service was going on. I came out into bright sunshine on the cathedral steps. Having ruined the procession and soaked the pious, it was now pleased to be fine.

Unfortunately I was not in Cologne for the more cheerful ceremony of the enthronement of the new Archbishop, Dr. Schultz. Cardinal von Hartmann's successor is at present a somewhat unknown quantity in public affairs. But if he lacks the commanding appearance and aristocratic features of his predecessor, Dr. Schultz is in many ways a more attractive personality. His face is wise and benevolent; a face which gives the impression not only of goodness but of good sense. Republican rule in Germany must result in many changes in the relations of the Church and State. Hot controversy already rages about various points, in particular the burning question of religious education in the schools. That men of wisdom and moderation should hold high positions in Germany is a matter of importance, not only to their own country but to the Allies as well. Honesty and goodwill on the part of all concerned are essential to the growth of a better understanding. If the new Archbishop of Cologne can make some contribution to this end, he will have deserved well of his country and his church.

CHAPTER V

BILLETS

EVERY billet has its crab. To that rule there is, I believe, no exception. The crab may be physical or moral, but the crab exists. Conquerors and conquered come up against each other in a peculiarly intimate way when sheltered by the same roof. Stop and reflect on the conditions under which we English live in German houses, and the marvel is not that friction sometimes arises, but that friction is not chronic.

Under the terms of the Peace Treaty the German authorities in the Occupied Areas are bound to provide housing, light, and firing, together with service, plate, and house linen, for Allied officers and their families. The number of rooms allotted varies according to rank, additional rooms if wanted must be paid for by the officer in question. Into the middle of these German families, therefore, we arrive bag and baggage, occupy by rights the principal rooms, while the owners squeeze into the remainder as best they may. All of which is *la guerre*, and when we reflect on the behaviour of the German armies in France and Belgium, we can only feel that Cologne and the Rhineland have little to grumble about. The war was not of our making, and between the two alternatives of sitting in the German houses or the Germans sitting in ours, naturally we prefer the former.

German houses reveal a great deal about the German

character. The spirit of a people is bound to impress itself on their daily surroundings, and German virtues and German faults are writ large over the residential quarters of Cologne. On the material side the houses are admirable. They are sound, well-built, excellent examples of good solid workmanship. Excellent too are all the material appointments. Hot and cold water, baths, electric light, first-rate kitchen apparatus—every practical comfort and convenience exists which simplifies life for the housewife. Central heating is the rule. There are no fires or fireplaces, though some houses have an open grate in the principal room for auxiliary gas, or wood. At first the hearthless rooms are very cheerless, but by degrees you discover virtue in the even temperature of the house. Also the saving in dirt and the saving in labour are considerable. No less excellent are all the fittings, window sashes, doors, floors, etc. Everything dovetails perfectly; there are no draughts, no signs of jerry-building. All that is material is handled with complete efficiency.

But beauty—here we come to the ground with a crash. Never were houses, taking them all round, so ugly and so devoid of taste. The furniture and pictures give one a pain across the eyes. *Objets d'art*, costly and incongruous, are jumbled together in the wildest confusion. I have been in drawing-rooms in which Flemish tapestries, Japanese lacquer, Louis xv. chairs, Meshrebiya work from Cairo, Indian embroideries, bastard Jacobean chairs, Chinese dragons, and modern Dresden shepherdesses were locked together in a deadly conflict to which the Hindenburg line must have been child's play. Robust oil paintings usually look down on the struggle. Admirable

though the German taste in music, the race appears to be without eyes as regards the plastic arts. The degree to which the things of the spirit have atrophied in modern Germany is writ large across these dwelling-places. In their material excellence, as in their aesthetic failures, they are a true touchstone of the race.

Meanwhile, surely no Army of Occupation was ever so well housed or so comfortable as we are. Human nature being what it is, competition about billets is naturally keen. *Bcati possidentes* is the happy state of those who have secured the best accommodation in the palaces of the local plutocracy. Yet withal some of us never shake off a sense of discomfort and oppression as regards conditions of life so radically artificial. There is something very depressing in the general atmosphere of a conquered people. Even when your personal relations with the German household are pleasant, the feeling remains. Too great a stream of blood and tears has flowed between the Germans and ourselves. It is impossible to forget the sufferings and trials which have led up to our presence on the Rhine, even though the sufferings are not confined to one side. A very small grain of imagination is necessary in order to realise what a military occupation would have meant to us. Admittedly, if the war had come to a different end, we should have felt to the full the weight of the Prussian jackboot. The Boche as a conqueror can be intolerable—swollen-headed, swaggering, brutal. Victory would have intensified tenfold every bad quality the race possesses. But leaving aside any question of personal outrage and indignity, what should we have felt as to the hard fact of the conqueror established on our

hearths, even though the conqueror brought with him standards of justice and decent behaviour?

Let us imagine our houses invaded by Prussian officers who would have demanded as by right the best rooms and the best appointments. Let us further imagine they bring German servants, who are installed in the basement and have to work somehow with our English maids. I often ponder the situation in the terms of my own household. What I always feel is that, hard though it would have been to endure the presence of the officers, the final straw would have been the arrival of their womenkind and children. The invasion of one's home by fat German Fraus would have proved the final and most bitter filling up of the cup. As a race we should have taken the inevitable billeting consequences of an occupation ill indeed. Conflicts would have been numerous, and the heavy Prussian hand would have driven us down into even lower depths of misery.

Now nothing of this sort exists in Cologne. Primarily the English are not Germans, and cordially though many of them detest the Boche, the English sense of decency and fair play checks any furtive growths of Prussianism among our own people. The average English person in Cologne is not concerned to ruffle it as a conqueror, but to enjoy life as much as possible under conditions so pleasant and so comfortable. But also the Germans are not English, and it is all part of the mental equipment of these people that they accept, quite as a matter of course, conditions which would drive us frantic. Nothing has surprised me more than the philosophy with which they endure our presence. Detestable as conquerors, they behave exceedingly well as conquered. I can only conclude

this attitude is all part of the war game to which they have been trained. They play to win and are ruthless when the prizes fall to their lot. But equally they are taught to take defeat without whining, and to accept its trials as a matter of course. The Germans of the Occupied Area have been, generally speaking, correct and dignified in their attitude. They are neither subservient nor aggressive. Their lack of imagination as a race, and the three extra skins of which I have spoken elsewhere, no doubt help them over situations which would be unendurable to more sensitive people.

But I must repeat every billet has its crab. English society in Cologne is provided with two standing subjects of small talk unknown to us at home. The hard-worked weather is able to have a rest while we discuss in detail the shortcomings and idiosyncrasies of our *Fraus* or the hideousness of the furniture in our billets. "What a trial for you to have to live with these dreadful pictures," is a common gambit when you go out to tea. As I have said before, the utter lack of taste of the average German house is apt to hit you between the eyes, and not only do we examine each other's billets with care, but criticism is audible.

It is to be hoped that the habit will not become chronic. Otherwise some of us who are absent-minded will be in difficulties when we return home. I can see myself looking round the ugly house of a dear friend and remarking genially, "What shocking taste the people who live here must have—did you ever see such ghastly furniture?"

But if we on our side discuss our *Fraus*, assuredly the *Fraus* at their various *Kaffee-Klatsches* discuss their English lodgers just as thoroughly. Much shaking of

heads and mutual commiseration must take place as the cups go round. I have no doubt that one story caps another as regards the enormities of the batmen, the dirt and breakages in the kitchen, and the general fecklessness and irresponsibility of the English women whose days are spent not in housework but in pleasure.

Our personal billeting experiences have been fortunate. The house in which we have lived for many months is small as Cologne houses go, but very comfortable. As I have said before, the German house may fail in taste, but it does not fail in the practical advantages of electric light and bathrooms. Our Frau is a widow, a slight, dark, nervous woman more French than German in appearance. She knows her Europe, and travelled annually before the war in Italy and France. French is the language in which we converse. Her attitude towards us was from the first entirely correct and civil; as time went on it has become friendly and pleasant. Insensibly human and personal relations grow up when people live together month after month under the same roof. I shall be sorry to say good-bye, and I hope her recollections of us will not be unpleasant. But despite her politeness and self-control, I have always felt that few women in Cologne can be more tried by the fact of having strangers billeted on her. A housewife with an almost fanatical sense of cleanliness and order, engaged from morning till night in cleaning and tidying, the advent of the English soldiery must have been a burthen hard to bear. Yet like all her race, she accepts the situation outwardly with calm whatever her inner feelings. She was inclined to welcome our advent as we succeeded a mess, and to have a mess in your house is to the German Hausfrau a circle of Inferno to which

there is only one lower stage—having black troops put in.

But if our relations with Madame have always been pleasant, and I am indebted to her for many small acts of kindness, heavy weather has obtained not infrequently below stairs. The crab of our billet is Gertrude, the cross cook who has lived with Madame for many years, and has great weight with her. Gertrude is a lump of respectability, virtue, and disagreeableness. She hates the English with a complete and deadly hatred, and she leaves no stone unturned to make things uncomfortable in the basement. Hence a series of fierce feuds with a succession of soldier servants. I admit the soldier servant is apt to be a trial. How can he be otherwise? Domestic service is a skilled art, and the Army can hardly be regarded as a school for house parlourmaids. I am grieved to say that there is no guile or deception to which an officer will not stoop to secure, by fair means or foul, a batman trained in a pantry. One pearl of great price have I known, an exception to all rules. But good fellows though many of them are, the average batman is apt to be casual and inefficient. His execution among glass and crockery is deadly. I have often wondered, judging from the weekly holocaust, whether it is a rule among soldier servants to play Aunt Sally in the basement with the tall thin-stemmed German wine glasses whose days are so brief and evil. Withal they are generally good-tempered fellows, and in many houses get on quite well with the German servants.

But naturally no Englishman is prepared to receive back-chat from a cross Hun. Consequently in the basement sector of our own house skirmishing is chronic. For some time Gertrude cooked for us, but as her culinary

performances were very moderate, it was no sorrow when one day, after a pitched battle below stairs—a battle of such intensity that murmurs of the strife floated up to us even through the well-fitting doors—she flung down her pots and pans and declared she would roast and boil no more. Since then we have had our own German cook, who has played the part of buffer state between the contending camps, and a far greater measure of peace has prevailed. But all this makes an undercurrent of unpleasantness which reveals how thin is the crust of conventionality on the top of which we live. Gertrude, when the storms were at their worst, never failed to us personally in respect and good manners, but her unfriendly face, sour and virtuous, is a trial about the house. She comes from Düren, which was heavily bombed during the war. Though the Germans initiated air raids, the return of these particular chickens to roost filled them with panic and disgust. Perhaps life has been embittered for Gertrude by the numerous evenings spent in the cellar. Anyway she is an example of the German character in its most unpleasant aspect.

But even in our billet the housemaid, Clara, shows how impossible it is to generalise about the Germans. Clara, a great strapping wench twenty-three years old, is as amiable and as good-tempered as Gertrude is the reverse. Friendly and pleasant, her beaming face puts a smile on the morning. No trouble is too great for her. First-rate at her work—she never stops all day—she is at any time prepared to do all manner of extraneous jobs for me quite outside her duties. A girl of better disposition I have never come across, simple and sincere. Clara has just become engaged to a carpenter, and naturally the

household has been in a state of sympathetic flutter over this affair of the heart. Clara has confided to me many of her doubts and fears on the subject of matrimony. Apparently her own parents were not a united couple, a fact which gave her pause. However, her sister had made a happy marriage, and the numerous perfections of Hermann at last won the day.

The ceremony of being "verlobt" was carried out recently at Essen—the home of the married sister. One wedding day is enough for most people. Not so the German, who manages to wring two ceremonies out of the event. The wedding day is preceded by a family gathering, when the couple are formally betrothed. The wedding ring is solemnly placed on the left hand, to be worn there throughout the engagement, till on marriage it is transferred to the right hand. To break off an engagement once "verlobt" is almost as disgraceful as a divorce. Clara must have looked like a rainbow on this great occasion, judging by the description she gave me of the various colours in her hat and gown. In thoroughly German fashion, food figured prominently in her account of this wonderful day. I suspect that a wish to get two copious meals instead of one out of a marriage lies at the root of the betrothal customs. "Wir haben so gut gegessen und getrunken," she said with a sigh of happy recollection.

Prices are too high, household effects too costly to admit of immediate matrimony, a fact for which Madame is very thankful. Madame thoroughly appreciates Clara's good qualities, and views the worthy Hermann with nothing but hostility. If only some brave man would carry off Gertrude! But there are limits to human

courage, and Gertrude's face is a barrier to adventures of the heart on the part of the stoutest would-be Bräutigam.

When living in a German household it is very necessary to lay down quite firm and definite rules as to your relations with the family. It is unfortunately true that the average German would misunderstand kindness and consideration, unless it is also made perfectly clear that certain things must be done and one will tolerate no nonsense. A great deal of "trying on" takes place in various billets, and it never does to give way. Frontiers should be marked out with exactness, and adhered to no less exactly. A race trained to obedience, the Germans understand an order when they would take advantage of a hesitating request. It is necessary in self-defence to accept their mentality in this respect. The British point of scruple arises in putting forward nothing that is unfair or unjust. On this basis it is possible to live on pleasant terms with the German occupiers. People's billeting experiences vary, of course, considerably. In many cases they are the reflection of their own temperament. Some people adapt themselves to the new conditions and handle them sensibly. Others are always in trouble and are full of grievances about the incivility of their Fraus.

The Germans for whom I have the least sympathy in billeting matters are the owners of the really large houses. Very few members of the former governing class are to be found in the Occupied Area, but the few who remain are disagreeable people. The working-classes speak bitterly of their selfishness during the war and class arrogance under the old régime. These are the people who fostered and fomented all that was arrogant and offensive in latter-day German policy, and it is entirely just and

seemly that the British Army should enjoy the comforts of their luxurious mansions. In an encounter of which I heard between a batman and a German baroness lies the whole philosophy of the Occupation. The baroness was discovered by the officer's wife billeted in her house speechless with rage. Never in her life, so she declared, had she been so insulted. Inquiries were made—batmen and English servants are not allowed to be rude to German householders. It then transpired that the lady, who after the manner of German Fraus was in the habit of haunting her basement at odd hours, found one afternoon two English soldiers belonging to the household sliding on the back stairs and whistling. The lady spoke sharply and told them that whistling and sliding on the banisters were "verboten." Whereupon Thomas Atkins, genial and undefeated, his hand on the stair rail, turned to the angry baroness and remarked pleasantly, "Aye, missus, but yer should have won the war, and then yer could have come and slid down our back stairs and whistled."

CHAPTER VI

CHRISTMAS IN COLOGNE

Xmas 1919

CHRISTMAS-TIME in Germany! I am haunted by the recollection of the beautiful passage in Mr. Clutton Brock's *Thoughts on the War*, a book which many of us read when no improbability seemed greater than that of spending Christmas in Cologne in the wake of a British Army of Occupation: "Forget for a moment the war and wasted Belgium and the ruins of Rheims Cathedral, and think of Germany and all that she means to the mind among the nations of Europe. She means cradle songs and fairy stories and Christmas in old moonlit towns, and a queer, simple tenderness always childish and musical with philosophers who could forget the world in thought like children that play, and musicians who could laugh suddenly like children through all their profundities of sound."

In this same essay Mr. Clutton Brock goes on to say how these Germans of the past were always spoken of as "the good Germans," and the world admired their innocence and imposed upon it. Finally they grew tired of being imposed upon, so they determined to put off their childishness and take their place among the strong nations of the world. What the consequences of that change of attitude have been we all know too well. The good Germans—the simple people who were bullied by their neigh-

hours till they made up their minds to be clever and worldly! If this be the right reading of history, what an immeasurable weight is added to the whole tragedy of the war.

It is to that older, more homely Germany one's thoughts turn at Christmastide. Our Christmas customs are largely German in origin. Christmas trees and candles, Santa Claus with his bag of gifts—all these things are in full swing here. Which of us as a child has not thrilled over *Grimm's Fairy Tales*? And German toys! Not for a moment would patriotism allow us to confess it, but at heart we know we have missed, and continue to miss very badly, the tin soldiers and other varied delights which in old days reached us from the Fatherland. Cologne before Christmas was placarded by a German peace society, begging parents not to rouse military instincts in their children by giving them tin soldiers. The notice was a curious illustration of the many varied opinions surging upwards in Germany to-day, none of which would have dared to find expression under the old régime. But Germany has certainly not disowned its militarism up to the point of perfection aimed at by the enthusiasts of the peace society in question. The Cologne community as a whole made merry over this appeal, and certainly the sale of tin soldiers in the shops did not seem to be affected by it. Never were toy shops so enchanting and fascinating as those of the Höhe Strasse and the Breite Strasse in their Christmas finery. I flattened my nose forlornly against the plate-glass windows, and mourned over the fact that the total of summers and winters standing to my account removed these delights beyond my reach. Troops of excited children flocked in and round the shops,

but for many a German child the matter ended there. Whatever benefits we English may gain by a low exchange, the price of toys in marks this winter makes them prohibitive to all except the well-to-do and the "Schiebers," the expressive name for profiteers.

The German child normally is in a stronger position about Christmas than the English child, for in this country there are two great days for presents and festivities. Early in December arrives St. Nicholas, bringing with him cakes and nuts and sweets. His visits are paid, of course, during the night, and shoes and stockings are, with the hopefulness of youth, left by the bedside for him to fill. On Christmas Day is the Christmas tree with further cakes and presents and delights. German brutality is always difficult to understand in view of the position held by the children and the obvious wealth of care and affection lavished on them. For in even greater measure than in England is Christmas the children's feast. During the holiday season the affairs of their elders are temporarily suspended, while the latter devote themselves to a round of juvenile gaiety and amusement. Children's plays appear at the theatre, even the Opera House abandons Mozart and Wagner and gives special performances of *Hänsel und Gretel* for the benefit of juvenile audiences.

I have no recollection of Germany more pleasant than that of the Opera House filled in Christmas week with a crowd of excited children come to listen to Humperdinck's delightful play. The white frocks filled stalls and boxes like petals of a great bouquet. Large bows of ribbon on the fair heads fluttered like banners in a breeze as the adventures of Hänsel and Gretel and the witch were followed with shrieks of excitement. On one side of me

sat a little English girl, holding on tight to her chair so as not to spring out of it altogether; on the other a little German girl, with a hand thrust firmly into her mouth in order to secure some measure of silence. But as the adventures of the play deepened, the situation proved too much for my small neighbour, who flung herself finally with cries of excitement into her mother's arms. I envied the actors their audience. It must have been a joy to play in an atmosphere of such entire appreciation. When the culminating moment is reached, and clever Hänsel pops the wicked witch into the oven destined for the children, squeals of joy broke out all over the theatre: squeals only to be renewed in intensity when the oven door was reopened and the witch brought out cooked and browned in the shape of an enormous gingerbread. Let us be thankful for the unconsciousness of childhood, keeping alive in the world great treasures of joy and laughter, when the grim realities of post-war Europe oppress our souls.

But if the toy shops and the theatres and the excitement of the children leave nothing to be desired, the weather has refused to play. Never can I remember so damp and dripping and sodden a Christmas. Our cold snap came in November. Then for a brief space we had frosts and red sunsets: those pre-Christmas sunsets when the German mother with a quaint materialism tells her children that "das Christ-kind bäckt"—the Christ Child is baking cakes for Christmas. But there was little baking this year on the part of the Christ Child. Fog and rain enveloped Cologne for days beforehand in a damp and dripping mantle. In a foreign land I found myself missing the hundred and one small duties which at home have to be carried out at Christmas. It is dull work

ordering your presents by post. Even so it was all done, and unless I went out in the wet and looked at the toy shops there was nothing to show Christmas was at hand. Finally I was struck by a bright idea. Why shouldn't we have a Christmas tree? Yes, and presents for the household, including the cross cook. Peace has been signed, and it is the season of peace and goodwill: so why not?

First of all I sounded Maria—this was before the days of the good-tempered Clara. Why shouldn't we have a Christmas tree—every other house in the street was getting ready for one? Maria's eyes glistened: she had had no Christmas tree since the war, to see one again would be a joy indeed. Yes, most certainly she would undertake to buy a suitable tree if I wanted one. My next business was to sound our Frau. She too lent a favourable ear to my proposal. No, they had had no Christmas tree since the war, but it would be pleasant to begin again. She had plenty of decorations and candle-holders and would be glad to lend them to me. Madame was as good as her word, and produced boxes of crystal balls and coloured tinsels and a solid wood block into which the tree could be fixed. Throughout a wet and gloomy afternoon Maria and I saw to the decorations, and on Christmas Eve the tree was lit up and our mixed household held a short and curious gathering in the dining-room.

Whatever faults may be urged against the Germans, they are certainly not lacking in a considerable measure of personal dignity. The attitude of our Frau and her maids was everything that was correct. They received their small gifts with pleasure and praised the English Christmas cake, slices of which were handed round. We exchanged greetings and good wishes for Christmas and

the coming year, and the tree with its candles and tinsel bravery was an object of much admiration. But could the inner thoughts of any one of us in the room have been revealed, how strange and painful must the texture have proved!

Of one thing I am certain: the surface of courtesy and amenity between us and our foes has to be restored little by little if we are aiming at a future, however distant, purged of hatred and revenge. The first tentative experiments can only be made between individuals whose circumstances have flung them, like our Madame and ourselves, into a personal relationship which is not unfriendly. As I have said elsewhere, it is easy to hate the abstraction called Germany, but for individual Germans one feels either like, dislike, or indifference the same as for other people. But the growth of a better understanding is likely to be slow and laborious. Even when individuals as individuals do not hate each other, events have dug a chasm between the two nations. The Germans are so curiously insensitive, it is always difficult to realise if they feel things as we should feel them ourselves. But the three German women who had had no Christmas tree since the war and now were looking at a Christmas tree provided by an English woman—what did the situation mean for them? Though obviously pleased with their gifts and the little ceremony, the khaki uniforms in the room spoke of conquest, defeat, overthrow. And for us too there came a flood of memories, memories of friends lost, of young lives cut down in their prime, of homes in England left stricken and empty this Christmas-tide because the monstrous ambitions of Germany's rulers would have it so. And even as we talked and exchanged

the old Christmas messages of peace and drank each other's health, the room and the tree and the candles all seemed to vanish, and in their place I saw the grey desolation and havoc of Flanders, lines of dim figures advancing to attack, rows of graves, silent, mournful.

But if these things are not to have their repetition in a future still more awful than the present we have known, somehow, some way, men must learn the message of Christmas, hard though it be in our distracted world, "Peace on earth, goodwill towards men." But for once in a way the Revised Version has stepped in with a deeper, more beautiful meaning than that of the old familiar words, "Peace on earth to men of good will." Peace is not a casual condition. It does not arise automatically when the roar of cannon dies away. It implies effort, sacrifice, and consistent spiritual purpose. Treaties and protocols cannot secure it; without goodwill peace is stillborn. We went through the trials of the war with a high heart and a great endurance. Are our hearts high enough for the final adventure of goodwill?

CHAPTER VII

THE BERGISCHE LAND

ONE of the real advantages of life in Cologne is the charm of the surrounding neighbourhood. Not that the neighbourhood to which I refer is near at hand or very accessible except by train or by motor car. Cologne lies in the centre of a great fertile plain, through which the Rhine flows nobly in that last stage of its career before entering the mud flats of Holland. At a distance varying from ten to fifteen miles the plain east and west is bounded by a chain of low hills broken up, especially on the eastern side, by delicious valleys. Here are woods and trout streams, meadows and flowers. No district with which I am acquainted is more adapted to walks, delightful without being arduous, or to longer expeditions by motor. These low hills commanding the plain abound in views of extraordinary vastness and extent. The hills are so easily climbed! Yet from their summits the wanderer has the impression that the kingdoms of the earth lie spread at his feet. For very little real exertion, therefore, he has the impression of having mastered some Alpine peak—an observation for which I hope I may be pardoned by any member of the Alpine Club.

From the eastern ridge, known as the Bergische Land, the sunset view is one of special beauty. The cultivated slopes and pasture lands fall away gently to the plain below, in spring fresh with the vivid green of young grass

or corn, in autumn rich with harvest gold. In the distance, chimneys stretching north and south reveal the course of the Rhine, whose waters are hidden from view. Far away to the left is the outline of the Siebengebirge mounting guard over Bonn and the entrance to the romantic reach of the stream known as the Rheingau. Above the chimneys and the remote huddle of houses and factories, the twin spires of Cologne Cathedral, their clumsiness softened by distance, raise their symbol of man's hope and aspiration to heaven.

The low range lying on the west side of Cologne known as the Vorgebirge is less attractive than the Bergische Land to the east. Industry preponderates on this side, for the Vorgebirge is of special importance owing to the famous black coal extracted from the hills. Here is dug, without any apparatus of shafts or sinking, a special brown deposit which, pressed and pounded, turns into the briquettes on which Cologne relies for its light and heat. The presence in the near neighbourhood of this ample supply of cheap fuel has been a factor of the utmost importance in the commercial development of Cologne. We of the Occupation have learnt to bless the black briquettes, which feed the central heating in winter and give us abundant electric light throughout the year.

How well these people manage their industrialism! That is a reflection borne in upon me time and again in the Rhineland. Prussianism, however bad for the soul, was very efficient in the organisation of daily life. Wages in Germany before the war were not high; the liberty and rights of the worker were restricted in many directions. On the other hand, no country in the world could approach Germany in the excellence of its municipal

organisation and the many advantages of the population as regards public services. German authorities excelled in arrangements concerned with health, communication, and amusement. Town planning and building operations were controlled; cities were laid out and houses built on lines destined to promote the welfare of the whole community. The speculative builder was not allowed to wax fat at the expense of his neighbours. Electric light is supplied even in small villages, and an admirable service of trams and light railways brings the amenities of life within reach of the poorest.

Amusements are dealt with in a rational spirit, which makes for happiness and self-respect. Cafés, beer gardens with concert rooms attached, are decent places, where a man does not drink furtively but takes his glass of wine or beer in the company of his family. Not only have large towns a first-rate opera house and theatre, but good music and good drama can be heard in quite small places. Industry in particular has been brought to heel. Factory chimneys are not allowed to pollute a district at will or to poison the air with noxious fumes. A modern school of painters has taught us to see qualities of strength and even beauty in certain aspects of industry. But those qualities cannot be obvious to the working-class wife who has to struggle with the intolerable grime and dirt produced. The strength of a nation is rooted in the homes of a nation, and there are many districts in England where no man can be proud of his home. Men and women whose lot in life is cast in the Black Country, or who are forced to dwell in the long, mean street of dirty houses which extends from Nottingham to Leeds, might well

envy the better conditions of existence which obtain in Germany.

I have never seen any information as to the stages of the Industrial Revolution in Germany. Naturally it came at a later date than our own and was able to benefit by our mistakes. But to what influence does it owe a character so different? Here in the lower Rhineland there are big industrial towns and great factories. These places are not beautiful, but they lack the overpowering dirt and ugliness of the manufacturing districts of Lancashire and Yorkshire. All along the lower Rhine one factory succeeds another, but they consume their own smoke and fumes and are not allowed to tyrannise over the district. Düsseldorf even more than Cologne is a great manufacturing centre, and among other industries has large machine and puddling works in its suburbs. But the public gardens of the town, which are of great extent and beauty, might be a hundred miles removed from a factory. Leverkusen, the great dyeworks near Cologne, has the appearance of a model village. It is all to the credit of Germany that she has not allowed herself to be obsessed by that spirit of helpless fatalism which has descended on too many of the manufacturing districts and towns in England. Men and women's lives are spent amid this grime, to the detriment of soul as well as body. It is a valuable object lesson to learn that, granted energy and a will to be clean, some of the drawbacks of an ugly industrialism can be avoided for the workers.

Lancashire and Yorkshire have one feature in common with the German industrial centres on the lower Rhine. Both have their own beautiful hinterland. The German hinterland in question has nothing so grand and so aus-

tere to show as the great heather-clad moors and rugged dales of Yorkshire and Derbyshire. But withal the rural districts of this smiling Bergische Land, with its wooded valleys and running streams and black and white houses buried deep among orchards, lie, so it seems, within a stone's throw of factories and workshops. Full of charm are these little valleys, divided one from another by narrow watersheds. All of a family, yet each possesses its own features and has the impress of its own personality. A trout stream almost invariably meanders along the valley, sometimes finding its way through meadows of long lush grass, Alpine in its greenness, sometimes flowing among overhanging woods where the murmur of the waters mingles with the rustling of the leaves or the deeper, more melancholy note of the fir boughs. It is a smiling, almost park-like land, richly cultivated and well populated. There are no wild or desert places. Everything perhaps is a trifle sophisticated. Many of the black and white cottages, gabled and romantic, might have stepped off the light-comedy stage. Here and there the moated tower of some ruined Burg or an eighteenth-century country house set back in a walled garden strikes the same note. This is not Nature in her strength and power, but Nature laughing, gay, forthcoming, a sylvan goddess of woods and streams and meadows. "Intime" is the word which best expresses her charm. Last, but not least, Nature in the Bergische Land is a goddess of the fruits of the earth.

Spring is a season of wonder and beauty in the Rhineland. The villages disappear in a cloud of pink and white blossom. White and pink too are the country roads lined with fruit trees. Beech trees abound; and has

Nature in her great spectacle of the changing year any sight more beautiful than the first shy unfolding of the young beech leaves? A little later come the chestnuts, stately and self-important, carrying their white candles on broad green candlesticks and lighting up the countryside with so brave an illumination. Then follows the deep-red blossom of the thorn, mingled with the purple and yellow of lilac and laburnum. Under foot the emerald green of the meadows is flecked yellow with cowslips. Yellow too are the great fields of mustard, which in turn yield place to carmine stretches of clover. It is a riot of colour and beauty throughout the Bergische Land. The high midsummer pomps find the cottage gardens a mass of roses and other homely flowers. Finally the white promise of spring gives way to the golden fulfilment of autumn. The orchards bend low under the weight of pear and apple and plum. And winter is no harsh thing in the valleys, where the delicate tracery of the leafless woods, detached against a frosty sky, has a charm as great as the young foliage of spring.

Though so little removed from the neighbourhood of industry, there is practically neither grime nor contamination about the Bergische Land. The German housewife, as I have said, is happily spared that hand-to-hand struggle with dirt which embitters existence for many an English working woman. The decentralisation of industry is much practised in Germany, and frequently isolated factories will be found in country surroundings which give employment to the immediate neighbourhood. It is perhaps for this reason that the game is not a hopeless one, that the extraordinary cleanliness of the German village is due. It is quite an experience to walk or motor

through the villages on a Saturday evening when cleaning operations are in full swing. The whole population is out in the street tidying up. The oldest and the youngest inhabitant alike are hard at work with buckets and besoms. I am now able to appreciate why the Besom Binder always figures so largely in German fairy tales. As soon as a child can stagger it is provided with a besom three times the size of itself and turned out to sweep. Tiny children flourishing brooms will remain one of my permanent impressions of Germany.

Not only the doorstep of each individual house and the strip of pavement in front of the door, but the street itself is cleaned up thoroughly on Saturday night. There are rinsings and scrubbing and washings and sweepings. The midden is tidied and made as neat and trim as a haystack. The woodstack is similarly squared, the blocks piled with mathematical exactness one on the top of the other. From the street itself every vestige of dirt and dust is removed. You are almost afraid to breathe lest anything should be disturbed. As for a motor car, its intrusion on the scene is little short of a sacrilege. Until dusk and after, the Saturday cleaning lasts. Then on Sunday the village in its best clothes sits about at ease on doorsteps and contemplates the fruits of its labours.

Sunday in this Catholic land is a true feast day. It is impossible not to admire the simple, wholesome way in which the people, town and country alike, take their pleasures. Churches are crowded in the morning, and it is clear that the Catholic hierarchy keeps in very close touch with its flock. But religious festivals, which are frequent, have a pleasant social aspect and the population from oldest to youngest clearly enjoy them. Sometimes in the

valleys of the Bergische Land you may meet a long procession going on pilgrimage to a neighbouring shrine. The sound of chanting and music is borne on the wind as the company wind up the hillside. It is like a scene in a play as you watch the distant view of banners and crucifixes and white-robed acolytes. Especially attractive are the children's processions held on White Sunday—the Sunday following Easter—when the ceremony of first communion takes place. No steps are omitted to make the occasion impressive. Every little child in Cologne down to the poorest wears a white frock and a wreath of white roses. They come with their parents in large numbers during the morning to say a prayer in the cathedral—tiny children, so they seem, to be struggling with the great mysteries of faith. We passed a small hillside church in the Bergische Land on the afternoon of White Sunday at the moment when a procession of children was coming out. It was a pretty sight: the fair heads crowned with flowers and every child carrying a gold-and-white lily in its hand; fond and anxious parents shepherding their lambs, and provided with cloaks and umbrellas in the event of rain.

These simple ceremonies give warmth and character to the countryside, but quite apart from religious exercises of the nature I have described, the whole of Cologne pours into the Bergische Land in the course of a fine Sunday afternoon. Various light railways issue from the city and, running across the plain, penetrate the valleys at various points. From the Dom Platz at Cologne you may, if fired by the spirit of adventure, take your choice of three trams to the Bergische Land. One will carry you in some forty minutes to the Königsförst,

formerly a royal forest at the foot of the hills; another in fifty minutes to Bensberg, a charming old town crowned by an eighteenth-century castle in the Palladian style. The castle with its domes has dignity and character; it is now used as a barracks for French coloured troops. From the tiny acropolis to which the city clings—in spring half smothered by the white and pink of its cherry and plum and apple orchards—is the finest of all the views over the plain. Or you may journey for an hour northwards along the Rhine, passing through Mülheim—a widely scattered district of factories—till you come to the pleasant little town of Berg Gladbach. Here through a third gateway you may enter the wooded hills and valleys stretching to the east.

Only there will be certain disadvantages if you conduct these explorations on the Sabbath, for the Boche in his best clothes is of the same mind, and the trams are crowded to a point of suffocation hard to endure on a hot summer's day. But all the same the experience of a Sunday excursion is by no means to be missed, for then you see the life of the people as it is. What light-hearted, cheerful crowds they are! Families, father, mother, and children, out for the day together, troops of young people with knapsacks and mandolines tramping for miles through the woods, singing as they march, and as often as not waving their hands and calling out "Good day" in English.

The group instinct of the German is very noticeable in his holiday-making. Picnic parties abound, clutches of children in the care of nuns and priests; more prosperous families out for the day in wonderful chars-à-bancs and wagonettes which are covered with green

boughs and wreaths of flowers. In summer it is a point of honour for picnic parties to decorate their carriages in this way. I have often seen horses drawn up by the roadside in the neighbourhood of the Königsförst or Bensberg while the occupants were employed in cutting down branches and converting the conveyance into a green bower.

Village feasts are common, and great is the excitement when a Kermess is held. The village is decorated from end to end, and the principal street is lined with booths and stalls. Merry-go-rounds, swing-boats, shooting-galleries cater for the amusement of the spectators, while dancing goes on in the inns and cafés. May-day festivities are a feature of the countryside, and the village belle may find her house decorated on May morning with a may-bush hung on a tall pole by an admiring suitor. If there is competition between suitors, more than one bush may be hung on the house, and the various lovers under such circumstances endeavour each to carry his bush into the air at a higher point than that of his rival or rivals. One fair lady this last year, so the story runs, found her may-bush decorated with a miniature figure in khaki hanging head downwards. Intimacy with British soldiers was frowned upon in the locality, and the village applauded the reproof thus administered to an erring beauty who had fraternised with the enemy.

One-horse cabs of archaic design survive in the more remote villages, and on Sunday afternoons the elderly local plutocrats may be seen solemnly taking the air in a conveyance of this character. The aged horse does his work in leisurely fashion, and if the rate of progression is slow, the dignity of the passengers loses nothing by the fact. No village is really remote, owing to the network

of light railways spread about the country. Yet despite the proximity of Cologne and the constant influx from the industrial districts on the Rhine, the village people appear to retain their simple habits and rustic outlook on life. They work hard, but they also enjoy life thoroughly in a simple way. It is this high standard of simple enjoyment among town and country people alike with which any traveller must be struck in the Rhineland, a better state of affairs surely than the enforced gloom of many an English village, where feasts and dancing would be regarded as a desecration of the Sabbath, and men are forced to drink and loaf for lack of something better to do. German education is open to grave indictment as regards the spirit and temper it has bred, but withal the Germans are an educated people, and an educated people knows how to employ its leisure.

The longer you live in the Occupied Area, the more sphinx-like the riddle it presents—the riddle of reconciling the behaviour of these decent, self-respecting people among whom you find yourself with the actions of that collective entity, Germany, who figures as the outcast of Europe. "It's all put on," some people say. But this theory of sustained hypocrisy becomes ridiculous over a period of many months, especially when you have mixed unknown in the crowd and seen the Germans at work and play among themselves. Some other explanation must be found for a psychology so bewildering. Love of God's out-of-doors is always a redeeming element in every human being, and it is an element which can in no sense be denied to our late enemies. The town folk enjoy the beauties of the country in a quiet, self-respecting way with a minimum of rowdiness. It is not a question just

of hanging about cafés and beerhouses. These places on a fine day are crowded, but they are crowded with parties whose dusty boots and draggled clothes show they have been far afield. The children carry bunches of flowers or green boughs. Sometimes a tired little one rides on a father's shoulder. Knapsacks are produced, from which a meal sadly frugal in quality and quantity emerges. Coffee or beer is ordered, and the party sit down to eat and take a rest.

As at every other point in German life, children play a great part in these excursions. Hard though the times, parents pinch and save to see the children are well and neatly dressed. A white frock in summer for the girls—a bit of fur round the collar of the coat in winter for the boys—these things are a point of honour. But boots have become a terrible problem to most working-class homes, as many a peasant has told us. It is certainly not easy to associate ideas of hunger and defeat with these respectable Sunday pleasure-seekers. But as I have said before, superficial impressions must be discounted in Germany, and there are always the thin legs and pasty faces of the children to pull you up short if you try to thrust aside ugly memories of reports and statistics and official inquiries.'

Often as I have sat among the Sunday crowds in the little hill towns have I reflected on the worldly wisdom of Machiavelli, who, like Bismarck, if bad was long-headed. Machiavelli took the view that you must either destroy your enemy or so behave that you may turn him into a good neighbour. One thing is very clear: Germany will never be destroyed. What steps, if any, are we taking to turn her into a good neighbour?

CHAPTER VIII

IN SEARCH OF A FISHING

LONG ago in Winnipeg I remember finding two young French girls in the immigrants' reception camp. I inquired if they had come to Canada alone. Whereat the elder with a fine gesture replied, "O non, nous ne sommes pas seules, mais mon père est allé en ville acheter des terres." In a spirit no less spacious and confident we set out one fine afternoon to find a fishing. The Army of Occupation is desperately interested in fishing; so, like the "terres" of which my Winnipeg friend spoke, good fishing is hard to come by. Consequently much reticence on the subject exists, not to say craft. The trout streams of the Bergische Land or in the Eiffel are set in ideal surroundings from the fisherman's point of view. All that is lacking on many occasions is the trout. The country folk are fond of talking of miraculous draughts of fishes which existed in the days before the war. The old gentleman who hires out rods by the day, when confronted with an empty bag, will explain elaborately that this unfortunate result is due to the fact that the British soldiers have caught so many trout; things are not what they used to be. Personally I am a little sceptical about these disclaimers and the shifting of the responsibility on to the broad back of the Occupation. Not that any feeling exists against Thomas Atkins in the British bridge-head. It is pleasant throughout our area to talk to the

villagers and to hear their friendly remarks about the troops. Of course there were some bad characters and some bad behaviour. But Atkins, kindly and easygoing, has been a missionary of reconciliation in many a German village. Women will tell you that they helped with the house and were kind to the children; "any English person is sure of a welcome in a village where English soldiers have been."

So despite some lapses on the part of the Army over trout—there are stories of hand grenades used in streams—we set out with confidence to explore some valleys on the back side of Söllingen, where, according to rumour, trout of large size and merit abounded in ideal streams. Our chauffeur had a German friend who knew of a fishing. The afternoon was before us, so we set out to find the friend.

For a time we went north along the Rhine, past the great factory of Leverkusen—famous for its dyes, and during the war one of the most important of German munition works. Our way lay amid the many industrial establishments which mark the high road to Düsseldorf, and I looked with envy on their smokeless chimneys. Beyond Opladen we turned off to the right and, with the bewildering rapidity which happens in this district, found ourselves in a few minutes in a purely rural valley. Here were orchards and open meadows and black and white houses. We twisted in and out along various side-roads, till the road itself showed signs of ending in a secluded valley where a mill-pond, a mill, and a miller came into view. The miller was the chauffeur's friend. They shook hands solemnly and exchanged greetings. Then we were introduced—was there any fishing to let? He,

the chauffeur, knew from previous experience that the stream was well thought of. The miller was friendly but could give us little help. The proprietor was just dead, the upper stream was let, there were no trout now in the lower pond. But he had a friend, Herr Hermann Hollweg, who owned a Bade-anstalt in a neighbouring village. Herr Hollweg most certainly would put us in the way of getting a fine trout stream.

Back again we went, therefore, to hunt up the Bade-anstalt and Herr Hermann Hollweg. We ran him to earth without much difficulty—a second polite and courteous gentleman, but again full of regrets that he had no fishing to let. Herr Hollweg produced a large map of the countryside. At Nägelsbaum he had a friend, Herr Holbach, who assuredly would be able to produce trout. Would we kindly mention his name and Herr Holbach would do his best for us? Before we left would we like to see his Bade-anstalt? Certainly, we replied, and so we were led through a scrupulously clean kitchen, to emerge in an open-air swimming bath of extraordinary size and appointments for a small village. A group of boys and girls were swimming and splashing about in the water. On a terrace above the bath was a café where various people were having refreshments. Behind that was a large concert hall where, according to Herr Hollweg, the company danced on Sundays. Nothing has struck me more in Germany than the excellent and wholesome way in which popular amusements are arranged. Probably the industrial workers from the surrounding district pour out to Herr Hollweg's bath and café and concert hall on Sundays. But why, one asks, is it impossible to secure similar amenities for an English town and

village, where loafing and drinking are often the dismal alternative amusements of the Sabbath?

We complimented Herr Hollweg on his establishment and then set out in pursuit of Herr Holbach. Our road lay through the characteristic scenery of the Bergische Land: little villages set deep in their orchards; rich pastures, wheat fields already turning golden under the summer sun. Woods of beech and oak and lime covered the low hills. In the early days of the Occupation, British troops had been quartered in this part of the perimeter, a point about which we were left in no doubt. The inhabitants from whom we stopped to ask the way countered my German by a fine flow of English. Small compliments about their prowess in this respect causes the Boche face to be wreathed in smiles. One young woman knew all about Herr Holbach. Yes, he had a large pond with "much fish"—a form of words of which I was growing a trifle tired. Down the hill we went again till a large dam came into view—that part of the story at least was true. Also there must be some earnest expectation or hope of fish, judging by the depressing number of rods which were dangling over the bank. We walked on to the damhead, and there encountered a hero in charge of two rods. He had lived in America and spoke English fluently. No, we had come to the wrong place for trout; this was carp-fishing—witness the rods. Were there any carp? Oh yes. Upon which he plunged down to the water's edge and produced a net with two large fish in it. Herr Holbach, who lived in a house across the dam, might have some trout-fishing, but he was doubtful about this.

Our latest friend had served in the Navy, and we fell into general conversation with him. As is usual when

talking to German working-men, I was struck by a sense of weariness and horror in all he said about the war. Their rulers had been mad, that was his view; the war had brought nothing but utter misery, there ought never to be another one; they were happy and prosperous before, now they were ruined. Our talk on the damhead was yet another proof that if the League of Nations ever becomes a going concern, it will draw its strength, not from the upper classes, many of whom are rooted in the ways of the old diplomacy, but from the humble folk like our fisherman whose souls have been branded in the furnace of war.

But the afternoon was going on, and though we had had much pleasant conversation, the fishing still eluded us. Herr Holbach's house, or rather farm, stood on the bank of another lake, and there, apparently, in addition to agriculture he turned an honest penny by letting out boats or arranging facilities for swimming.

Herr Holbach proved as pleasant as his predecessors, but equally elusive on the subject of trout. No, he dealt solely in carp; then came the familiar leitmotiv for which I was waiting—the English soldiers had taken all the trout. But he had a friend, Herr Richard Klassen, at Witzhelden, who had fishing to let and enormous trout. It was very expensive, but the trout were of a size and vigour under which any ordinary rod would bend to breaking point. His advice to us was to go and interview Herr Klassen, recommended to that end by Herr Holbach. The sun was drawing to the west and long shadows were beginning to fall over the hills and glades. If indeed it was to be our fate perpetually to chase trout from one valley to another in this smiling land, there might be a

worse lot. We turned our car, and once again, hope triumphing over experience, we set out in search of Herr Klassen.

Herr Klassen, so our instructions ran, lived near the church in Witzhelden. We found the house in possession of a girl, who to our surprise showed signs of alarm at the sight of a uniform. However, her face cleared up when we explained we had come about fishing. Herr Klassen was in the hayfield; she would fetch him. Meanwhile, a neatly-dressed elderly man with a lump of putrid meat in his hand came up the road and took off his hat politely. This was Herr Klassen's brother. The gentleman was, like his niece, a trifle nervous at seeing us, but became garrulous when our errand was revealed. We came from Cologne did we—then of course we knew of the most regrettable incident which had overtaken the Klassen family last week. No? Was it possible we had not heard—they had been fined five thousand marks for having firearms in the house;—the whole family were devoted to sport and they had various shooting guns they had not given up.

Hence these tears. We expressed sympathy with the family troubles, but said it was foolish not to have mentioned the various fowling-pieces of whose innocent intentions Herr Klassen spoke with such conviction. However, he showed no resentment that the long arm of British law had touched him in his remote village, though, as the hero of the hour, his feelings were clearly a little hurt that we had no knowledge of his fame. At this moment up came Herr Richard Klassen, hot and perspiring from the hayfield.

Yes, he had a pond, and he had a lot of trout. They

were not very big as yet, but they would soon grow; was he not feeding them on lumps of the dead cow whose remains had caused me to get to windward of his brother. Would we like to see the pond? Nothing was easier. Down another small valley, therefore, we plunged again till the road came to an end, and a pretty path through a wood brought us out on the shore of a secluded pond. It was a peaceful scene, with the warm sunlight on the wood and the water, and the sweet smell of new-cut hay reaching us from a neighbouring meadow. As we walked we admired the beauty of the country. This moved Herr Klassen to a flow of words: the country was beautiful, but men were bad; since the war there was no honour, no goodness, no morality. It was all greed and grab, "Wucher" and "Schieber." And the end would be Bolshevism. Herr Klassen's lack of faith in human nature was demonstrated practically by the barbed-wire entanglements which surrounded his trout pond. Along the narrow track by the water's edge were various, almost invisible, contrivances destined to show whether any trespasser had come that way. Here at last were some trout, if only little ones. But little trout grow, and Herr Klassen was emphatic that if we would come back in a fortnight or three weeks we should have good sport. As for payment, it was to be strictly by results—no fish, no cash. All fish caught were paid for at so much a pound—a very fair arrangement.

It was pleasant to linger by the water-side in the evening sunshine, and, pipes and cigarettes being produced, the talk slid east and west over matters of greater moment than the trout. We had been joined by a friend of Herr Klassen's, a wag with red hair and freckled face who

poked fun at his neighbour with great vigour. Freckles had been to the war, Herr Klassen had not—the women and the Church would not let him go, declared the former; at which Herr Klassen raised protesting hands to heaven. Both men spoke with evident alarm of Bolshevism. Another war was bound to come, only next time it would be a Bolshevist war. It must be remembered this pleasant Bergische Land is not so very far removed from the Ruhr district, and that at Remscheid only a few miles away there had been shootings and murders. The spectre of anarchy and red revolution has come very near homes such as Herr Klassen's, and for revolution a small farmer of his type has nothing but horror. We asked about the new Republican Government. It moved neither man to much enthusiasm. Weakness can never inspire enthusiasm, and the policy pursued by the Allies towards Germany has made it impossible for any government to be strong. Herr Klassen said what they wanted was a constitutional monarchy like England. They were doubtful of Republics. France was a Republic and they did not want to be like France.

We talked of the war and the peace and the threatening condition of affairs in Eastern Europe. Both men called down fire from heaven on the Poles. No German can speak of a Pole in measured language. Soon there would be a Bolshevist army in Warsaw, and then what was going to happen to Germany? Freckles, who had fought on the Eastern Front, spoke well of the Russians. They were brave men, so he said, and if properly armed and properly led would fight as well as the Germans. They had no chance in the war; men could not fight with spades and hayforks. They were mown down like sheep because

they had often neither rifles nor guns. Klassen had had a Russian prisoner working on his farm and had found him a good fellow. Freckles, who was, I gathered, not a man of property, was rather attracted by some of the anti-capitalist ideas of the Bolsheviks. Klassen was talking bitterly of the Schiebers and the terrific price of food and goods in Germany—capitalism was a curse. "What are you but a capitalist," retorted Freckles with a grin; "you have four cows and some land and a pond full of trout"—before which sally Klassen, who was clearly at the mercy of his more nimble-witted friend, collapsed entirely. "What about the arms, too," said Freckles with another grin and a wink in our direction. Klassen turned to us as eagerly as his brother. Of course we had heard of the law proceedings in Cologne at which he had been fined? No? His face fell on realising the limited span of his fame; it was a terrible affair; he did not know how he should get the money for the fine.

We packed both men into the car and took them back to the village, where we parted with mutual goodwill. "In a fortnight, then," said Klassen, "you will come again when the fish are bigger. Yes, you can bring a friend too if you wish."

So we said good evening and, consoled by the discovery of a secret pond if we had failed to secure a length of stream, travelled westwards towards the setting sun and Cologne.

CHAPTER IX

WHO PAYS?

To the traveller passing from the devastated regions of France to the hills and valleys of the Rhineland, there is something almost scandalous in the impression of wealth and solidity conveyed by the latter country. "These people have not suffered in the war at all," said an Englishwoman in Cologne to me indignantly; "look at the worldwide misery they have provoked; look at the state of France, and then see how lightly the Germans themselves have escaped: everything intact and their country untouched."

But has Germany really escaped so lightly? Untouched her country may be; intact in one vital particular it certainly is not. Bricks and mortar can in time be replaced, shell holes can be filled in, and the plough pass again over the devastated fields. But at a date when the material destruction of France will be, let us hope, to a large extent repaired, Germany will still be paying for the sins of her rulers in the bodies of a generation a large proportion of which will be enfeebled and diseased. It is an insidious form of payment, lacking in obviousness or dramatic quality. But its ultimate thoroughness ought to satisfy even the moralists who demand that an entity called Germany should be punished, quite irrespective of

the guilt or innocence of the actual person on whom the punishment falls.

A mile or more below the Hohenzollern bridge, where four kings of Prussia on their bronze horses survey a world fashioned now on other lines than those contemplated by Prussian arrogance, the Rhine flows along a ribbon of green strand which serves as a recreation ground for the children of the district. Here on a summer evening we sometimes walk and watch young Germany at play: children of all ages bathing, paddling, shouting, laughing, amusing themselves in a hundred different ways, while their parents sit in little groups, the women sewing or knitting, the men with their pipes.

Children abound in Germany. They swarm in droves in every direction. Surely, you say, these hunger stories must have been exaggerated! The rising generation does not appear to be much affected, judging by its numbers. To the casual observer there seems to be very little amiss with these Rhineland children. My first impression was that they compared favourably with many children in our own industrial centres. The German working-classes are self-respecting folk, and however slender their resources in food and clothing during the war, they made the most of them. Also it must be remembered the Rhineland is one of the richest provinces, agriculturally no less than commercially, in the Empire, and that the British Occupation had resulted in nine months of adequate feeding before I saw Cologne.

Nevertheless, after a time I found myself modifying my first favourable impression. The clothes of the poorest children are neat and tidy. But large numbers of the

children, trim though their appearance, are pinched and pasty-faced. Under the short skirts bare legs are seen often thin and rickety. Little by little my attention was arrested by two facts: first, that these crowds of children were all apparently very much of an age; secondly, that the proportion of babies to children seemed extraordinarily small. Below the age of two and a half to three the juvenile population comes to an abrupt halt. After a time, intrigued during my walks by the relative absence of babies, I took to counting perambulators or babies in arms. The numbers were strikingly small. Motoring through Bonn one Sunday afternoon in 1919 when the family life of the town had turned out into the streets and gardens, I counted six babies in all. The explanation is simple. Statistics show that there has been a rise in the death rate of German children between two and six of over 49 per cent. during the years 1913-1917. Among school children from six to fifteen the death rate rose 55 per cent. in 1918 as compared with 1913. As for the older children, their apparent uniformity of age is largely due to arrested development. Many of them are much older than they seem. Of course there is no general rule. Some children look astonishingly well and plump if others are thin and pasty-faced.

Coming home one evening along the banks of the river, we passed two typical working-class families, each supplied with a perambulator. One held the fattest and rosiest baby imaginable. I admired Heinrich, and was told he was nine months old—born at the time of the Armistice. Whatever the prenatal conditions of the mother, the baby had not suffered. But the other child—a little girl of eighteen months—its memory haunts me

still. A tiny shrivelled face looked up at me under the bravery of a blue-and-white bonnet; tragic haunting eyes set in an emaciated body. My mind harked back, as I looked, to the devastated areas and to the cruel sufferings and losses of France. But here, on the frail body of this unhappy German child, war had set its seal as unmistakably as among the crater holes and shattered buildings of the line. Conqueror and conquered we looked at each other, till I the conqueror could look no more. Do any robust spirits still survive, I wonder, who take the view that an occasional war is a good thing—that it freshens every one up and makes for briskness and efficiency? Is it possible, after all we have endured and are still enduring, that large numbers of people in a mood of helpless fatalism are already talking about “the next war”; while many of them are actively encouraging policies and popular sentiments, the logical outcome of which is a future conflict even more ghastly than the last one?

Meanwhile, the martyred child life of Europe cries to heaven against this theory. The sufferings of the Central Empires in this respect have been heaviest. “Tu l’as voulu, Georges Dandin.” Germany, in pulling down the pillars of Europe, has involved all this for her own people. But why, one asks, should the heaviest toll be paid by those who have least measure of responsibility? Why should the Junkers and horrid old gentlemen covered with decorations, who made the war, be living comfortably on their estates while the children of the working-classes have perished? It is the natural instinct of every decent person to shield a child from suffering, and as I watch the boys and girls playing on the banks of the Rhine, the whole question of the war takes on an aspect from which

every vestige of glamour and chivalry and romance has vanished. These merry children at their games: it is on them that the hand of Britain's sea power, however unwittingly, has rested in its heaviest form. The British people would repudiate with anger any idea of making war on children. But war has a horrible vitality of its own and goes its own way, moulding men more than it is moulded by them. These things follow inexorably from the very character of modern warfare, which is no more a struggle between armies, but between nations. Noncombatants have ceased to exist, and those who make wars must reckon on babies as cannon fodder.

So long as there are wars, the weapon of the blockade is inevitable. We were fighting for our lives and had no choice but to use it. The German submarine campaign was directed to the starvation of England, and bitterly though they complain of our blockade, their own minds were set on identical ends so far as we were concerned. But blockade means infant mortality on an appalling scale, and if statesmen and militarists are indifferent to such things, it is to be hoped the democracies of the world will view matters differently. So far as Germany is concerned it is through her children she is hit.

The Occupied Areas have suffered the least of any in Germany. Yet even in this relatively favoured land the state of affairs is bad enough. In Bonn, for some reason, things seem to have been worse than in Cologne. I shall never forget the feeling of utter helplessness with which I saw a group of rickety-looking Bonn children staring hungrily into the windows of a chocolate shop. We took them in and gave them sweets; there were no cakes or buns to be had, and bread is rationed. Poor children,

they gathered round us in a state of frantic excitement when we produced slabs of chocolate. The fatuity of our own action was miserably apparent. For these children were only typical of hundreds of thousands of cases all over Europe, and even so their circumstances were far better than what obtains in many other countries. Children, of course, cannot grow up and be healthy without milk, and milk is unobtainable in the towns. The municipality doles out a limited supply to invalids, nursing mothers, and babies, but children above a certain age never see fresh milk, and tinned milk is too expensive a luxury to figure in the daily dietary of the working-classes. Most German children have nothing but "ersatz" coffee to drink in its unqualified nastiness. The distribution of food on fair lines has proved a great failure in Germany, and the prolonged malnourishment of the children is likely to have consequences of the gravest character.

A shattered house, a ruined village tell their own very obvious tale. Physical deterioration is a subtle thing far less easy to recognize or to estimate. It is only little by little that one realises the state of affairs produced by the blockade and the degree to which the morale of the whole nation has been undermined by starvation. It is true that the Germans cling desperately to what sorry comfort they can derive from the theory that their armies in the field were never defeated—that they were brought down at the last by hunger. They still assure you their armies were magnificent—never were there such soldiers. But towards the end rations failed, and morale broke through stories of starvation at home. "We had not plenty of bully beef like you," said a German soldier to us; "you did not get letters saying your wife and children had

nothing to eat. We could have gone on fighting if we had had food." He spoke with that curious lack of resentment which is a constant puzzle among these people. Consistent and growing hunger spread over a term of years is not a pleasant experience. Germany, unlike France, has been spared the horrors of the invader on her soil. But no mistake could be greater than to imagine that the war she provoked has proved a frolic for her, while all the rest of the world suffered.

A Report by Professor Starling and two British colleagues, on "Food and Agricultural Conditions in Germany," gives the results of an official inquiry made by the British Government as to food and health questions in the spring of 1919. The Report shows an increased number of deaths among the civilian population, from 1915 to 1918, of more than three-quarters of a million persons as compared with normal pre-war estimates. In plain language, three-quarters of a million people have died from starvation or the consequences of underfeeding. In the last year of the war the civilian death rate was up 37 per cent. The infant and child mortality figures quoted above are taken from this Report. To the number of deaths must be added the very much larger proportion of children and adults who survive with constitutions permanently impaired. Discoursing learnedly of the number of calories required to keep a normal man in normal health, Professor Starling shows that the Germans were living on just half the necessary amount. There were great inequalities between town and country, owing to the reluctance of the country districts to surrender the food they produced. The urban populations, of course, suffered most.

The three British investigators give a sorry account of the children they examined in the schools, hospitals, public kitchens. Some people may say that the fewer German babies in the world the better. I feel certain, however, that no theoretical holder of that view would act upon it when brought face to face with some of these hollow-eyed children you see in the streets. Professor Starling and his colleagues visited Berlin and Upper Silesia, as well as the Occupied Territories. Everywhere they found the same condition of mental and moral prostration, of apathy, and lowered vitality. Disease has flourished, of course, in the wake of starvation. The statistics of consumption show an alarming increase in the percentage of people attacked. Enfeebled bodies, young and old, cannot resist the inroads of infectious complaints. Matters grow steadily worse as the eastern frontiers are approached. Beyond, in Poland and Russia, a state of affairs exists about which most people, happily for themselves, have not sufficient imagination to form a clear picture.

German conditions have not sunk to levels of misery so profound as those which exist elsewhere, but they are bad enough to afford a useful standard as to the situation in Austria, Russia, and other countries. That luxury and great extravagance exist side by side with dire want and starvation is a feature of the fatal coil which is throttling the economic life of Europe. Thoughtless travellers are often misled by a superficial appearance of prosperity in the main streets of big towns. Newspaper correspondents seek from time to time to decry the existing misery by giving accounts of the gay life in some cities and the excellent food obtainable at a price in large

restaurants. The fact that food of such a kind can be had does not prove the unreality of starvation. All that it proves is a complete breakdown in rationing, and failures in distribution operating most unfairly in favour of the rich. The good dinner paid for at a fancy price is only a link in the chain. At the other end are families whose destitution is the greater because the inefficiency of control has made the serving of such a dinner possible.

When the history of the war comes to be written, the question of food production and distribution in Germany will prove a suggestive no less than a tragic page. The German machine, admirable for carrying out a carefully devised military policy, was useless for meeting unforeseen contingencies which call for public spirit rather than for regulation. The failure to grapple with the food question was complete. German officialism seems to have collapsed helplessly before the problem of distribution and rationing. Though fresh milk is unobtainable in Cologne to-day—except the special supplies rationed by the municipality—it can be had in the country ten miles out. Considerable efforts were made during the war to provide a limited amount of milk for children and nursing mothers. But with better distribution the supplies available might have gone much further. The Government of a country cannot have it both ways, as the Prussian autocrats found to their cost. It cannot at one and the same time exact and obtain docile obedience to a machine and simultaneously develop that free spirit of public co-operation which was the salvation of England during the war. In our own country public opinion rose to the occasion with a will. All classes worked together to make rationing a success, and the brilliant improvisa-

tions of the Ministry of Food carried the nation over a crisis of unparalleled magnitude in a manner highly creditable to every one concerned.

Let us admit at once that our food problem did not approach that of the Germans in difficulty. For one thing, the problem of distribution was largely solved for us by the fact that we relied mainly on imported supplies on which the Food authorities could lay their hands at the ports. In Germany, on the contrary, 85 per cent. of the food was produced within her own borders. Self-producers firmly determined to be self-consumers are not easy to deal with. Then again, though there was shortage and inconvenience, we were never really hungry. Greedy and selfish people exist among all classes and nations, and we had our share of both. But making the largest allowance for the greater difficulties of the Germans, the moral is, I think, striking as regards the spirit which a free people can show in a time of stress as against the dragooned temper of a military nation. Military rules could not deal with the food question. In a matter which necessarily was independent of sabre-rattling, no pressure of an independent public opinion seems to have filled the gap.

The struggle between town and country to get possession of the food supplies was severe. Every German is full of complaints about the selfishness of the country people. Not only did they keep enough food for themselves—which, after all, was natural—but they lived in plenty while the towns starved. It may be said broadly that there was no hunger or any particular suffering among the people on the land. Among the industrial classes, estimated at from twenty-eight to thirty millions

of the population, the suffering on the other hand was severe. But even to this rule there were many exceptions. Wealth, always a weapon of dominant value, is of supreme importance when hunger is abroad, and this weapon was used mercilessly by the prosperous classes. The working classes who were earning large wages were in many cases able to pay for additional food; the people who bit the dust were primarily the minor professional and official classes.

Among the words added to the German vocabulary by the war is that of *Schleichhandel*—illicit trading. *Schleichhandel* permeated the whole national life. The *Schleichhändler*—the little brothers of the *Schiebers* or profiteers—were rampant. The *Schiebers* and other wealthy families had *Schleichhändler* in their pay whose business it was to find them food. From highest to lowest the same spirit obtained. All accounts agree as to the extraordinarily demoralising consequences of illicit trading on the morale of the race. Professor Starling states that, had the existing food supplies been distributed on a fair and equitable basis, there would have been enough to go round, and the effects of the blockade might to a large extent have been countered. If the attempt was made, it failed lamentably. The terrible winter of 1916-1917, known as the "swede winter"—owing to the failure of potatoes—will never be forgotten by the present generation of Germans.

Matters have improved somewhat during the year 1919-1920. But the prices of food and necessaries of life are still so high that, despite the considerable rise in wages, many working-people cannot afford to pay for adequate nourishment. The present food shortage is still great

and, owing to the absence of feeding stuffs and manures, stock and land have both deteriorated. Supplies remain, therefore, at a level far below that of pre-war production, a circumstance aggravated by the world shortage and the financial chaos of the country.

Three special consequences have resulted from this state of affairs. There has been, in the first place, an extraordinary embitterment of feeling between town and country; the urban classes bear the agriculturists a deep grudge for the part they played in the war and the prosperity they acquired by exploiting their neighbours.

Secondly, there has been a great intensification of class hatred as between rich and poor. The ordinary German artisan or shopkeeper speaks with intense bitterness of the upper classes. They were selfish, they were hard, they were greedy, they did nothing for the poor, they lived in comfort while others starved. The well-to-do classes apparently were shameless at grabbing at all they could get. The average German does not believe any rich person could or would act otherwise. Talking to Germans about our respective war shortages, I have mentioned more than once that I had various friends in England who, having farms and producing food, kept their own households on the rationed allowance and sent the rest to market. The look of absolute incredulity on their faces made me realise they thought I was pitching a fine but wholly preposterous tale to the credit of my own country. It was obvious they did not believe a word I said. The behaviour of the German upper classes in this time of testing has had, and is likely to have, very considerable reactions on the political situation. That the Junkers and militarists have brought this particular form of discredit

on themselves is all to the good. It will tell heavily against such doubtful chances as exist of their achieving even a measure of political rehabilitation.

An English person brought in contact with these melancholy facts can only reflect with legitimate pride on the different spirit shown in our own country. No aristocracy in Europe has come through the war with credit so high as that of the British upper classes. From the throne downwards, men and women alike, they pulled their weight in the boat as good citizens, bore their full share of death and suffering, and contributed an adequate quota to the united effort of the nation. I have found no evidence in Germany of that mutual goodwill between classes which was a hopeful and encouraging feature in our own land. German life in this, as in many other respects, has to be reconstituted from the foundations upwards.

The third outstanding social reaction of the war is the degree to which ordinary standards of honesty and fair dealing have broken down between man and man. The food shortage, and the cheating to which it led, appears to have entered largely into the matter. Thoughtful Germans deplore the moral debacle which has overtaken the country. Profiteering has been quite shameless. The "Schiebers" have exploited a disastrous economic situation, and many large fortunes were made during the war. The strange paradox of extremes of wealth and poverty goes on side by side. Even the official classes have shown themselves on occasions as selfish as the landowners and the profiteers, and no less unscrupulous in exploiting the advantages of their position. So late as August 1920 ugly charges were brought by the Socialists against the Mayor of Cologne and other City Fathers with reference to the

milk and butter supply of the town. The facts which came to light proved that there had been, at the very lowest, culpable slackness in administration and gross favouritism in the distribution of available supplies. City councillors had milk while sick children had none. The anger created by these revelations is easily understood.

While corruption permeates the upper and middle levels, robbery and crime are widespread among the working-classes. Thieving has become a normal quantity in daily life; crimes of all kinds are common. Official figures were published in Cologne during July 1920, showing the large increase in criminality throughout the district as compared with the previous year. Serious crimes had increased by 45 per cent., housebreaking 44 per cent., robberies in shops, warehouses, etc., 95 per cent., minor robberies 85 per cent. Every man's hand is against his neighbour; suspicion and fear poison the whole spirit of communal life. Hunger, and the general sense of demoralisation born of defeat and downfall, are responsible in the main for the increase in petty thefts. Railway wagons and warehouses containing food are robbed systematically. War is not a good school for enforcing the catechismal injunction about keeping your hands from picking and stealing. An invading army takes what it wants where it can find it, and the habit once acquired is not easily lost.

Every class of society in Germany to-day feels that, bad as things are, much worse probably has yet to come. A sentiment akin to despair is widespread. The business community, confronted with an economic situation quite hopeless in its outlook, give way in many cases to helpless fatalism about the future. Restraints are thrown off, and

despair expresses itself frequently in wild extravagance. With the sword of an indefinite indemnity hanging over them, wealthy Germans feel that a spell of riotous living in which their capital disappears is preferable to handing over the latter to their enemies. The working-people, confronted not only with food shortage, but with the abnormal cost of clothing and other necessaries, grow more and more restless. All this is a dangerous temper, not only hostile to economic and social recovery, but a premium on revolution. If Allied policy is directed to creating this temper, then it must be congratulated on a success not always conspicuous as regards its efforts in other fields. The policy pursued, however, has its dangers. A hungry country, balancing the possible advantages of revolution, can pay no indemnity nor make reparation for damage done. One or two axioms in this matter are self-evident. If Germany is to pay her indemnity, she must work; she cannot work unless food and raw materials are forthcoming in adequate quantities; with her finances in ruins she cannot begin to reorganise them unless told what definite charges she has to meet; if she is to carry out her obligations, she must have a stable government which commands confidence at home and is treated with some consideration abroad. It is quite easy to pursue a policy which will make the fulfilment of all or any of these conditions impossible. But how far a deepening of the present confusion will serve the ends of the Allies, let alone promote the cause of peace, is a mark of interrogation hung in menacing fashion to-day over the welter of Europe.

CHAPTER X

CERTAIN CITIES AND THE SAAR BASIN

A FINE spring morning, ten days' leave, a motor car, the open road calling us to new sights and fresh adventures—in such good case we left Cologne one April forenoon for Wiesbaden. The plum blossom was over, but the apple blossom was in great beauty all the way. Why, one asks, cannot English roads be planted with trees whose shade is a blessing to the traveller in the summer months? And again, what happens to the fruit on the myriad trees which grow along the highways of Germany? Are German little boys endowed with virtue of such abnormal quality that they survive the chronic temptations to which they must be subjected in the matter of pears, and apples, and plums? Even the ingenious theory that the apples are cooking ones, designed if stolen to inflict adequate punishment on youthful stomachs, cannot explain away these innumerable orchards and long avenues of fruit trees. The Rhineland is a garden of enchantment when the blossom is in flower. It is a hard saying that any sight on earth can be more beautiful than an English spring at its best. And yet, with memories of an April in the Rhineland, I am bound at least to hesitate.

Thanks to the absence of smoke, there is nothing to sully the purity of the air. The vivid green of the fields, the yellow splashes of mustard, the varied tints of tree, and bush, and blossom—all this melts and glows together

in the clear sunlight. Wherever the road touches the great river, the beauty of deep flowing waters is added to the scene. The Rhine maidens themselves must surely be at play in the sunshine as the Rhine sweeps by hill and vineyard. Their laughter and joyous song can be heard by fancy's ear. Forget the presence of road, railway, and villa, and on that piece of jutting rock Siegfried must have talked with the three sisters and mocked their entreaties about the ring. The great world of Wagner's music is connected in a special sense with the Rhine. The elemental beings with whom he peopled its banks and waters are more in the picture than prosaic tourists of our own type. Withal, who are we to grumble at the latter-day comforts of motor cars and broad highways which bring these delights within our reach? So we picnicked by the roadside in great contentment of spirits while a lark sang overhead. Wisely was it once written, "there will always be something to live for so long as there are shimmery afternoons."

Coblenz, which we reached in due course, is a shabby city magnificently situated at the junction of the Rhine and the Mosel. No town in the Rhineland lies so nobly, overlooked as it is by the great rock of Ehrenbreitstein. The river front of Coblenz is second to none in the whole course of the stream. Yet the town itself is cramped and curiously dirty for a German city. It gives the impression of a poor place which has dropped behindhand in the race. Even the American occupation and the presence of the Rhineland High Commission have not galvanised it into life. Since the ratification of peace the Rhineland High Commission, one of the costly bodies set up by the Treaty, is technically the governing authority

in occupied Germany. England, France, and Belgium are all represented on it, but by one of the ironies of the situation, though the Commission has its headquarters at Coblenz in the American area, America, being independent of the Peace Treaty, holds aloof. The wish to provide Germany with a civilian administration was no doubt excellent in theory, but the Germans are somewhat puzzled by the anomalous position of a body of this character alongside armies of occupation, and still more suspicious as to the flavour of permanence which civilian administration suggests. The Commission produces large numbers of ordinances, of which it is very proud, but it is not paper regulations, however excellent, but the power to enforce them which matters in a country under military occupation. That power rests not with the Rhineland High Commission, but with the armies. To the armies the Commission must turn when it wants anything done.

Administration, to be satisfactory, must correspond with the real facts of any given situation. The Allied Armies are in Germany as conquerors, and by right of conquest only. No civilian government set up under such conditions can be in a sound position, for civilian government is rooted in the consent of the governed—a consent which is certainly not forthcoming in this case. The long term of military occupation imposed by the Peace Treaty is open to very grave objection. Five years coupled with conditions under which Germany could have made a real effort to pay her indemnity would have been reasonable. Fifteen years, the period provided for in the French area, is very like an attempt at annexation. Security is never achieved through a régime of alien dom-

ination, and the temper bred in turn by alien domination destroys all hope of security. Occupation for a short period was not only inevitable but desirable. Prolonged for years, it is oppressive and mischievous. This being the case, the presence of foreign gentlemen in frock coats and top hats will not sweeten the unpalatable fact of occupation to the Boche. The officials of the Rhineland High Commission, many of whom are soldiers, appear sometimes in uniform, sometimes in civilian clothes; a blending of garments typical perhaps of the anomalies which beset the Commission in doing its work.

Meanwhile, Coblenz must benefit by the foreign influx into the town. The Americans fly a colossal flag over the famous fortress which crowns the summit of Ehrenbreitstein. It is quite the largest flag in the Occupation. The Stars and Stripes are no less conspicuous over every public building in American occupation. If the technical position of the United States in Europe is a little uncertain at the moment, at least there is no doubt about her flag. We English adopt a different policy, and are not given to making our flag too cheap—a fact for which some of us are grateful. There is a great deal to be said for the Zulu custom of not allowing your most sacred things to be spoken about.

At Coblenz we left the river to attack the high land lying between the Rhine and Wiesbaden. We first went up the valley of the Lahn through Ems and Nassau. Both towns, watering-places of a conventional and familiar type, were at that season of the year deserted, but Ems, with its memories of the Franco-Prussian War and the intrigues of Bismarck, has a painful interest of its own. The Germans, with their mania for monuments, had commemo-

rated the spot where the French Ambassador in 1870 received an answer from the Emperor William which was the prelude to hostilities. Is this slab one, I wonder, that Republican Germany will care to preserve when ridding itself of other souvenirs of the Hohenzollerns?

Beyond Nassau we struck up a great plateau with wonderful views, and so along what is known as the Bader Strasse to Schwalbach and Wiesbaden. The high land we crossed was a continuation of the Taunus mountains, at the feet of which Wiesbaden lies. The colouring was wonderful in the evening light as we motored along the ridge of the hills. Field and forest were bathed in a bath of blue; blue mist like some enchanter's garment hung over the far distance. The rolling country at our feet was fertile and well cultivated, but the sense of space and distance and of mountains beyond redeemed any sense of sophistication which must result from a too obvious agriculture. Beech woods abounded, woods just caught by that moment of the spring when the delicate green buds begin to open on the lower branches of the trees, while all is brown above, and under foot lies the old gold carpet of last year's leaves. Spring that week was in the brief but exquisite phase when she resembles a primitive Italian picture; all the coming beauty foreshadowed but none of it clearly expressed. Only here and there was the brown of the buds touched by the green of the young leaves. The call had, however, gone forth. Up every hillside, among the russet company of the woods, April waved her white ensign of cherry and blackthorn. I am glad to have travelled along the Bader Strasse on such a day in the fourth month of the year.

From the beauties of nature to the elegances of man

was an inevitable step on dropping into Wiesbaden. There seems something very suitable in the French occupation of this attractive city. The French temperament, the French genius, are more at home here than in any other German town I know. Wiesbaden is less "echt Deutsch," more international in its atmosphere, than what is usual in the Fatherland. It is a fine town with broad boulevards and a good many shops. The large Kur Haus is surrounded by beautiful gardens. German taste frolics, after its usual fashion, within doors where gilt and plush abound and everything is costly, vulgar, and comfortable. But apart from this lapse it is a very attractive town, and the French are fortunate to be housed in it. The Occupation seems to work smoothly, and there were no obvious signs of discontent among the German population.

Diplomatic relations were a trifle strained between the Allies on the occasion of our visit, Frankfurt having been occupied by the French the week before. Over this step the English had shaken their heads. There had been a collision between the French troops and the people in the town; some shooting had taken place. We had neither passes nor permits, but we bluffed our way into Frankfurt on the Sunday afternoon by the simple expedient of going there. It was no one's business apparently to stop a car in which British officers were driving. We passed through the French sentries without being challenged, and found ourselves in the town. Frankfurt is a large ugly city with wide streets and solid-looking buildings. The population was out promenading in its best Sunday clothes. The streets were crowded, and everything appeared quite normal. French soldiers of course abounded,

and here and there a stray Belgian was to be seen, Belgium having sent up a few men as a sign of moral support to France in her enterprise. We were clearly the only English in the place. I wondered if these Frankfurters would take the view that we were the advance guard of an English detachment. However, the attitude of the populace was quite polite. We went to tea at the Carlton Hotel, which sounded homelike. The big hall was filled with Germans who surveyed us with some curiosity. But the waiters and the management tumbled over each other in their anxiety to be civil. We drove round the town before returning to Wiesbaden and paid a pilgrimage to Goethe's house, which unfortunately was closed. At the Opera House we found a curious state of affairs: French soldiers with machine guns crowding the steps of the main entrance, while people were going into some performance through a side-door.

A feature of the afternoon's run, and not a pleasant one, was the presence of the French coloured troops in the district. Technically the coloured troops had been withdrawn from the town itself, but they were in force in the suburbs. Frankfurt is a large city, and its outskirts stretch for a long distance into a thickly populated industrial area. A Moroccan battalion in brown jibbahs with red trimming and yellow tarbouches were hardly soldiers whose presence we should have welcomed in Birmingham or Manchester had they been introduced by an occupying enemy power. Large numbers of colonial troops are used by France in her Army of Occupation. That their presence causes great resentment among the Germans is understandable. France's case is that her population has suffered heavily owing to a war forced

upon her by Germany, and that, with a French man-power depleted and weary, a large colonial army is a necessity. Whatever the necessity, it is very unfortunate that coloured troops should be introduced into a country where the complications of black and yellow races are unknown. White men do not take kindly in European towns to being policed by Africans or Asiatics. An occupying army presents moral problems of sufficient difficulty without any gratuitous additions caused by the introduction of Senegalese and Moroccans.

At the same time, so far as outrages are concerned, a great deal of exaggeration has taken place about the French employment of these troops. Undesirable though the presence of black or coloured men in the cities of Central Europe, I have no reason to think that they have been conspicuous for bad or immoral behaviour. Germans have admitted as much to me. They hate the use of the black troops, but the objection is one based on general principle, not on specific crimes. Naturally pressmen and publicists work the black-troops question for all it is worth, and feeling on the subject runs high. The Germans lose no opportunity of exploiting any opening presented by mistakes in Allied policy. But exaggeration is always a boomerang and recoils on the head of those who use it.

The following day in dripping rain we motored through Mainz to Bingen, and then across the slate mountains of the Hunsrück and the Hochwald to Trier and the valley of the Mosel. The fine Roman remains, especially the Porta Nigra, lend great dignity and character to latter-day Trier. The cathedral, one of the oldest churches in Germany, has succumbed to the common disease, fatal to

its type, of "a thorough restoration." Its interior presents the ordinary bathroom appearance, with concrete walls painted to represent stones, plus vile modern frescoes, which is the hard latter-day lot of many fine old Romanesque churches throughout the Rhineland. One could weep over the destruction of these ancient monuments and the clumsy unseeing hands which have been laid on them at such obvious expenditure, not only of money, but of a most misguided care.

After Trier our troubles began. We were making our way to Metz via Saarbrücken. Crossing the hills into the Saar basin our car developed trouble with a bearing, and at Mettlach, some miles from Saarbrücken, it was clear our journey was temporarily at an end. Saarbrücken is not an ideal spot in which to be marooned for several days. But all situations have their compensations, and to this accident, irritating as it was, I owe my acquaintance with the Saar valley and the peculiar state of affairs existing there.

The situation in the Saar raises in concrete form certain general criticisms of the Peace Treaty of which I have spoken more in detail in a later chapter. The Saar provisions of the Treaty¹ gave rise to a good deal of misgiving at the time among some of the most staunch supporters of Allied policy. Such misgivings are not likely to be dissipated by any visit to the area itself. The wicked destruction of the French coal mines is regarded, and regarded rightly, as a demonstration of Prussian militarism at its worst. Particularly infamous were the efforts of the German military authorities during the last weeks of the war. Surface destruction of the mines was inevitable

¹ Section iv. Part iii.

owing to the colliery area lying across the line of battle. But the worst damage was done in a spirit of pure wantonness and without any military justification during the retreat of the German Army in the autumn of 1918. It was the last kick of the militarists, and they did their work thoroughly.

I am glad to think that I heard Herr Sollman, a Socialist leader in Cologne, denounce this action in the strongest possible terms amid the applause of a large audience. But the havoc done cannot be made good by words of regret, however genuine. That France has the right to exact the very fullest material compensation from Germany for damage done during the war, especially in this matter of coal, is a proposition so self-evident as hardly to require statement. Not only the mind of the Allies but the moral opinion of the whole world was ranged behind the claim. The German Social Democrats are equally prepared to admit the claim. Herr Sollman, in the speech delivered after the Spa Conference to which I have referred above, stated that in view of the wanton destruction of the French mines, Germany should regard it as a debt of honour to deliver all the coal she could spare to France.

A Peace, however, which was aiming, not merely at exacting punishment—punishment which must necessarily fall on shoulders quite different from those responsible for the original crime—but at the ultimate amelioration of racial and national animosities, would have kept two principles steadily in mind. First, that reparation though adequate should be as prompt as circumstances allowed; secondly, that reparation should have as few ragged and irritating edges as possible—that it should be organised

strictly on business lines and not on lines calculated to exasperate and inflame national feeling. The end in view should be adequate material payments. If, however, reparation is to be used as an instrument of punishment and diverted from economic to political ends, general confusion is bound to result. What punishes does not pay; payment means to a large extent the waiving of punishment. It is impossible to have it both ways.

The Saar situation throws both of these principles in relief. In order to meet the just claims of France, was it necessary to annex a purely German district for fifteen years, to set up a separate government wholly alien to the wishes and spirit of the people, and then to call in the League of Nations to bless the sorry business? Are these provisions of the Peace Treaty likely to further the ostensible end in view, namely, the delivery of so many tons of coal annually from the Saar to France? On the other hand, if the occupation of the Saar is intended to punish Germany for her sins, has France any reason to think, after her own experience in Alsace-Lorraine, that provinces governed against their will are likely to be a source of comfort and pleasure to the power in possession? The Saar has been a solid German block for centuries. The district is strongly German in feeling and sentiment. A less encouraging centre for an experiment in alien government could not well have been found. With a mixed population the dubious game of playing off one element against another can at least be attempted. Even that consolation is lacking in the Saar. Out of a population of over 600,000, the French element is practically nil. Further, as a method of popularising the

League of Nations with the Germans, the mutual introduction via the Saar hardly seems a happy one.

I have been in every portion of the Occupied Area and have had various opportunities of studying the temper of the people. Generally speaking, that temper is good in the Rhineland proper, and a visitor is not conscious of any obvious friction. A straightforward military occupation, disagreeable though it may be for the conquered race, is laid down in precise terms. Every one knows what to expect, and the situation is for the most part accepted with philosophy. Very different were matters in the Saar. You could not walk down the main street of Saarbrücken without feeling the atmosphere charged with hostility. The spirit of the town was angry and disgruntled. Every German to whom we spoke seemed on the verge of an outburst. We found ourselves not a little embarrassed by the obvious desire to confide grievances to us about the French—grievances naturally which we had no desire to hear. Hotel waiters are beings who usually float with the times and are not concerned to challenge authority. But without one word of warning a Saarbrücken waiter, who knew England well, broke into words of angry declamation. How should we English like a foreign commission to come and take a piece out of Yorkshire and hand it over to an alien government? Should we accept such a state of affairs without protest: should we be worth anything if we did? I retorted sharply with some remark about Alsace-Lorraine, but I knew the ground was unsound. Until two wrongs make a right, the Saar occupation must lead to many searchings of heart among Allied nations who have any regard for consistency in political professions of faith.

Why has the League of Nations undertaken this task? Thankless tasks the League has no right to shirk; a false position such as this is another matter. The Treaty provides for two Commissions under the League: one a Boundary Commission of which a British officer is Chairman; the other a Governing Commission over which a Frenchman presides. The Boundary Commission has to delimitate the frontiers of the temporary state, and in separating towns and villages, all purely German, one from another to make the economic division between friends and relations as little harsh as possible. It is not desired, for example, that a village should be cut off from its water supply, or that workmen should be forced to cross a frontier in the course of their daily toil. The Commission hears the views of the inhabitants, and has shown them every consideration in its power. Even so, very hard cases are bound to arise owing to the homogeneous character of the country. The frontier line is necessarily arbitrary and artificial. Friends and kinsmen find themselves separated one from another; villages divided from their natural markets by the barrier of a French customs system.

For the whole directing power in the area is France; everything else is camouflage. France supplies the occupying troops, France controls the customs and the railways; a Frenchman is head of the Governing Commission. Though there are practically no Frenchmen in the Saar, French names are being given in some cases to the towns and villages. The mines have been handed over absolutely to France for fifteen years. At the end of fifteen years the Saar inhabitants may decide by plebiscite whether they desire to be French, to be German, or to remain under

the League of Nations. If they elect to be German, Germany must repurchase the mines on a gold basis. The whole arrangement is an admirable illustration of the "heads I win, tails you lose" principle. But a few brief years ago we were very insistent that we were fighting for justice and right, and again I ask what is the League of Nations doing in this galley?

The various members of the two Commissions are clearly desirous of dealing justly with the inhabitants, but it hardly seems possible for a body of men, however honourable and well intentioned, to overtake a position so radically unsound in itself. The lines of government for the Saar, laid down by the Peace Treaty, are a premium on friction and intrigue. Also it is very unlikely that this fancy occupation is going to result in a large output of coal. Colliers are kittle cattle, as we all know, and they do not like being irritated. Nothing and no one can make them work unless they choose. The occupation of an enemy country is a military act which a war may render inevitable. But military occupation as a means to economic ends is a clumsy weapon. Effective as a threat in the event of non-fulfilment of contract, as an agent of production it is the worst of instruments. The cussedness of human nature comes into full play, and people who will work hard to avoid an occupation become sulky and inactive when handed over to a conqueror.

The effort to create a Saar state, definitely separated from Germany for a term of years, cannot be justified by any of our own professions during the war. We have yet to reap the full fruits of the mistake. The new conditions have mobilised, of course, the passionate resentment of the inhabitants, and friction exists at every turn. The

Germans lose no opportunity of giving all the trouble they can. Whatever grit they can throw into the machine they throw with a will. His words frequently pass between the Governing Commission and the German Government in Berlin. The whole atmosphere is one of moral *ca' canny* and obstruction. It is idle to blame the Germans for making the most of the ready-made grievances with which they have been presented. Those to blame are the short-sighted politicians of Versailles who could imagine that such an apple of discord as the Saar could be flung down in Europe without the further embitterment of every passion which it was the first duty of statesmanship to allay.

Could not the coal to which France has a clear right be obtained under simpler and better conditions than those of temporary annexation, however much disguised? Would France herself not have benefited by more coal and less friction? When the Boundary Commission has done its work there will be only one British representative left in the Saar, and there are no British permanent officials. The country is penned in between Lorraine and French occupied territory. Censorship of news is strict, and the inhabitants are wholly in the hands of the Governing Commission. Unless members of the League of Nations bestir themselves so that the control of the League shall not be an empty phrase, a great deal may go on in this remote district which if realised would be highly distasteful to the best mind of the Allies themselves.

Our personal experiences in Saarbrücken were quite pleasant. During our troubles with the car we received a good deal of helpfulness from a variety of stray people. The erring machine had been put on a truck at Mettlach

and was to come by train to Saarbrücken. We met the train in due course, but there was no car. We met other trains, but nothing happened. At 10 P.M. we invaded the signalman's box and unfolded our tale of woe. I can never say enough for the real courtesy and kindness shown us by the operator in charge. For two solid hours till midnight he telephoned up and down the line trying to discover the whereabouts of the truck. One station after another was rung up. "I have here an English colonel whose motor car broke down at Mettlach and who arranged for it to come on by the evening train." Over and over again the opening phrase was repeated till I knew it by heart. In intervals of ringing up the various stations our new friend conversed with us amiably. He was a demobilised sailor, had been in the Scarborough and Hartlepool raids and had fought at Jutland. He spoke regretfully of the pleasant times in old days spent with the British Navy, especially at Kiel, just before the outbreak of war. "You met them in different fashion at Jutland, did you not?" I suggested. He raised his shoulders deprecatingly. He told us that during the Scarborough raid the attacking ships had been saved by the fog. He had also fought in a U-boat, but was not to be drawn on that subject, of which he was clearly shy. "We had to do our duty," he said briefly. In between our conversations the telephone bell tinkled gaily, but the night was going on and there was still no trace of the missing truck. Then at last a satisfied "So" from the telephone raised our spirits. A train had just come in. The car was in the goods yard; we could get it in the morning. We parted from our good Samaritan with real gratitude. Railway servants are not an overpaid class in Germany,

but not one penny would he accept for the pains and trouble taken on our account. He was a true gentleman, our Saarbrücken signalman, and when Germany rears a few more of his type and kind she will have less trouble with her neighbours and find life more pleasant for herself. At the motor repair shop the men worked with a will and repaired the car in what seemed a surprisingly short time. Whatever the German upper classes may be, the German working man is a very decent fellow, civil, well educated, hard working. Over and over again the same moral is driven home. There are good and bad elements in Germany. What has the Peace Treaty done to reinforce the better elements?

The Saar basin in the upper waters is highly industrialised. The manufacturing areas lie near the source, a fact which is uncommon in the case of most rivers. The lower waters, as they approach their junction with the Mosel near Trier, flow through a hilly and beautiful country purely agricultural in character. Saargemünd, Saarbrücken, Saarlouis are all manufacturing and colliery centres. Saarbrücken itself, a dirty, unattractive town of one hundred thousand inhabitants, is the centre of the coal area, which before the war had an annual output of eleven million tons. Crossing the hills from Trier and journeying up stream to Saarbrücken, all the grimy apparatus of mines, furnaces, slag heaps, etc., make their appearance from Saarlouis onwards. Even so, the small collieries, towns, and villages compared favourably with our own. They are not overcrowded, and open spaces, fields, and even orchards are to be found breaking up the sordid paraphernalia of dumps and pitheads. The natural features of the river valley are beautiful, and even on the

upper waters have not been wholly destroyed. Woods are preserved at many points. Here, as elsewhere in Germany, industrial life has not been allowed to get thoroughly out of hand.

One feature at least of the Saar valley impressed us painfully as we motored back to Trier—the miserable condition of the children and the appalling proportion of bandy legs. As I have said elsewhere, the effects of underfeeding during the war are distributed very unevenly throughout Germany. Some districts seem to have suffered little or none at all. Not so the Saar, where, judging by that unfailing test, the children, the population must have gone through very hard times. I heard of an innocent inquiry of an English child made in the Saar area: “Mother, why do the children’s feet here turn in the wrong way?” In the answer to that question lies the tragedy which has overtaken the child life of our enemies.

NOTE

Since writing the above impressions of the Saar in April 1920, there has been serious trouble in that area. A dispute arose at the end of July between the Governing Commission and the German permanent officials, as to the conditions of service under which these officials should be taken over. Security of tenure is a matter of jealous concern to the Germans, for it is no secret that France is very anxious to see the last of some of the existing Prussian officials. The latter are no less determined to resist any doors being opened through which foreigners might enter. In the opinion of the officials, the new regulations rendered their position much less secure than formerly and offered wider scope for dismissal on other

grounds than those of efficiency. The right of combination was also restricted. Further, they were required to take an oath of fidelity.

The officials objected to these provisions, and demanded that they should be confirmed in all rights and privileges in which they were possessed on November 11, 1918. No satisfactory settlement of the dispute was forthcoming, and the officials went on strike. Railways, posts, telegraphs were paralysed throughout the area. This action was followed by a general strike of the whole community. The French hurried up troops. Saarbrücken was patrolled by cavalry, infantry, machine guns, and tanks. House-to-house searchings took place. Many people were arrested, others left the district. The Governing Commission in a proclamation openly accused the Berlin Government of inciting the whole trouble, and of spending large sums of money for purposes of disloyal agitation. The Berlin Government retorted by a Note no less acrimonious. Each side charged the other with intrigue and breaches of the Peace Treaty. It must always be remembered the Governing Commission represents the League of Nations and that the League is involved in these proceedings. The strike dragged on for a time and then came to an end.

The position as I write is obscure. The censorship in the Saar is very severe. English papers publish little or no news from the area. A silence on the subject no less profound envelops periodically the German Press. It is difficult, therefore, to form any judgment as to the rights and wrongs of the dispute in view of the limited material available. But the strike itself is a symptom of the ugly spirit ruling in the Saar district, the dangers of which

were obvious when we were in Saarbrücken. Probably both sides are right in their charges of mutual intrigue. It is clear that each Government has only one desire, namely, to exasperate and hinder the other. Germany protests loudly against the French attempt to change the German character of the district. France retorts that perfidy and bad faith are the true hall-marks of the Prussian. All this is inherent in the situation actually created, and if it causes surprise to the creators of that situation they must be simple-minded folk. The plan evolved is one that not only asks for but demands trouble, and the trouble is there.

Practical administration becomes a nightmare under such conditions, and that this particular nightmare should persist for the fifteen years contemplated by the Peace Treaty is a prospect sufficiently dismal for all who have to face the waking realities.

CHAPTER XI

FROM METZ TO VERDUN

THERE is something grim and forbidding about the name of Metz. The tragedy of shame and defeat with which it was connected during the Franco-Prussian War hangs round it like a sombre garment. I for one associated it always in my thoughts with a dark menacing fortress, the very stones of which cried aloud the tale of France's humiliation and the ruthless might of her conquering foe. Historical events have the power of lending their own colour to the names of localities where great dramas have played themselves out. Sometimes the very nature of a place—I take three at random, Mycenae, Blois, Glencoe—harmonises completely with the sense of tragedy. No one could associate the shores of Lake Trasimene with the idea of trippers on the beach, or the plains of Borodino with swings and roundabouts. Yet to this rule, if it be a rule, Metz is a complete exception. Instead of a gloomy fortress it is a delightful French town, ideally situated in the basin of the Mosel. The Mosel breaks up at this point into several channels, and Metz disposes of itself in somewhat Venetian fashion among the various branches. The main portion of the town is situated on a low crest overlooking the stream. The crest falls away to the river below, gardens, houses, and terraces clinging to the slopes. To the west across the plain rises a range of hills. From the vantage point of the Esplanade—the

beautiful public gardens on the terraces above the Mosel—the view of the surrounding country is very fine. The fortifications of Metz, being of the latest type, are naturally not in evidence. But the distant hills which rise in such calm beauty from the plain are honeycombed with everything that is deadly in modern military equipment. Villages and vineyards may be on their surface, but the hand of man has been concerned there with other matters than those of the plough or winepress. No traveller surely can look at the hills beyond Metz without a catch in the throat? For through them runs the road to Gravelotte and Mars-la-Tour, and so beyond to a place of glory and endurance greater than theirs—Verdun, shattered and destroyed, but inviolate and unconquered in the midst of her ruins.

Few districts in Europe are so important in military history as the country which lies in the neighbourhood of Metz. We came by train from Saarbrücken, our car being under repair, and nearly every mile of the way had been a path of destiny for France in 1870. A French customs official, not a genial specimen of his kind, charged us roundly with having contraband concealed under the maps spread about the carriage. We assured him our business at the moment was concerned with history and geography and not illicit trading, and after shaking the offending sheets he disappeared with an unfriendly grunt.

The heights of Spicheren are within sight of Saarbrücken. Here on August 6, 1870, was fought one of the early battles in the Franco-Prussian War—an indecisive action which was to prove, however, a strand in the great coil spread round the French armies. To the east of Metz lies the fateful battlefield of August 14, when after

a desperate struggle centring in particular round Colombey and Nouilly, the French were forced to give way and the German pincers began to close in on the doomed city. The history of the 1870 war, that tale of heroism and mismanagement, is painful beyond bearing to read. It moves with the precision and inevitableness of a Greek tragedy—France, so sound at heart, yet superficially so rotten, matched against the supreme technical skill of a painstaking people guided by the wholly non-moral purpose of a Bismarck. From the conflict, as it was then, of the iron with the earthenware pot, only one end could result. Yet

“Nor kind nor coinage buys
Aught above its rate.”

Germany in the person of her rulers bartered in 1870 the first principles of justice and morality between states. To-day she is paying the price of that moral treachery on a level of humiliation to which 1870 held no parallel, while a ruined world also bears its testimony to the eternal truth that, as members one of another, the sin and failure of the one involves confusion and disaster for all.

Lorraine is a smiling land with rolling plains and hills. Villages, solid and well-built, lie among their orchards in the folds of the undulating fields. Important though the mineral wealth of the province, agriculture plays a part hardly second in value as regards its resources. The rich red soil is highly cultivated, and farming is carried on with the thoroughness one associates, alas, with continental methods alone. The red-tiled roofs of the farmhouses lend a sense of warmth and colour to the landscape. Especially beautiful is the contrast when the warm madder-coloured gables rise out of a foam of fruit blos-

som. Truly a land to win and to hold the affections of its children. To see it for the first time, no longer under alien rule but liberated and restored to the Motherland, was a glad experience of travel. Indefensible though the German rape of the protesting provinces in 1870, the case of Lorraine, predominantly and overwhelmingly French in population and sentiment, was perhaps the greater outrage. A people annexed against their will are not easy citizens to handle, as for over forty years French resistance passive and active taught Prussian officialism.

Thiers fought desperately for the retention of Metz in the peace negotiations following on the 1870 war. Bismarck, whose ends were attained by the war itself, was not implacable on the subject. Personally he favoured the payment of a larger indemnity in lieu of the city. Military opinion was violently hostile to this proposal, and with cynical indifference the Chancellor let the soldiers have their way. To visit Metz in 1920 is to realise how the soul of the city kept itself free and aloof, heavy though the material yoke imposed on it. The town is French in every respect. The Germans have added solid public buildings of practical value in the shape of an excellent railway station, post office, banks, etc. As a material proposition, Metz returns to France much richer than when torn away. But the purely French character of the streets and houses defied all efforts of the conqueror at any true absorption within the German Reich. The new buildings lie, like scorned and wealthy parvenus, on the outskirts. Within are narrow streets, tall houses and shuttered windows—all the indefinable genre and elegance which French taste and French architecture bring with them. When the hour of liberation came, Metz

reverted to her natural allegiance with as little difficulty as a prisoner casts off some hated garment of servitude.

Sign painters must have driven a brisk trade after the Armistice. Not only have all the names of the streets become French again, but the names of shops have undergone a similar transformation. So hastily has the work been done in many cases that the half-obliterated German letters may be seen under the new paint. Business was clearly urgent in those early days and the transfer of names to the winning side permitted of no delay.

The fine fourteenth-century Gothic cathedral is a great adornment to Metz. The lofty windows, slender and austere, and the splendid glass still speak of the soul of the Middle Ages no less than of the skill and cunning hand of the mediaeval builder and craftsman. Yet not these abiding beauties but a freak decoration of the exterior is what attracts the average traveller to Metz Cathedral to-day. Under German rule the church had undergone a "thorough restoration," ominous words which, as I have said elsewhere, are the knell of doom to many a fine building in Germany. French skill was apparently successful in staving off the barbarisms common in the Rhineland, and the interior has not suffered. But the addition of a Gothic west portal in 1903 gave William II. a priceless opportunity of masquerading among saints and holy men on the new façade. Such a chance possibly did not often come his way. Certainly he availed himself of it eagerly. He appears, therefore, on the façade in the guise of the prophet Daniel. The statue is well executed, though the sculptor, whether or not intentionally, has endowed the prophet with a sinister expression, especially when viewed from certain angles.

The statue has been allowed to remain, but after the Armistice the hands were fettered with chains, and in that felon's guise William II. still surveys the cathedral square from under the cowl of his prophet's cloak.

I have referred in another chapter to the problem presented to Republican Germany by the redundance of Hohenzollern statues. Metz had been endowed with more than its fair share of Prussian effigies. "If you do not like your conquerors, you shall at least have plenty of them too look at" seems to have been the principle adopted. Hohenzollerns major and minor abounded therefore in every public place. A huge equestrian statue of William I. had been erected in the centre of the Esplanade. The Emperor, with whiskers of a particularly bristling and aggressive order, flourished a baton in the direction of the French border. It was certainly not by accident that the statue was designed to look across the hills to the west, and to convey a challenge to which France on her side was not slow to reply.

Whatever the embarrassments of a reformed Germany as regards its former reigning house, naturally they did not weigh with the people of Metz. The inhabitants after the Armistice rose *en masse*, tore down the statues of the Hohenzollerns, and generally destroyed every outer symbol of Prussian domination. The effigy of William I. was overthrown by an excited crowd, and pictures of the event show the monarch on the ground while men, women, and children shake their fists at the prostrate form. The plinth, stripped of its ornaments and inscriptions, was allowed to remain, and with every possible haste the temporary figure of a victorious *poilu* was erected in order to replace that of the Kaiser. This figure was no longer

in situ at the time of our visit, and the plinth awaits its permanent memorial. The hard-worked German phrase, "Von seinem dankbaren Volk," is still visible though half effaced on the plinth, but on the west side looking towards Verdun the Hohenzollern devices have been replaced by the three electric words crisp with victory, "On les a."

We English, who for centuries have never known the bitterness of alien conquest—among whom no tradition even survives of its sting and misery—can enter very faintly either into the anguish or the joy of countries conquered and then subsequently redeemed. Few stories of the war are more moving than the tales told of the entry of the French troops into Metz and Strasbourg. Indescribable enthusiasm prevailed among the French population. Not only were the liberating legions greeted with garlands and banners, but weeping men and women followed the French generals and prayed to be allowed to kiss their hands or touch the hem of their garments. On the Porte Serpinoise, the ancient gateway of the city, a long inscription has recently been erected which tells the tale of Metz in recent times from the treachery of Bazaine to the reunion with France in 1918. About this inscription there is little of the calm and measured language of the message usually carved in stone. The words are burning and passionate, torn from the heart of suffering, turned though it be at the last to joy. That the years of "separation cruelle" to which the gateway bears testimony were bitter indeed no one could doubt who has stood by the Porte Serpinoise and read its record of both defeat and victory. But has the world even yet laid to heart the moral of the German seizure of these provinces? Has France herself, greatest of all sufferers, ap-

plied the lesson to her own circumstances? Coming to Metz from Saarbrücken with a vivid recollection of all we had seen and heard there, I turned from the Porte Serpinoise with an uneasy question in my mind. When the first enthusiasms subside and the flowers and the garlands have faded, the practical business of life remains. The government of a mixed population is never an easy task, and the redeemed provinces will make heavy demands on the wisdom and generosity of France.

Alsace-Lorraine was in fact indulging in all the joys of a general strike at the time of our visit. Post, telegraph, railway service, everything was at a standstill the day after our arrival. The trouble had arisen apparently over the replacement of German employés, now French subjects, by other French workmen. The long and stubborn resistance offered by the provinces to German rule is sufficient proof of the healthy spirit of independence which inspires the population. But even under the new order, the people of Alsace-Lorraine are likely to show a spirit no less vigorous in all that concerns their local affairs. Bureaucratic interference even with the German side of the population may easily give rise to resentment throughout the whole community. German bureaucracy, heavy handed though it was, had the merit of being efficient. French administration would do well to avoid situations in which irritated citizens begin to make comparisons not always favourable to those at present in authority.

We hired a car which took us, or rather shook us, to Verdun. The road crosses some of the most famous of the 1870 battlefields, especially Gravelotte and Mars-la-Tour. The road first climbs the lofty ridge of hills lying

to the west of Metz, on the top of which lies an open plateau. Fortifications and defences were obvious everywhere. It was clear, from the masses of barbed-wire entanglements which we passed at various points, that the Germans had intended to defend Metz if necessary in the last war. Further, the road along which we travelled must have been their main artery of supply to Verdun. We saw the remains of their light railways running in various directions. Dumps of wire still remained and traces of dumps of ammunition. The light railways had been ploughed up by the returning peasantry. Yet as we approached the area of devastation an obvious question arose—why were these railways not preserved for the task of reconstruction and the demands on transport reconstruction involves?

We halted at the famous ravine of Gravelotte, where on August 18, 1870, the terrible struggle took place which decided the fate of Metz. Here, as everywhere else on the 1870 battlefields, all traces of the German monuments to the dead have disappeared. The graves in the cemeteries were untouched, but the eagles had been knocked off the monuments. Unquestionably the presence of these German memorials on land robbed from France presented the French Government with a difficult problem. No doubt many of the "Denkmals" were boastful and vainglorious, after the usual German fashion in these matters. Clearly they had no place on redeemed French soil. I could not feel, however, the situation had been handled very wisely as regards the memorials to the fallen soldiers. Nothing would have given me greater pleasure than to have pulled at the rope which dragged William I. from his plinth. The ignominious overthrow of statues

of kings and princes of a ruling house so directly responsible for the miseries of Europe is a symbol of victory over the evil principles for which they stood.

But the soldiers who died doing their duty do not belong to the same category as the men who plotted the war. Many of the monuments blown up were merely records of regiments who fought and fell, and had their historical value. Their destruction has caused great bitterness among the German section in the province, and no end is served by the further creation of bad blood between people who are forced to live together. The 1870 war and its terrible consequences are not to be wiped out by blowing up a few obelisks. The man who dies fighting bravely for his country, however much duped as to the righteousness of the cause for which he gives his life, has a claim to consideration at the hands of a generous foe. The dignified way out of the difficulty would have been for the French to call upon the Germans to remove their monuments. We felt this the more on reaching Mars-la-Tour, the scene of another fierce battle. The frontier fixed after 1870 ran between Gravelotte and Mars-la-Tour. On the Mars-la-Tour side of the frontier stands a wonderful French monument which commemorates the heroism and tragedy of 1870. A woman symbolising France holds in her arms a dying soldier, whose head she crowns with laurel. But she is in no way concerned with the agony gathered next her heart. Her eyes are fixed, not on the dying man, but grimly, steadily across the frontier. She looks across the hills of her own lost province, and the fixity of her gaze conveys a spiritual challenge to that other statue on the crest above the Mosel—the statue of William I. conquering and insolent. Fur-

ther, from the hand of the dying man falls a musket. But two babes playing at the woman's feet catch the musket before it lies in the dust and raise it once more in the air.

This monument, a striking example of its class, is executed with a full measure of French skill and artistic power. But there cannot be the least misunderstanding as to its meaning. Every line breathes revenge and a day of reckoning to come. Mars-la-Tour was occupied by the Germans in the first days of the recent war. It must, I think, be put to the credit of the military authorities that, during the four and a half years that this memorial was in their power, no damage of any kind was done to it.

Gravelotte and Mars-la-Tour are both dirty ramshackle villages, with middens out in the street blocking the entrance to the houses. Perhaps the inhabitants of frontier villages are inspired by a justifiable pessimism as to the futility of building decent dwelling-houses. Certainly the standard of life seems unusually low. Shortly after leaving Mars-la-Tour we began to pick up occasional signs of war, signs which, of course, multiplied as we entered the plain of the Woevre, and began to draw near the ridge of hills to the west on the far side of which Verdun lies. One battlefield is painfully like another. The destroyed villages and desolate fields told the same tale of death and suffering which is impressed on the long belt of devastation running across the Continent. Yet to me in future a cowslip field will always bring with it memories of Verdun. The familiar yellow flowers were growing in sheets by the roadside, striving, as it were, pa-

thetically to throw the cover of their freshness and grace across the stricken land.

The interest of Verdun, apart from its heroic defence, lies in the fact that the line of attack being very intensive was relatively small, and owing to the hilly and varied nature of the ground it is possible to visualise more or less accurately the various attacks and counter attacks. We approached Verdun from the south-west, a point from which the damage was relatively small. The whole of the Verdun ridge on which the forts are situated runs north and south, and commands the plain of the Woevre to the east and the valley of the Meuse to the west. All this district was formerly a great forest. On the southern slopes we found the trees practically intact. We turned to the right and, keeping along the top of the ridge, had our first view of the valley of the Meuse, and Verdun with its twin towers lying far below us in the plain.

Verdun, never a considerable city, has nevertheless emerged into fame on more than one occasion in the course of its long history. It gives its name to the one event of capital importance in the evolution of modern Europe. The Treaty of Verdun in 843 may be taken as the starting point of the long struggle between France and Germany. Under this Treaty the united empire of Charlemagne was broken up between his three grandsons. France and Germany parted company, never to meet again during the course of the next thousand years but on terms of fire and sword. Revolutionary France offered its own example of frightfulness at Verdun. The city was taken by the Prussians in 1792. The struggle was not of an embittered character, and some young ladies of the city not only welcomed the conquerors but presented them

with sweets. Fraternising with the enemy was not included apparently in the then revolutionary interpretation of fraternity, and three of the girls were sent to the scaffold when the French retook Verdun after Valmy. The little place sustained a siege of three weeks in 1870, and surrendered with the full honours of war after a gallant resistance.

But at Verdun as elsewhere the scale of events has been flung utterly out of focus by the recent struggle, to which history has no parallel. The town itself has suffered cruelly. Every other house is a ruin. But at least it never yielded, never bowed the head to the conqueror. How near, terribly near, the Germans came to complete success, we appreciated better on the spot than anything we had been led to believe by the official communiqués issued at the time. A discreet veil was flung over the German capture of Fort Douaumont. As a matter of fact not only was the fort taken, but the Germans penetrated for a mile and a half further westward beyond that point. One remaining fort alone lay between them and their prey. Heroic though the defence, it is clear that but for the Somme offensive and the diversion of forces it entailed, Verdun itself must have fallen.

Fort Vaux and Fort Douaumont are the central points of interest in the defence, but every yard of the district is full of poignant and tragic association. Trees and vegetation had disappeared before we reached Fort Vaux. The ground had become a mere crater field. It was almost impossible to believe that this blasted hillside and neighbouring ravines had once formed part of a beautiful forest. As to Douaumont, little of the fort remains beyond a heap of rubble and rubbish. Imagination stumbles

and halts as to what the bombardment must have been which could blast fortress and land alike out of being. Still more impossible is it to gauge the human endurance which could survive any experience so hideous as the fighting which raged round these key points. Just below Douaumont is a trench where a French platoon was overwhelmed and enfiladed by German fire. The ground fell in, burying the men where they stood. The bodies have not been removed, and the tops of the rifles can still be seen sticking out of the ground. The trench is enclosed by barbed wire to keep the tourist at bay, but I hope that this gruesome sight may not be perpetuated for the benefit of the tripper. The tourist invasion of the battlefields is inevitable, but it is intolerable if they bring with them to soil which is sacred anything of the orange peel and ginger-beer bottle atmosphere. Two or three charrs-à-bancs filled with visitors were already on the ground, early though the season. However, they were mercifully cowed into silence by the all-pervading desolation.

All the hillsides round Verdun are scarred with the marks of trenches. Every name, every ridge in the district is famous. We looked on a given heap of ruins and remembered with what anxiety and suspense the name of this or that obscure village filled half the world a few years since. There was a tangle of wire in many places, though much clearance of the battlefield has gone on. Here and there the roots of the unconquerable trees had begun to throw up a sort of scrub. Here and there coarse grass and coarser brambles were hiding the shell holes. But on the hillsides about Vaux and Douaumont, Froide Terre, Poivre, and Haudromont, there was no sign of life. The subsoil had been blasted out of exist-

ence, and vegetation had not been able up till then to reassert itself.

The area of destruction round Verdun extends for a long distance, and the general impression left by the ruined villages is painful in the extreme. In the area of moving battle the land is not destroyed, but the houses are mostly in ruins. The task of reconstruction is formidable indeed, and there were few signs in April 1920 that it was being grappled with on adequate lines. People were beginning to creep back, it is true, to their ruined homes, but under circumstances which seemed very undesirable. The ruins had been patched up in some places, and the owners were living among them in a state of indescribable and insanitary squalor. There were no signs of a big scheme of reparation, which should have aimed first and foremost at the scrapping of these small dirty centres and starting new villages on fresh sites. The average French village is apt to be a dirty place. The sanitary conditions left by a bombardment are better imagined than described.

I cannot help feeling that the inhabitants of the devastated areas have a most real grievance as regards this question of reconstruction. The French Government has wholly failed to deal with it up to the present on a big scale. Progress has been made with areas in the north; other districts, of which Verdun is an example, remain practically untouched. The French complain that they cannot get work-people or materials. I cannot say from what causes the deadlock springs, but the evidences of deadlock in the Verdun district are complete. One feels this state of affairs to be a terrible hardship for the poor people concerned. One of the reparation proposals put forward by the German Government is a scheme for re-

building and re-equipping the devastated areas. It excites, naturally, a chorus of disapproval from greedy contractors and other people who would like the money allocated for houses, furniture, and implements to go into their pockets. But in the interests of the inhabitants—surely the paramount interest—any scheme which would deal promptly with the problems concerned with the return to normal life among the ruined villages should be examined closely.

Further, England and America ought not to miss their opportunities in this respect. The movement for the adoption by English centres of French towns and villages is wise and generous, and if widely spread through the United States as well as our own country should result in substantial assistance to the victims of the war. The basis of any adequate reparation scheme must be national. But destruction so great leaves ample scope for additional voluntary assistance. It is often whispered—one of the unfriendly whispers which circulate in corners—that the French are over-willing to let other people shoulder the burthen of the devastated areas. Whether or not the wealthy French could have made greater efforts on behalf of their compatriots, the position of England and America in this matter remains unaffected. They cannot err on the side of over-generosity. The sufferings of the poor and humble in the devastated areas have been atrocious. In so far as we render France every material assistance within our power, our position is the stronger if from time to time we are forced to cry halt about matters concerning her general policy. Between the Allies there may be, indeed there must be at times, differences which are fundamental as regards their outlook on post-war prob-

lems. But on one point there can only be complete unity of feeling and idea—sympathy for the innocent victims on whom the material brunt of the war has fallen in its most acute form; whole-hearted desire to make good the losses endured.

CHAPTER XII

IN ALSACE

NEVER have I appreciated more fully than during the months I have lived in Germany the many advantages of an island people. No more detestable fate can exist than to be a border state of mixed population, snatched as the chances of fate and history may dictate from one domination to another. With the unhappy example of Ireland before our eyes, we are not lacking in experience of the difficulties which arise from the presence of two races and two religions in one country. When to these internal differences are added the ambitions and intrigues of warring Powers, each hungrily desirous of increasing its coast at the expense of its neighbors, the lot of the inhabitants of the debatable zone is seen to be unenviable indeed. National self-aggressiveness is always accentuated when unhappily yoked with the rival claims of another stock. Temperaments and points of view may be irreconcilable, but each side is forced to contend for its daily bread in the same area and to clash hourly or daily over the task. The problem in government presented by such a situation is at the best of times distracting. When inflamed by old memories of grievances and suffering, of wrongs given, wrongs endured, it becomes almost insoluble. Only a being from another planet endowed with infinite wisdom might be able to deal justly and impartially with so great a tangle. But the very fact that such

a being would be remote from the passions surging round him, would rob him of knowledge essential to their understanding. The hard-worked phrase, self-determination, beloved by the sloppy-minded, never touches the root of real bi-racial difficulties. When two sets of people in one place wish to self-determine themselves in opposite senses, what then? Only along the lines, not of self-aggression, but of loyalty to a common ideal of justice and fair play, can reasonable men on both sides grope towards some sort of compromise. But almost invariably the actual course of events has been to destroy the very possibility of mutual forbearance. Hatred, sinister child of arrogance and injustice, stifles men and women within the evil circle it has forged. And the circle continues pitilessly to revolve, the oppressors of to-day being sometimes the oppressed of yesterday, but, whichever side is uppermost, the bond of hatred remaining close and unbroken.

The German wrong done to France in 1870 was at the same time a supreme political blunder. At the time of the Franco-Prussian War, Alsace-Lorraine had been French for nearly two hundred years and was strongly French in sentiment. There was no real case for restitution to Germany on geographical or historical grounds. For generations life in the border provinces touching the Rhine had been in a state of flux. The rigid territorial demarcations of our own time were then non-existent. Frontiers and population were both fluid. Baedeker, whose national bias in matters both of art and history makes the Handbook on Germany often very unreliable, writes of the "seizing" of Strasbourg by Louis XIV. and the "restoration" of the city after 1870. Cities and provinces, according to our modern ideas, were tossed about

ruthlessly in the seventeenth century, but Alsace-Lorraine having become thoroughly French had no wish to find itself restored to the Fatherland and brought within the circle of Prussian philanthropic effort. Even Alsace, more predominantly German in origin than Lorraine, had in 1870 no desire for other allegiance but that of France. The provinces were torn, protesting and unhappy, from the motherland of their adoption. Bismarck, great and unscrupulous genius, whose clear-sighted vision in matters of practical statecraft was only equalled by his entire lack of moral sense, knew that a bad mistake had been made. "I do not like the idea of so many Frenchmen being in our house against their will," he remarked uneasily. But Bismarck, whose time and thoughts had been devoted with devilish ingenuity and success to manœuvring France into war and putting her in the wrong over the process, had at the critical point, so it would seem, not sufficient energy left to resist the annexationist clamour of the Prussian generals. He yielded to military pressure, thus leaving an open sore in the side of Europe, which in the end was to involve his own creation of the new-made German Empire in ruin.

To-day the provinces are French again, while the conscience of the world applauds a righteous act of restitution. It would be foolish, however, to deny that the return of Alsace-Lorraine after forty-seven years of German rule, with a German population very largely increased, does not present an administrative problem to France of exceptional difficulty. Lorraine, as I have said elsewhere, has kept its French character very much intact throughout the years of oppression. The problem of Alsace is harder to solve.

My first vivid recollection of Paris as a child is being taken to the Place de la Concorde to see the figure of Strasbourg draped in her mourning weeds. It was with real emotion that after the Armistice I saw the statue, all symbols of loss and servitude removed, throned equally with her sister cities who encircle the great square. A visit to Strasbourg itself in the dawn of its liberation is a satisfactory and stimulating experience. The many vicissitudes of its history have left a clear architectural mark on the town. Strasbourg lies, a little way removed from the left bank of the Rhine, in the centre of a fertile plain. Looking southwards, the line of the Vosges mountains stretches far away to the right; equally far to the left across the river runs the line of the Black Forest. So near the borders of Switzerland, it is something of a surprise to find the Rhine flowing tranquilly through this wide flat land already far removed from the mountains of its birth. Before railways and modern methods of communication had made light of rivers and mountains, Strasbourg, commanding the gap of Belfort between the Vosges and the Jura, was a key point of the highest importance. Here lay the broad and easy highway from France to Germany. Along this path swept Napoleon in his invasions of the Rhineland. The strategical value of the position was recognised by the Romans, who had a camp at this point. No less important was it commercially in the Middle Ages, for thanks to its position, Strasbourg was a necessary centre of exchange for the trade of France, Germany, and Switzerland. Manufactures have been developed on some scale by the Germans since 1870, but it is as one of the great marts of Central Europe that Strasbourg has achieved its fame.

The mediaeval character of the buildings survives to an unexpected extent in many of the narrow streets. A small canalised stream, the Ill, encloses the centre of the town, and the gabled houses which cluster on the water's edge, sadly insanitary though they must be, are wholly satisfying to the eye. May health experts and social reformers long be kept at bay from the old quarters of Strasbourg! The type of house which lends unique character to the city has a deep-pitched slanting roof broken by small dormer windows. The red tiles, flecked with green, have been mellowed by age into a subdued colour of great beauty. The houses, with wide lattice windows, are often decorated with wood carvings, sometimes old, often restored. The gables which lend so much character to this class of architecture are treated with considerable freedom and variety; the crow's-foot gable introduced by the Dutch to South Africa is not uncommon here. The beautiful colour of the tiles which glow and shimmer in the sunshine is like a warm and rosy cloak flung over the town. Flowers not infrequently decorate the broad window ledges, and give life and colour to the narrow streets and passages. Striking indeed is the framework of such a house for an Alsatian woman wearing the national head-dress with its voluminous black bows, when she appears at the window to tend her geraniums and marguerites, or to pass the time of day with neighbours in the street below.

The influence of mediaeval Germany on the old streets and buildings of Strasbourg can be seen at a glance. Superimposed on this foundation is a town essentially French in character and architecture. Eighteenth-century France has left behind it the type of high French house, elegant and well-proportioned, characteristic of a period at once

correct and dignified. It is curious to notice how Strasbourg and Metz adopted a similar attitude to the architectural improvements of the conqueror. The spirit of both cities is identical in this respect. Like Metz, pre-1870, Strasbourg keeps itself to itself, aloof and reserved, within the confines of the surrounding Ill. On the further banks, the modern German buildings encircle the old kernel with all the material comfort and ugliness of the latter-day German town. The solid reinforced-concrete houses, the large public buildings, the wide streets and squares breathe a spirit from which the older Strasbourg seems to remove the hem of her garment with fastidious contempt—"What mean ye by these stones?"—and it is not fantastic to read the moral and political struggles of this oft-disputed city of the marches in the vivid contrasts of its architecture. Between mediaeval and seventeenth-century Strasbourg there is no strife. But pre-1870 Strasbourg, humiliated, aristocratic, reveals a passionate antagonism towards the conquering parvenu to whom the city owes its present material prosperity. The Kaiser's palace, a building, monotonous and vulgar, of the type which reproduces itself in a dozen German cities, adorns one of the modern squares. As at Metz, the empty plinths of destroyed statues testify to the passing of the Hohenzollerns. Allegorical figures on one or two modern buildings, bereft of their heads, were something of a puzzle. I could only conclude that the former reigning house, with its mania for self-portraiture, had disguised themselves in such cases as Virtues or Graces.

I have spoken of the beauty of the tiled roofs. The famous cathedral built of red sandstone strikes a similar note of warmth and colour. Incredibly fine and delicate is

the work on arch and buttress; too fine, too delicate perhaps, for ornament is surely at its best in that wonderful moment of Gothic at once austere and noble when ornament serves a strictly architectural end. The famous west front of Strasbourg Cathedral, for all the individual beauty of its carving—the Wise and the Foolish Virgins alone well repay a long journey—is a decorative façade entirely divorced from any architectural end. Similarly with the gossamer-like tracery of the spire. The lines are beautiful, but somehow you feel that the Kingdom of Heaven must be stormed by more violent means than those of so fairy-like an inspiration. Can such a structure really survive the next storm? The question springs involuntarily to the mind, and in it lies a point of reproach. It is one you would never ask yourself when looking at the spires at Chartres. The fine apse of the minster testifies to the Romanesque plan on which the building was begun. Then it was captured by Gothic in its most airy and fantastic mood. It ranks, and ranks rightly, among the great cathedrals of Europe. Yet, since buildings and human beings tend to reproduce each other's characteristics in a strange and intimate way, it leaves the impression that, as may happen with some character of real value and worth, its feet are a little off the ground, and so the quality of the whole suffers. Ruskin, who first saw Strasbourg when a boy of fourteen, writes in *Præterita* that with all its "miracles of building" he was "already wise enough to feel the Cathedral stiff and ironworky." But the high roofs and rich wooden fronts of the houses excited and impressed him greatly.

With the great astronomical clock, beloved of sight-seers, I was frankly a little bored. The cathedral is care-

fully closed at 11.30, so that you are forced to pay for a ticket to come in at 12 o'clock when the twelve apostles and the cock perform. A series of little figures creak in and out, while two rather aggressive Suisses shout explanations and thrust picture-postcards on the spectators. More satisfactory is the museum, where a small collection of pictures, admirable for a provincial town, can be visited. A delightful park called the Orangerie ministers to those social amenities of life the secret of which is so much better understood on the Continent than in Great Britain. The numerous cafés and beer gardens of the continental town make the partaking of food and drink—especially of drink—a simple respectable affair, wholly robbed of the vicious and degrading associations which invest the liquor trade at home.

The crowds gathered in the cafés on a Sunday afternoon gave us a good opportunity of studying the men and women of Strasbourg. I had the impression of a mixed type special to itself and largely independent of its parent stocks. It is wholly different from that of the tall blond men and women we see in Cologne. Neither is it entirely French. The Alsatians tend to be dark and short, somewhat solid too in build, though the unmistakable elegance of French clothes lends a frequent touch of distinction to passers-by in the streets. Such elegance is unknown in Germany proper. Appalling too in its confusion of tongues is the language spoken: a bastard jumble of French and German which has ceased to have any resemblance to either. You speak in French, the people reply in German; you try German, only to be countered in the vilest of patois. In the end I fell back on English as the least unintelligible of the three languages. As re-

gards the difficult bilingual question, I do not know on what ultimate policy the French have decided. For the moment both French and German names appear in the streets, and public places such as the railway station. It is to be hoped there will be no departure from this policy. Suppress a language, and it flourishes with that zest and vigour derived from persecution alone. The Germans, being stupid people, never learnt this lesson either in Poland or Alsace-Lorraine. The French, as a really intelligent race, are in a better position to avoid what is at all times a gross mistake. The lessons of history are usually disregarded, and it would appear that politicians as a body are singularly inept as regards the application of past precedents to present events. Yet the great moral of the pacification of South Africa and the principles it illustrates is one on which Europe in its present chaos would do well to reflect.

The general appearance of the town throughout Sunday was merry and light-hearted. Bands and processions were the order of the day. A parade of ancient firemen during the morning must have included all the surviving heroes of 1870. Young Alsace was bringing itself up no less vigorously on Boy Scout lines. Every organisation which could march was marching to a fanfare of trumpets and a flying of flags. Strasbourg is the stronghold of the German section of Alsace, yet even among individuals I did not notice any appearance of discontent or hostility. The sullen black looks we had seen in the Saar were absent here.

The proposition in government, however, with which the French find themselves confronted is a difficult one. The problem of population is specially intricate. The Ger-

man element preponderates considerably in Alsace, but a German name may often conceal French sympathies. Every effort was made by the conquerors after 1870 to stimulate immigration from German stocks of whose loyalty there could be no doubt. Many Germans have come into the country during the last forty years, but the line of demarcation between them and the German Alsatians proper is an impossible one to draw administratively. The type of shrill voice which on all and every occasion clamours for policies which would aggravate the existing confusion of Europe is loud in its demands that the Germans should be turned out. The French Government have had the good sense up to the present not to pursue so mad a course. The friction which has arisen over the inevitable replacement of German by French officials has been a warning, no doubt, as to the consequences likely to follow from any attempt at wholesale expulsion. During the spring changes in personnel on the Alsace-Lorraine railways led, as I have mentioned in the previous chapter, to a general strike in both provinces.

The question of military service is tangled and difficult. Germany is now free from conscription, a blessing whole-heartedly appreciated by her working population. Alsace-Lorraine, on the contrary, has to contribute its quota to the French armies. Thousands of ex-German soldiers have already been called upon to serve with the French colours. The cruel fate of French Alsatians, conscripted by Germany and forced to fight against France, has harrowed the conscience of European public opinion for many years past. France must see to it that she does not pursue a policy towards the German Alsatians which will sooner or later alienate the sympathy of Europe from

her as surely as it was alienated from Prussia. At the moment she holds all the cards in her hand. She can afford to play the big game, the generous game, which is the only one capable of meeting the present situation. Forty-seven years of German bullying and efficiency left the sentiment of Alsace-Lorraine predominantly French. The rape of the provinces had long been regarded as an injury to the comity of nations. Outside the Central Empires and their adherents the whole world rejoiced with France in the hour of restitution. Now she has exchanged the position of the person wronged, to that of the person in possession, something of romance and sympathy evaporates inevitably. The test is no longer that of sentiment and feeling, but of the hard facts of government, well or ill handled.

Under the heel of the oppressor, France taught the world how firm and enduring national sentiment can become. No material benefits of Prussian rule, considerable though they were, could reconcile the Alsations to the injury done to their rights as free people. Now that a large German population passes under French control, France will be wise to give no opportunity for the cultivation of a national sentiment among the German Alsations as bitter as that of the last forty years among the French. In all that concerns the practical and material organisation of life, German efficiency is much greater than French. They understand the gas and water affairs of life thoroughly. France's advantage lies in the keenness and admirable clarity of her spirit, her powers of wit and of intuition, her fine sense in all that concerns the heart and mind of man. Wholly devoid of sentimentality, no nation can approach the French clearness of vision and

touch when at their best. But on the administrative side the Frenchman is often less happy. The German is painstaking and very thorough; the Englishman has a natural instinct for finding a way out of serious difficulties through the application of a rough-and-ready code of behaving decently to decent people. The Frenchman is apt to tie himself up in red tape. A French bank in Metz refused to give us any money on a French draft especially arranged for our tour. We were told to call again in a fortnight. A German bank in Saarbrücken gave us all the money we wanted on the draft scorned by the Metz gentlemen, six of whom were brought to look at us before we were turned down. As a method of conducting business the proceedings did not strike us as efficient.

The administrative problem of Alsace-Lorraine can only be a difficult one. French bureaucrats admittedly can be both corrupt and unwise, and it is on the enduring qualities of the French spirit that France must draw if she is to make a success of the government of her restored provinces. A true pacification of the German elements resulting in a general loyalty to France would be a signal victory for French statesmanship.

The question of the compensating advantages presented by Alsace-Lorraine as against the devastations in Northern France, raises an issue about which French opinion is peculiarly sensitive. On this delicate ground any English writer is bound to tread warily. France will never admit, or permit it to be said, that any element of compensation enters into the case. The provinces were stolen from her; now they have been restored at the cost of over a million French lives and untold sufferings. From the point of view of abstract justice and ideal right this contention is

doubtless true. But it breaks down before the humdrum questions presented by population, trade, revenue. The provinces were irretrievably lost to France and could only be regained at the price of a successful war. It must be a considerable satisfaction to any friend of France to feel that the crater holes of the devastated areas are at least set off by the recovery of two rich and prosperous provinces, 5605 square miles in extent, with a population of 1,874,014 people. The case of France otherwise would have been aggravated to a desperate degree. She at least enters here and now into possession of an undevastated area, bringing with it considerable compensations in population, minerals, agriculture, and all that these imply as regards trade and taxation. The provinces return vastly improved in their material equipment, thanks to the German capital spent on them. The asset restored is far richer than the asset lost. The set-off, of course, is in no sense equal to what has been destroyed, but it is a substantial element in the case, and one to which, frankly, too little attention is ever paid when questions of war losses are discussed.

It is an interesting experience to motor through the Vosges at a point where the line, so fiercely contended in the north, peters out, so to speak, under conditions which by contrast seem mild if not actually ladylike. We motored to St. Dié by way of the Odilienberg and Saales, returning over the Col de Schlücht to Münster and Colmar, and so back to Strasbourg. Our chauffeur, an Alsatian, warned us we must expect terrible scenes on reaching Saales: since 1870 the French frontier. The warning proved how little experience he had had of the

grim business of war on the main lines of attack and defence.

The rampart of the Vosges falls away sharply to the plain on its eastern side, and from the convent crowning the heights of the Odilienberg a wonderful bird's-eye view exists of the mountains and the plain: Strasbourg and the silver streak of the Rhine dimly visible in the distance, far, far away beyond, the still dimmer line of the Black Forest mountains. The convent itself, a favourite "viewpoint" for trippers to the Vosges, has, thanks to its restaurant and café, a curiously secular appearance. The good nuns apparently drive a brisk trade in souvenirs and picture-postcards, the restaurant catering as much for the needs of the body as the prayers of the faithful for the soul. The wooded heights of the Vosges, sometimes beech, sometimes pine, varied by splendid scarlet patches of mountain-ash berries at their best, are threaded by excellent roads. In the neighbourhood of Saales we braced ourselves, thanks to the exhortations of the driver, to resume our acquaintance with the horrors of the line. But a few damaged houses, and here and there a shattered tree, proved how lightly by comparison this district had escaped. Woods and fields were in a normal condition, and vigorous efforts had clearly been made to deal with the shattered houses.

The scenery of the Col de Schlücht is very fine. A country to be really appreciated must be seen on foot, and motoring is at best but an unsatisfactory makeshift for the busy. To the true vagabond, as Borrow and Robert Louis Stevenson understood the term, the friendly hills of the Vosges must offer many attractions as a wandering ground. Our time being limited, we were grateful to the

motor for the cinematograph impression we were able to carry away. Fighting of a more serious character had taken place on the Col de Schlücht than at Saales. It was along this road the French made their original thrust into Alsace at the beginning of the war, when for a brief period they occupied Colmar in the plain below. Driven back by the Gerinans with heavy losses, the line was stabilised for some years at a point near the head of the pass. Even so the unfailling test of the trees showed that the destruction had not been complete. Münster at the foot of the pass was a heap of ruins. Here for a time artillery fire must have been heavy. But we passed rapidly out of the zone of battle; a great contrast in this respect to the plain of the Woevre where, mile after mile before Verdun is reached, the aspect of the landscape along the road from Metz is desolate and desolating in the extreme.

The agricultural value of the great plain of Alsace must be considerable. The land is rich and well cultivated. Corn, potatoes, and beetroot flourish. Crops of maize and fields of tobacco point to the warmth of the climate. Hops and vines are grown on a scale which does not indicate much enthusiasm for the Pussyfoot movement. Hops are trained on rather a different principle from that usual in Kent, and the long trailing festoons of leaves and flowers languish one towards another like so many elegant and swooning beauties. Tobacco factories and breweries have been established in Strasbourg by the Germans; engine works and foundries also contribute to its wealth. But despite the commercial and manufacturing activities which have turned a city of 78,000 people in 1870 to one of 170,000 in 1911, the strength of Alsace

remains rooted in its agriculture and its agricultural population. Except Strasbourg, and in a lesser degree Mülhausen, there are no big towns. From the land has come in the main the brave spirit which carried the people through years of gloom and foreign domination. That the same spirit will triumph over the difficulties of reconstruction must be the hope of all friends of France.

CHAPTER XIII

SOME ELECTIONEERING IMPRESSIONS

I.

GERMAN political life is in the main a sealed book to the British public. Many people take but a tepid interest in the politics of their own country. To grapple with the intricacies of parties and programmes in a foreign land is an effort quite beyond the will or the power of the average citizen. Yet Germany plays, and is bound to play for years to come, so dominant a part in every calculation and forecast made by her neighbours, that it is of considerable importance to try and realise what forces are at work among her own people.

Constitutional life in Germany has had many vicissitudes. When the tragic history of our own times comes to be written, future historians will probably regard the failure of the Frankfurt deputies in 1848 to solve the problem of German unity on a democratic basis as the most fatal date in modern history. The unity which the "Professors' Parliament" failed to achieve was welded together triumphantly by Bismarck, twenty-three years later, through blood and iron. To the cult of blood and iron Germany henceforth dedicated itself, and for many years, with striking success. But even within the Empire the system had its challengers, as the spread of Socialist doctrines and the successes of the Social Democrats

proved. When the military régime collapsed in defeat and confusion in the autumn of 1918, it was to the despised democratic elements that Germany owed her escape from utter ruin.

Little or no attention has ever been paid to the astonishing feat of constitutional reorganisation which was carried through after the flight of the Emperor. Complete military disaster had overtaken the country; revolution and anarchy were abroad in the land. Yet on the morrow of these events not only was a Republic proclaimed, but a German Government came into being which worked out a democratic constitution based on universal suffrage and full ministerial responsibility of the cabinet to the elected representatives of the people. The history of parliaments contains no more surprising page. Women were enfranchised, lists of voters prepared, and within a few weeks of the Armistice, elections were held which brought into existence a provisional National Assembly whose business it was to carry on the hard task of government till the first Reichstag of the new Republic could subsequently be elected. How all this was done in the time is a mystery, especially having in mind the endless delays to which our own last Franchise Bill gave rise, and the difficulties pleaded as regards the revision of voters' lists. The temper of the hour and the mood of the conquering Allies did not permit of one word of praise for a constitutional *tour de force* carried through under conditions of overwhelming difficulty. But it would be unjust and ungenerous not to recognise to-day with what dogged determination the German democrats, inexperienced and untried as they were in government, handled the half-foundering ship they were called upon

to save. To make a success of the task was an impossibility under the circumstances for them or for any set of men. But that they kept the ship afloat, in view of the seas breaking over it, is little short of a marvel.

The man who played a thoroughly creditable part in the hour of collapse was Hindenburg. Unlike other distinguished members of the ruling class he did not run away when the game was up, but stood by his country through the grim business of defeat and surrender. Without a shred of sympathy for the Republican Government, he gave that government loyal assistance as regards the withdrawal of the armies. No man in Germany to-day commands more universal respect than the old Field-Marshal. Amid the flood of recriminations which German statesmen, generals, and admirals have poured on each other, Hindenburg has displayed reticence and generosity which do him entire credit. The inclusion of his name in the list of War Criminals is of all Allied ineptitudes since the Peace perhaps the greatest.

The National Assembly lasted for about fifteen months. In June 1920 Germany went to the polls to elect the first Reichstag of the Republic. Not the faintest interest in the event was taken by the British public. Yet whatever the result, it could only react on the whole future of European reconstruction.

Current conceptions at home remain astonishingly crude as to the position in Central Europe. The man in the street, brought up in the true milk of the word as preached by the Yellow Press, is still of opinion that Germany is as militant and as threatening as ever, and that, should we be so foolish as to stop sitting on her head, she would promptly overrun Europe again. Suggest that

Germany with her fleet sunk, her merchant shipping confiscated, her colonies lost, her army disbanded, her war material surrendered, her railway system in ruins, her food shortage considerable, is hardly in a position at the moment to make an unprovoked attack on any one, and the said person hints darkly in reply at hidden divisions on the Eastern Frontier; at an alliance between the Bolsheviks and the German Government; at a military menace little less serious than what existed in 1914. It is surprising that people of this type are not more in conceit with themselves after the Allied victory, and fail so completely in appreciation of what the conquering armies have done. The German legions, perfectly trained and equipped after years of preparation, and with the whole resources of the German Empire behind them, could not achieve the preliminary pounce on Paris in 1914. Is the present Republican Government in any better position to succeed where they failed? A nation broken by hunger and defeat may become a centre of disease, dangerous to its neighbours owing to the poison spread through the whole international system. But any talk of external military adventure, apart from sporadic insurrections, is absurd.

The old united Germany with its strong centralised military government is a thing of the past. Instead of which we have a Germany, weak, disorganised, distracted, split into various factions each at mortal strife with the other. The position is full of danger and grave internal crisis; it may menace the foundations of European society, but the danger is disruptive and from within, not the menace of external legions. Political parties in Germany are split up into numerous and bewildering sub-

divisions. The Independent Socialists and Communists form a group to the extreme left, with more or less Bolshevik ideals. But, broadly speaking, there are two main sections, the democratically minded people who desire the evolution of a peaceful and constitutional republic, and the reactionaries who, while paying a certain lip-service to democratic principles, at heart detest the whole business.

It will be the eternal reproach to Allied policy that it has done nothing whatever to help the better elements in Germany to consolidate their position. On the contrary, by the intolerable economic penalties of the Peace it has pushed German democracy into a slough of despond and handed over all the vantage points to its enemies. The measure of the vast blunder committed in this respect is clear enough to any one who, like myself, has had the opportunity of attending political meetings held in Germany. To be living in a country torn by a fierce election campaign and to be taking no part in the fray was a novel experience for me. The placards with which Cologne was covered and the heated articles in the German newspapers made me, like an old war-horse, sniff battle from afar. At least I was anxious to try to gather as a spectator how German men and women were really feeling and thinking on this critical occasion. Political meetings have their own atmosphere and tell their own tale, and the opportunity of hearing and judging for myself was too good a one to miss.

I confess it was with a certain amount of trepidation that I made my way for the first time into a German public meeting. Naturally I had no desire to be recognised as an Englishwoman, and, the conditions being wholly

novel, I was not clear beforehand how far I should be able to lie low and conceal the fact of my nationality. However, seeing that the Social Democrats advertised a meeting to which women were specially invited, I plucked up my courage, reflected on the not infrequent and slightly chastening occasions when I have been addressed by Germans in German, bought a Socialist paper which I displayed conspicuously, and walked into the gathering. Neither then nor on any subsequent occasion, let me say, did I experience the smallest difficulty in slipping in amongst the crowd and hearing the proceedings in entire comfort.

It was a warm evening, and the great hall of the Gürzenich, the old banqueting-room of mediaeval Cologne, was only half full. The audience—about equal numbers of men and women—were well-dressed, entirely decorous folk. The long hair and red ties of orthodox Socialism were absent. German meetings are detestably unpunctual. Advertised generally for 8 P.M., they seldom start till twenty minutes later, and the audience meekly accepts conditions of delay which would rouse an English meeting to fury. The principal speaker of the evening was Fräulein S., of Hamburg, a member of the National Assembly. At 8.20 a procession of earnest-looking women slowly mounted the platform. They wore coloured blouses and dark skirts, and their hair was scratched back tightly off their heads—a true hall-mark of feminine virtue in all climes and among all nations. The chairwoman had fortified herself with a large dinner-bell, and rang a peal, apparently to give herself courage, on opening the proceedings. Restoration of order was unnecessary, for the audience sat in stolid silence on the appear-

ance of the speakers, not even extending to them the perfunctory greeting with which an English audience heartens the platform victims before the sacrifice. No encouraging cheers greeted the advent of a pleasant-looking lady who, armed with a folio of MS., made her way to the reading-desk. Fräulein S. spoke, or rather read, for an hour in a clear, cultivated voice. She outlined the constructive policy of the Social Democrats or Majority Socialists, whose platform approximates to what was known as the Liberal-Labour position in English politics. The party is, however, definitely pledged to nationalisation. The speaker led off with the blockade, which is the King Charles's Head of every political meeting in Germany. Their enemies, she declared, accused the Social Democrats of bringing Germany into her present desperate straits. Not the revolution, however, but the dire consequences of the blockade were responsible for the troubles of the people. Fräulein S.'s chief interests lay obviously in the field of social reform. She outlined a programme which was strangely familiar in many respects. The unmarried mother and the question of religious education in the schools were in the forefront of the battle. The temper of the meeting, it must be owned, was very tepid, but the depressing silence was broken by a few cheers when these subjects were handled. Another old friend appeared with Fräulein S.'s emphatic assertion that no school teacher should be compelled to resign her appointment on marriage. The lady then dealt at some length with finance and the incidence of taxation. A thoughtful, well-expressed speech—withal a trifle dull.

The reading of manuscript in a large hall has a curiously deadening effect on an audience, and judging by

what I have heard, the women politicians of Germany—and be it also said many of the men—have not as yet learnt to emancipate themselves from the tyranny of elaborately prepared lectures. This was noticeable in the case of the speakers who followed Fräulein S. She was succeeded at the reading-desk by a dark, heavy-browed, energetic-looking girl, who infused a welcome note of vigour, not to say violence, into the proceedings. This young woman was a school teacher of obviously advanced views, and spoke well and fluently. She made short shrift of religious education in schools. Priests and catechisms vanished under her touch as she flourished the Socialist banner and belaboured her political adversaries with a series of witticisms which evoked rounds of applause. Yet she too had a folio of notes, and now and again when a word failed, a sudden pause in the flow of oratory, a hasty turning of sheets showed that the thunder, effective as it was, had been carefully prepared.

These little difficulties were still more noticeable in the case of the next speaker, an old lady wearing spectacles and a black bonnet, whose witticisms (the drift of which I was quite unable to follow) delighted the audience. Her notes had got mixed, and when she lost her thread—which happened frequently—some moments were spent hunting it. Quite undismayed, however, by these interruptions, the old lady held to her task gallantly. She was clearly a favourite, and the carefully prepared jokes resulted in loud laughter. I was sorry to miss the point of these jests, but I was left with the impression that public meetings in Germany, as in England, are ready to be amused with very small beer. The ladies were succeeded by one or two men speakers, who all chanted the praises

of the Social Democrats and introduced variants of another familiar theme—poll early and poll straight. After this the chairwoman performed energetically again on the dinner-bell—did any member of the audience desire to speak? Hardly had the sounds died away when she declared the meeting over. I was waiting for the real fun of the fair to begin with questions, but found myself, with the rest of the company, in the street.

Encouraged by this first attempt, I made a round of the meetings held by the leading parties, gatherings at which night after night I listened to views as wide asunder as the poles. The proceedings were considerably more lively than at the women's meeting, and on more than one occasion feeling ran high. Yet the proceedings were astonishingly orderly as compared with the uproarious election meetings which are common enough at home. Interruptions were not of a sustained character, and during the campaign I saw no meeting broken up. I can only marvel, however, at the easy lot of a German candidate, for questions and heckling play a very small part in the campaign. The carefully prepared conundrums which harass the existence of the British Parliamentary candidate, the game of thrust and tierce, are unknown here. I was disappointed by the absence of the familiar figure in the back row who rises, wagging a minatory forefinger, and the words, "I want to ask the candidate," etc. The odds are against the heckler in Germany, for what is called the "discussion" consists of objectors coming on to the platform and making speeches of protest, surrounded by the candidate or candidates and their supporters. As I have already remarked, meetings begin late, speeches are very lengthy, and by the time the party candidates

sitting in a row on the platform have each said his say the hour stands long after 10 P.M., and the audience begins to go home.

Naturally I was specially interested in the women speakers and the general bearing of women at these gatherings. The impression made upon me was that if German women attained full political emancipation at a bound through the revolution in November 1918, they have already laid a firm hand on their new rights. Large numbers of women were present at every meeting I attended—a fact which made my own presence possible. A fair proportion of women had sat in the National Assembly (the first provisional Parliament elected after the revolution), and were candidates for the new Reichstag. It is a satisfactory feature that, though the progressive feminist spirits are naturally more numerous among the Social Democrats and Minority Socialists, the various Conservative parties also support women candidates. If the British voters at the last General Election showed no mind of any kind to return women to Parliament, German women have fared better. But the difference in the electoral system probably tells in their favour.

II

German political organisation differs widely from anything with which we are familiar. The small constituencies represented by one or two members have no existence here. The country is divided into large electoral areas, and each party has a list of candidates qualified for the position by the votes of their respective supporters. On polling day you are implored to vote, therefore, not for a

person but for a list, the list being headed by the name of the leading candidate. A definite quota of votes given to a party elects a member automatically. The personal element in elections which is so conspicuous a feature of our own public life has practically no existence in Germany. The struggle is one of principles far more than of personalities. This state of affairs tells against a candidate of special gifts, but on the other hand it neutralises the unfair influence of the purse, and gets rid of much of the polite bribery which enters into political life at home. There is no question here as at Eatonswill of kissing the babies or shaking hands specially washed for the occasion. Further, areas are too large to make handsome subscriptions to local charities a factor in success. A millionaire could not stand the strain of subsidising portions of a province.

Another curious feature of a General Election in Germany is the inadequacy of the Press arrangements. The papers supporting the various factions give the list of their own candidates, and these lists appear on the electioneering placards which are in great evidence. But I wholly failed to obtain any general list of the candidates in the Cologne area, let alone a list for the whole country. Equally difficult was it after the poll to get a detailed list of the losses and gains. Totals appeared but no names. It was necessary to hunt through a variety of party organs to find which of the candidates had been qualified as members by the quota of votes given to the party. Though I spent my time buying newspapers, I was never able to find a list setting out the new Reichstag in tabular form, with parties and localities attached to the various names. Electioneering literature was poor stuff, and the occasional

picture posters not inspiring. The Deutschnationale had a dramatic placard of a drowning man sinking beneath heavy seas, to whom a lifebuoy with D.N.P. is being thrown as his one chance of salvation. But the subject of the placard could hardly have thrilled the electors. Posters devoted to the general turpitude of the other man's views were common, and followed familiar lines. But certainly neither Press nor posters could compare with the organisation of the written and printed word which exists during a General Election in the United Kingdom.

It was an interesting experience night after night to watch a country groping its way along political paths but recently opened. The multiplicity of parties into which Germany is split is very confusing to a foreigner. The lines of demarcation in some cases are hard to grasp, and the political life of the Republic would gain in vigour and directness if certain of the groups were combined under one banner.

The two main groups, right and left, into which German political life falls are split up into various factions. The Socialist Party is divided into a constitutional right wing, the Social Democrats, and a revolutionary left wing, the "Unabhängige" or Independent Socialists. Since the revolution, various parties have been busily engaged changing their names, a fact which does not simplify the situation, as the old ones still survive in current conversation. The former Liberals—whose views have nothing in common with Liberalism in the English sense—are included to-day in a variety of Capitalist and Conservative groups from the Demokraten (mildly Liberal in our sense of the word) on the left to the Deutschnationale Partei on the right. This last-named tabernacle shelters the

Junker and Agrarian elements, and is reactionary to the core. But it is less dangerous than the party which has risen into power of late and bids fair to be thoroughly mischievous, namely, the Deutsche Volkspartei. This is the party of Herr Stinnes and the "schwer Industrie." It includes the great manufacturers and capitalists, as well as large sections of the Bourgeoisie, has ample funds at its command, and despite some perfunctory patter about democracy, is bitterly anti-democratic in feeling and outlook. These two main divisions of the Socialists and the Bourgeoisie face each other with uncompromising hostility. But the situation is further complicated by a clerical element standing between them, with which happily our own politics are untroubled.

The fervour and depth of Catholicism on the Rhineland has been one of the many surprises of Germany to me. In the Rhineland, therefore, questions affecting Church and State are much to the fore, especially the burning question of religious education in the schools. But the cross-correspondences between the Zentrum, the orthodox Catholic party, and the other groups are most bewildering. There are Christian Socialists and Socialists who are very much the reverse. The Zentrum has cooperated for certain purposes with the Social Democrats, which has resulted in a split in its own ranks and the formation of a new party of clerical extremists known as the Christliche Volkspartei.

Amid the welter of parties two conclusions force themselves on the observer. First, the orderly democratic elements in Germany are having a hard struggle to survive; second, it is essential for the Allies to have a responsible Government in Germany with principles approx-

inating to those of the democratic peoples. To such a Government alone can they look for the execution of Germany's Treaty obligations. Yet they have taken no steps to secure this end. I often think that Europe will make final shipwreck over the mistaken idea of German military unity still so firmly screwed into popular imagination at home. Could we but grasp the profound internal cleavage of ideas and ideals in Germany itself, common-sense, if no higher consideration, might suggest the importance of strengthening the hands of the only party from which we have anything to hope.

The democratic Government which came into existence at the time of the revolution has had an impossible task. It was confronted by hunger, defeat, despair, and the miseries which resulted from the blockade. It was not a strong Government—how could it be? Democracy is but a plant of struggling growth in Germany. The nation has had no training in self-government, and the efficient bureaucracy which still more or less survives is steeped in the old bad traditions. That under these circumstances the new Government was open to suspicion at every turn is natural enough. A more far-sighted policy, however, inspired by some faith and hope for the future would have realised that these struggling democratic ideals, if feeble, were sincere and would not have withheld all help from them. Also that the powerful internal enemies, the revolutionaries on the one hand, the reactionaries on the other, were waiting their opportunity to destroy them. Such a policy, could it have illumined the councils of Versailles, might at least have seen the folly of associating the first efforts in democratic government in Germany with rebuffs and humiliations of all kinds. The

German working-man means to stand by the revolution, but hunger and general demoralisation are openings on which the reactionaries and revolutionaries are not slow to seize.

These reflections were driven home to me in a most emphatic way at a meeting of the Deutsche Volkspartei which was addressed by a distinguished professor from Berlin. The Deutsche Volkspartei excites peculiar wrath in Socialist circles. The Junkers and the Right Wing extremists, left to themselves, are not dangerous. But this great Conservative capitalist block, fortified by the funds of the big business men and the "schwer Industrie," is considered, and rightly, a formidable adversary.

The Professor's speech was in its own way first-rate. From premises which personally I detested he developed his theme with extraordinary ability, piling argument upon argument with a cumulative force which swept everything before it. Personally I was very thankful it did not fall to my lot to answer some of the points scored.

The Gürzenich Hall was crowded on this occasion, and the fashionable ladies who sat on the platform belonged to a different world from that of the Social Democratic women of an earlier meeting. As regards the masculine supporters of the Volkspartei, I was reminded of Mr. Keynes's famous description of the present House of Commons, "a lot of hard-faced men who looked as though they had done very well out of the war." This was particularly the case with the chairman, who had "schwer Industrie" written all over him. The Professor's personality was more attractive than that of many of his supporters—a grey-haired, grey-bearded man, with a fine head and full strong voice. He spoke without a note of

any kind, never once hesitating for a word. He dealt skilfully with occasional interruptions, for the meeting was not composed of unanimous supporters.

The speech began characteristically with a eulogy of Bismarck. Bismarck had been reproached for a policy of blood and iron and force. But blood and iron and force, not the pratings of the democratic visionaries of the National Assembly at Frankfurt in 1848, had created and sustained modern Germany. It was the absence of blood and iron which was responsible for their present downfall. Not that the armies in the field were ever defeated; Germany's downfall sprang from the blockade and the fanatical hatred of England. Yet not from the blockade alone: all might have been saved but for the revolution which had brought about their final undoing. It was the traitors from within, not the enemies from without, who had finally wrecked and destroyed Bismarck's work. Social Democracy had been the ruin of the country. It had delivered the nation tied and bound into the hands of their enemies. Democracy, what was democracy? The firstfruits of German democracy had been the Treaty of Versailles with its intolerable burdens. Belief in democratic principles; trust in the professions of democratic leaders? The speaker laughed bitterly. Had not President Wilson proclaimed that America was fighting German militarism, not the German people? Had not Lloyd George said the same thing, and that no yard of German soil was desired by the Alliance? The Social Democrats might believe these fables, on the strength of which they sold the pass to the bitter enemies of the Fatherland. The result was the Treaty of Versailles. The Socialists talked of a peace of reconciliation, of interna-

tional relations, of stretching out hands to the democracies in other countries. What folly to trust to such shifting sands, which had resulted in the German people being swallowed up in misery. The Social Democrats had promised them freedom. "Freedom," said the speaker with bitter scorn; "are you free in the Rhineland?" No; there was only one way by which a happier future could be reached—the re-creation of Germany on strong nationalist lines; a Germany resting on force, purged of democratic and international follies, with her eyes fixed on herself and the principles of Bismarck well to the fore again. To do this the defeat of Social Democracy and Socialism at the polls was the first essential. A Government must be returned which would know how to safeguard the welfare of the Fatherland. Unceasing work was an essential of reconstruction; the eight hours' day was another colossal blunder recently made. Here and there the speaker threw an occasional sop to the democratic Cerberus. Perhaps it was true that they had relied a little too much on force alone in the past, and had forgotten the old idealistic teaching of the poets and philosophers. And again the rule of bayonets was over; government now rested on the will of the people—a good old tag which appeared towards the end of the speech. If the Volkspartei have their way, how much will shortly remain of the will of the people in Germany?

Now for an Englishwoman sitting unperceived and unrecognised among a German audience this speech was not pleasant hearing. Naturally, the speaker glided easily over the rotten ice of Germany's responsibility for the war. He had nothing to say as to the original crime of German militarism, the real starting point of his tale of

woe. For him history began with the Peace, an indefensible position. Nevertheless all he had to say on that subject drove home every doubt people like myself have felt as to the scrapping by the Peace of the fundamental principles for which we fought the war. The speech was a practical illustration of how the Treaty itself has played straight into the hands of the German reactionaries, how it has brought democratic professions into utter contempt, how it has made the lot of a German democratic Government practically impossible.

The speech of the evening was received with rapturous applause, though elements of dissent were not unrepresented. But, as I have said before, German political meetings are not arranged with a view to helping the heckler. It is one thing to fire off questions from the body of the hall, quite another to go upon the platform and make a reasoned speech of protest surrounded by your enemies. Even so the "discussions" are at times sufficiently lively. A nice old working-man, with clothes so patched that the original pattern had almost disappeared, sat next me in my corner. He was obviously full of protest at the speech, and obviously anxious to explain his objections to me. But the necessities of my incognito demanded strict silence, for my speech I knew would betray me if I became involved in conversation however interesting. So I was forced to assume an attitude of haughty aloofness, much though I regretted the latter.

When the Berlin gentleman sat down, another prop of the Volkspartei, an elderly and spectacled lady, advanced to the reading-desk fairly staggering under a load of MS. "Lieber Gott!" said two young men sitting in front of me when she had said half a dozen words. Seizing their

hats, they fled forthwith. I bore with the portentous dullness of the lady for a few minutes and then fled in my turn. The evening though interesting had not been agreeable. There had been too much truth in many of the taunts hurled by the Professor at the democratic professors of the Allies and their "faithful guardianship" of the principles of liberty and justice. The miserable state of confusion to which the pundits of the Peace Conference have reduced Europe is only too apparent to any one living on the Continent. But to have the moral enforced and adorned by a German is poor work for an Englishwoman.

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III

One outstanding impression which I have carried away from political meetings in Germany is the easy life of a German parliamentary candidate. So far as I could judge, these happy individuals saunter through a campaign with relative ease and leisure. Instead of a hectic evening spent in rushing from one meeting to another, candidates sit for hours listening to one another's oratory. The absence of heckling and questions makes the delivery of long political treatises, which are but mildly challenged, a simple task. There are of course exceptions, and some meetings, notably Socialist ones, announce a "discussion," at which feeling runs high. But the average German audience is very long-suffering, and tolerates bores and speeches of inordinate length which would empty an English gathering. The whole spirit of a German meeting is hostile to interruptions. I have heard a man who interjected a harm-

less remark torn to pieces by the speaker, with the obvious approval of the audience.

All of which is perhaps a mark of the political inexperience of the people and that despairing German habit of taking for granted what is told them. Nowhere more than in Germany does one thank heaven for the intractability and argumentativeness of the British democracy. Intellectual docility lies at the root of many German crimes, and along the path of criticism probably lies the way of political regeneration.

Liberal and Conservative principles are much the same all the world over, and the German political parties which embody them are easy to recognize whatever their names. But the clerical element which cuts across political life in Catholic Germany has no parallel in English politics, and produces some curious eddies in the stream. The Zentrum, the orthodox Catholic Party, cannot be reproached with clericalism in the bad sense of the word. German Catholicism includes mildly Socialistic elements, and the Zentrum joined with the Social Democrats in forming the present Government. It is largely a working-class party, and stands for what we should call moderate Liberal views. But at the same time it is grounded in principles of religious education and that religious view of the State to which modern democratic feeling is increasingly hostile. Joint makers of the Coalition, no two parties at the moment abuse each other more heartily than the Zentrum and the Majority Socialists. Despite its present influence, it is difficult, therefore, to judge what the future holds for the Zentrum. Meanwhile, a certain section of zealots and intriguers have broken away from the original Catholic Party to form the Christliche Volks-

partei. The seceders declare that by holding any traffic with the Social Democrats the Zentrum has been faithless to the first principles of religious education. It was incumbent on them, therefore, however heart-breaking the task, to withdraw the hem of their garments from the accursed thing and stand for Christian fundamentals in their original purity. Behind all of which professions lurks a very pretty intrigue.

I was favourably impressed at a Zentrum meeting both by the audience and the speakers. I came away feeling that they were decent people holding moderate views with honesty and a certain liberality of view. Unlike the Deutschnationale and the Volkspartei, they do not desire the destruction of the Republic, while paying it perfunctory lip-service. One speaker, a priest, declared emphatically against any restoration of the monarchy, and his remarks were received with cheers. The capitalist element was clearly unrepresented on the platform. The body of the hall was filled with the same working-class element largely represented in the crowds which flock on Sunday mornings to Cologne Cathedral. The Zentrum is a strong party, and whatever electoral successes it may win at the polls are not likely to be hostile to social reform on cautious lines.

Very different is the position as regards the seceding body, that of the Christliche Volkspartei. I attended a meeting of the new party, and fell among proceedings which were refreshingly lively. It was a curious audience, generally speaking on a plane just above working-class level, but including more well-to-do and moneyed interests. They were not a pleasant set of people. Some looked fanatics; others undiluted scamps. A large num-

ber of women were present who cheered with great vigour. Enthusiasm was boundless, but was countered at the back of the hall by very definite opposition.

When the speakers and candidates took their place on the platform, cheers greeted the appearance of a sinister-looking priest with intrigue written all over him. This was the celebrated Father Kastert, whose political activities of late have made no small stir in the Rhineland. The various candidates got to work, and I have never heard texts and Christian ideals hurled about a platform with such vigour, and, according to English standards, with such entire lack of reserve. Several of the speakers, judging by their appearance, might have engaged in shady commerce, which made their declamations about the supreme importance of religious education the more interesting.

Shortly after the meeting began, a blind gentleman, venerable in appearance and with a large white beard, was shepherded with ostentatious care on to the platform. I suspected a trophy, judging by the exaggerated marks of respect with which he was received by Father Kastert and his friends. He was, in fact, a leading supporter of the Zentrum, who had seceded to the new party. The old gentleman was propped up, and when he began to speak, despite his tottering steps and shaking hands, proved a veritable Bull of Basham. The Sermon on the Mount and the Temptation in the Wilderness formed part of a political pot-pourri mixed up with the misdeeds of the Social Democrats. I was sitting by chance among a nest of zealots, who greeted these remarks with hysterical applause. A youth, still wearing field grey, suddenly jumped up in emphatic protest. General uproar resulted.

"Aus mit dem Kerl!" shouted several ladies round me. My spirits rose at the prospect of seeing some one turned out with German thoroughness, but the young man thought better of it, and sat down again hastily. The chairman rang his bell, and after a time the meeting proceeded. Among this curious company of hypocrites applauding principles clearly remote from their practice I was struck by one working-man candidate, who spoke with obvious sincerity as well as simplicity. No workman, he said, could look for joy in his work unless that work were grounded in Christ. Christ was the root, Christ was the foundation, Christ was the workman's stay and support. Happily in England we do not discuss the Founder of Christianity on political platforms after the manner of this meeting. But in this solitary case the note of sincerity rang true, and I was grateful for it.

The candidates said their say, and then the real "turn" of the evening began with a lengthy discourse from Father Kastert. Father Kastert, despite all disclaimers to the contrary, is regarded as the protagonist of the Rhineland Republic, a matter about which there are many mutterings and murmurings in the Occupied Area. As such he is an object of abhorrence to all patriotic Germans. Various elements enter into the Rhineland Republic intrigue. The annexationist party in France are naturally in favour of it; good Catholics are told that self-determination for the Rhineland means getting rid of Prussian Protestant officials; clericals are promised more power in a State dominated by clerical influences; greedy financiers are heartened by the prospect of escaping any way from the full burdens of the indemnity. Every decent German looks on the movement as one of supreme

treachery to the Fatherland in its hour of defeat and overthrow, and on Father Kastert as the arch-traitor.

That Father Kastert and his following are violently assailed is only natural. His lengthy speech on this occasion took the form of an apologia. His visit to General Mangin was only concerned with securing a greater measure of liberty for the Rhineland during the Occupation, and in hastening the close of the Occupation itself; away with the abominable lie that he was in French pay and serving French ends; all that he sought was to free the Rhineland from the Jewish influences rampant both in Prussia and Berlin and to secure the fullest measure of self-determination. On the whole the Father, though like all priests a good speaker, proved less of a personality than I expected. I am quite unable to judge how far the charges brought against him are just. The Christliche Volkspartei is the political instrument formed by him for carrying out his projects, whatever they may be. Father Kastert would appear to draw his support from singularly unworthy elements in German public life; people who are ready to traffic with the enemies of yesterday for the sake of such bread-and-butter advantages as may be obtained from the intercourse. A bad peace opens the door to intrigues of many kinds. But the security of Europe or France is not to be achieved by buffer states of the type contemplated by the supporters of the Rhineland Republic.

The French Chauvinists who air schemes for the annexation of the left bank of the Rhine are mischievous people. It is hard to believe that one French person endowed with a grain of good sense could lend an ear to so mad a proposal. Where Germany failed ignominiously

in Alsace-Lorraine, the French are hardly likely to succeed in the Rhineland. But foolish talk of this character tends very appreciably to exasperate and embitter German public opinion, and brings new elements of hatred and unrest into a situation which was bad enough already. Many Germans are convinced that France intends to spring some annexationist coup upon them, and is only waiting for an opportunity to strike again. Suspicions of this kind destroy any hope of improved relations between the two countries. Goodwill can be at the best a plant of very slow and painful growth between the nations. Intrigue makes its existence impossible. The Rhine is German to the core in race, language, and sentiment. Even a whisper as to the possibility of detaching it from the rest of the country is a premium on a fresh outbreak of anger and exasperation. The unhappy situation existing in the Saar Basin may have its compensations if it provides an anti-annexationist moral too strong to be disregarded.

IV

Polling day came and went. Despite a certain amount of nervous chatter beforehand of disturbances and riots, the elections took place in complete tranquillity. Not a dog barked through the length and breadth of Germany. In Cologne, at least, no one would have suspected that any event of importance was taking place. The ordinary Sunday crowds promenaded peacefully, as is their habit, to and fro along the Rhine. The Independent Socialists, with singular delicacy and nice feeling, plastered the outer walls of the cathedral during the night with their election-

eering placards, and in gigantic red letters painted the words "Wahl List Fries" on the threshold of the west door. Otherwise everything about the town was quiet and normal.

As for the result of the Election, it was very much what was to be expected under the circumstances—a result in the highest degree unsatisfactory, if they but knew it, to the British democracy. The reactionaries and the extreme Socialists gained at the expense of the moderate men. The Independent Socialists—the Unabhangige—negligible at the last election, increased their strength four-fold, and instead of twenty-two hold eighty-one seats in the new Reichstag. They swept the great industrial districts of the west, an ironical commentary on the hysterics of the English papers which insisted that the Ruhr disturbances were a put-up job by the German Government destined to veil a new attack on France. No less striking were the gains of the Deutsche Volkspartei, who increased their numbers from twenty-one to sixty-two seats. The Zentrum with sixty-eight instead of eighty-eight seats lost substantially, but while yielding ground was not routed. The Christliche Volkspartei was beaten off the field. The discomfiture of Father Kastert and the upholders of the Rhineland Republic was complete. The serious feature of the Elections was the downfall of the Social Democrats, the largest and most influential of the three parties forming the Muller Government. Their numbers fell from one hundred and sixty-three to one hundred and twelve. No less complete was the discomfiture of the Demokraten or Moderate Radicals—the left wing of the Bourgeois parties—who at the best lived cramped and uncomfortable lives between the Social Dem-

ocrats on the one hand and the Conservative groups on the other. Their numbers fell from seventy-five to forty-five seats. Secrecy of the ballot does not in Germany prohibit analysis of the totals polled, and the women's vote taken as a whole was clearly thrown on the reactionary side. Gratitude is not a factor which counts in political life, and the Social Democrats to whom the women owe their enfranchisement suffered severely at their hands.

On the morrow of the poll, therefore, the Müller Government then in power found that its majority had disappeared, and that the Bourgeois groups reckoned together were in a majority as compared with the two Socialist parties. In the good old days for which many Germans sigh, nothing would have happened in the seats of the mighty, whatever the complexion of a Reichstag returned at a General Election. But under the new constitution established by the revolution, a Government in power must hold its authority from the elected representatives of the people. Since, however, both the Zentrum and the Demokraten had been associated with the Müller Government, a political deadlock of great difficulty at once arose. For some days the hitherings and thitherings between the various groups kept political Germany on the tiptoe of excitement. The Independent Socialists held aloof and refused entirely to be associated in any Government with the Majority Socialists. The Majority Socialists refused with equal firmness to have anything to do with a Cabinet in which their deadly enemies the Volkspartei would necessarily play a leading part. The Zentrum with its sixty-eight seats and Liberal leanings clearly held the balance of power between the conflicting parties. The political crisis lasted for a fortnight, during which

period Germany was practically without a Government. This state of affairs was considerably aggravated by the approach of the Spa Conference and the necessity to have a German Cabinet in existence with whom negotiations could be carried on. Finally, after many days of uncertainty, a new Coalition Government emerged with Herr Fehrenbach, the Zentrum leader, as Chancellor. The new Government is largely Zentrum with a dash of Demokraten, but the sinister influence of the Volkspartei is dominant in its counsels. The Government can command no clear majority. It is confronted with a solid block of Socialist opposition. The Social Democrats, whatever the attitude of the Independents, are not likely to hamper the new Cabinet in vital questions of external politics. But in daily life it will be forced to lead the uneasy existence of playing off the various groups against each other. It is a weak Government at a moment when strength is essential, and such strength as it possesses is largely of the wrong kind.

This upshot, as I see it, is wholly devoid of comfort to any one who desires the rehabilitation of Germany on right lines. The election is the writing on the wall which even at the eleventh hour should command the attention of the little ring of politicians who control the Entente policy. This shifting of German opinion to the right and to the left is an ominous sign. The party standing for ordered democratic development has been knocked out. The British public should try to realise it has been killed by the Allied policy. That it was worth supporting is proved by the fact that, despite heavy losses, the Social Democrats still remain the largest individual group in the new Reichstag. We have refused to discriminate between

the good and bad elements in political Germany. Our hand has rested as heavily on a democratic as it would rightly have done on a Junker Government. The shackles forged by the Allies have in the first place reduced the only administration to impotence to which they could look for the fulfilment of the just demands of a revised Treaty. Economic and political recovery has been made an impossibility owing to the policy pursued. As a result, hunger, despair, and general misery have driven large sections of the working-classes into the arms of the Communists. They have lost faith and hope in a constitutional party whose weakness has been so great. They are out for the short cut of violent means in order to better conditions which they regard as intolerable.

Meanwhile the Deutsche Volkspartei and all the wealthy and reactionary elements in the country have been no less eager to stamp upon the smoking flax of a democratic Germany. On the Friday and Saturday before the poll I attended meetings respectively of the Volkspartei and the Social Democrats. In each case speeches were made typical of the two sets of ideas at war in Germany to-day. On this occasion the Volkspartei speakers hardly took the trouble to camouflage their real opinions, though one pastor spoke eloquently of the "Liberalisms" of which they were the guardians—a claim which moved me to secret mirth. The arguments were developed on the same lines as those I have described above, only on this occasion the cloven hoof was still more obvious. The revolution and the Republic were the root causes of Germany's present misery. The view of the Volkspartei that a Constitutional Monarchy was the best form of government was unchanged, though they "accepted" the Republic.

Soon they hoped the old red and white and black colours would wave over them again—a remark which roused frantic applause from the large and enthusiastic audience. Internationalism and the League of Nations were condemned in unsparing terms. Who were the Allies to advance these principles? Let them cease to boycott Germans in all parts of the world, and let France bring to an end the scandal of her black troops in the Occupied Areas. Then they might begin to talk about internationalism. As for England, no country pursued its policy with more consistent and single-eyed devotion to its own interests. Germany could only be remade on the basis of a strong and efficient nationalism. A new spirit was abroad in the land and, granted the defeat of the Socialists and Social Democrats, all that had been lost might be regained.

Very different was the tone and temper of the meeting of the Social Democrats on the following night. From first to last not one word was said with which I, as an English Liberal, was out of harmony. Any democratic audience in Great Britain would have found itself in entire sympathy with the general views expressed. The audience was typically working-class; quiet, orderly people, who made on me an unmistakable impression of underfeeding and suffering. The shabby field-grey uniforms converted to civilian use served to heighten the curious earthen look noticeable on so many faces here. Food is plentiful now in the Occupied Area, but the cost of living is so high, many families remain ill-nourished. Fresh milk is unobtainable; during the many months I have been in Cologne I have never seen a drop. Over and over again the same question is driven home with over-

whelming force: can even the most volatile and opportunist of politicians imagine that the unspecified millions of the indemnity, or, indeed, any indemnity at all, can be collected from a nation which is not in a position to eat or work?

Herr Meerfeld, the leader of the Social Democrats in Cologne, and Frau Röhl were the principal speakers at this final gathering. Both were members of the National Assembly; Frau Röhl unfortunately has not survived the deluge which has overwhelmed many of her colleagues. A capable-looking woman with golden hair, she reminded me a little of Mary Macarthur, though lacking in the magnetism and stature, moral no less than physical, of the English trade-union leader. Herr Meerfeld's speech was a merciless indictment of the former militarist Government and its colossal blunders in connection with the war. In his first words he struck the keynote of all that followed: "We will have no more war. What we want in future is a 'Peace-Kultur'" — that untranslatable word which in so many varied forms finds its place in the political utterances of all parties — "we seek a revision of the Treaty of Versailles, but we seek it through a policy of reconciliation and understanding with the democracies in other countries." The failures of the military party to make peace when an honourable peace was still possible, the rejection of President Wilson's offers of mediation, the folly and crime of the unrestricted U-boat campaign — all these subjects were handled in a spirit which astonished me. A pamphlet on sale at the meeting, "Wer trägt die Schuld an unserem Elend?" (Who bears the responsibility for our misery?), of which I bought a copy, was packed with a damning array of facts, many of them

unknown to me, as to the part played by the Kaiser's Government during the war. "The German people have been lied to, and deceived, and betrayed," cried the speaker. "We were told that the U-boat campaign would bring England to her knees in three months!" German mentality is a baffling thing, but I hardly expected that this remark would be received with shouts of good-natured laughter. The long arm of England's sea-power has been no laughing matter for Germany, but throughout this campaign I was specially struck with the absence of hostility shown to England. Even at the Volkspartei meetings I listened in vain for the note which shows itself unmistakable when an audience is deeply roused. The justice and fair dealing which have marked the British Occupation have contributed primarily to this end.

A quaint little woman dressed in black came on to the platform to make a few remarks during the discussion. At first she was almost inaudible, but her voice gathered force and courage as she proceeded. She had been a Red Cross nurse during the war, so she said. Nothing could have been more scandalous than the pilfering by the officers in charge of stores and comforts destined for wounded men. She had to stand by helplessly and watch robbery and corruption of all kinds going on at the expense of the sufferers. "These heroes who filled their pockets," she concluded naïvely, "always declared they were great patriots. Please vote to-morrow for the patriotism of the Social Democrats, which won't rob sick men." Even more pathetic was the appeal of a working-man on whom disease had clearly laid a fatal hand. He addressed the meeting as "dear brothers and sisters," which raised a laugh. But there was nothing comic about

the few words spoken. He had starved, so he said, during the war. Wars meant nothing but misery and starvation. Let them support the Social Democrats and then there would be no more war. He was followed by a Communist youth, who in languid and superior tones struck the first note of dissent by adjuring those present at the meeting not to vote at all. If, however, they felt irresistibly driven to the polls, the only mitigation of a bad act would be to vote for the Independent Socialists. General uproar resulted from this advice, a fat man near me rising from his seat and shouting with fury, "I know how you'll vote. You're the sort that votes Zentrum." The Communist highbrow did not stop to see the end of the storm he had provoked, but, having said his say, discreetly fled before Herr Meerfeld could deliver a highly chastening reply. He left the hall pursued by the execrations of my neighbour, who showed signs of vaulting over the chairs and continuing the argument in more forcible fashion in the street. The general tone of the meeting, apart from this incident, was serious and appreciative, but it lacked any of that electric quality which thrills a party on the eve of victory. I came away uneasy as to the result—an uneasiness more than justified by the issue.

As for the future, it lies, as I write, on the knees of dark and doubtful gods. The British people found it hard to acquire the habit of war and to make war thoroughly. To-day it seems as hard a task to recover the habit of peace and make peace thoroughly. As I have said before, so long as we persist in regarding Germany as a political unit solidly inspired by the old military spirit, and of using a sledge-hammer to it on all occasions, the resettlement of Europe becomes an impossibility. The

moral of the Kapp Putsch has been completely ignored in Allied countries. Yet it was highly suggestive as to the changed conditions which now rule. A militarist plot was nipped in the bud by the German working-classes who retaliated with the weapon of a general strike. I do not know what better proof of good faith the German democrats could have given as to their determination to have no more to do with the old régime. The cry of "give us back our Junkers" will never arise unless democracy itself is wholly discredited. We can take no risks with Germany, and there is no question of her escape from the penalties of the war she provoked, and the burdens which in consequence she must bear. Common-sense points, however, to the Allies giving a fair chance to the democratic elements from whom, and from whom alone, we have anything to hope as regards the future. We may make Germany's burden impossible, in which case, sooner or later, general collapse and chaos must follow—chaos and collapse which will certainly not be confined within the borders of this country. Or we may make the burden possible, and not deny a place for repentance to the men and women who are struggling against heavy odds to remake their country on principles which are the basis of our own freedom.

CHAPTER XIV

HATRED

IT is, I fear, true that national hatreds are in the main created and kept alive by the educated and upper classes. Working men and women throughout the world, absorbed as they are in daily toil and often preoccupied about the next meal, have no leisure for the cultivation of abstract sentiments. With a greater simplicity of outlook they take people and things as they find them and do not theorise about their faults. The scholastic attitude as regards hatred is an ironical commentary on some of the byways into which education is apt to stray. Professors—German professors in particular—are notorious for their bloodthirstiness. The ordinary fighting soldier, who has been over the top half a dozen times, is a man of peace compared with certain ferocious persons of academic distinction. The brandishing of quills has apparently a more permanently disturbing effect on character than the hurling of hand grenades. The man in the trench has, after all, a certain tie of fellowship with the man in the trench opposite. They are linked together by a common sense of duty fulfilled and of horrors equally endured. Each knows that the other is a man very much like himself, sick with the misery and dirt of the whole business, whose heart in all probability is yearning just in the same way for a wife, and home, and child. Men under these

circumstances do not give themselves up to abstract hatreds.

But among civilians, a man or woman's gift of war-like talk is often in inverse ratio to any sort of personal capacity to shoulder the responsibilities of battle. Women are always apt to be more bitter than men because their measure of personal sacrifice in the war has been invariably less. They have seen their loved ones perish and the light of happiness quenched in their own lives. It is not easy for them to think steadily of the great ideals for which men died, and to realise that bitterness breeds a spirit which makes the fulfilment of such ends impossible. The case of the professors is even worse. In Germany the subservience of high academic authorities to the most abominable doctrines of the militarists was a grave and sinister feature in the history of the years preceding the war. The beating of tom-toms by men presumably of education goes a long way to justify the jibe of the "New Ignorance" applied to education by Mr. James Stephens. Education left to itself is just a force, and if it throws off the right sort of moral controls, becomes, as the whole history of latter-day Germany proves, a very dangerous force. Probably in Germany to-day there is no class more bitter, no class more full of hatred and the desire for revenge, than that of the professors. But a similar attitude may often be found among well-to-do people of all races, people who, whether or not they have been educated in the real sense of the term, have had the opportunities and advantages which spring from worldly status and prosperity.

No side of the Occupation has been more interesting than the points of contact it has provided between the

English and the Germans. Social intercourse on the upper levels is non-existent. Germany and England were at war when the Rhineland was occupied, and the relations then inevitable between conqueror and conquered have remained unaltered. Many of the English families now living in Cologne can hardly be conscious that they are in a foreign country. The English military community lives a life apart. At hardly any point, except in the shops, do they come in contact with the Germans. The large majority of English people, men and women alike, do not speak the language, and few make any effort to learn it.

It is not easy to say what impressions of Germany and the Germans many of these people will bring away. Opinion on the subject varies considerably, and the views expressed are as wide asunder as the poles. Some people admit frankly that their judgment and outlook have been modified considerably by all they have seen and heard. Others brought a stock-in-trade of prejudices from England and have guarded it jealously from any contact with facts. If an Occupation following on a war has any moral value, it is that necessarily it brings the enemies of yesterday in touch, and so helps to break down a certain amount of prejudice and to soften bitter feeling. Thus the way is paved to the resumption, sooner or later, of normal relations. It is easy to hate the abstract entity Germany. It is less easy to hate individual Germans who may prove on acquaintance to be estimable people. Little of this modifying influence has made itself felt on the Occupation. Many women, and some officers, declare that the behaviour of the Boche is rude and insolent; that he jostles English women in the streets, and is generally lying and dishonest in all his ways. Circumstantial stories

are related in this sense. It has been stated in my presence that a certain lady could not use the trams owing to the gross incivility of the conductors. I am left wondering how far people who have these experiences provoke them by trailing their coats. Obviously, English women who talk loudly in a tram about "the beastly Boche" may find themselves in trouble with their fellow-passengers, the German ignorance of foreign languages not being as great as their own.

Speaking for myself, I have never received one rude or uncivil word from man, woman, or child during the year I spent in Germany. I went about sometimes wearing the official arm-band, and therefore obviously English; sometimes not. I have never noticed the smallest difference in the behaviour of the people on the pavements or in the street cars. Tram conductors I have found almost without exception a polite and efficient body of men. All great cities contain a proportion of gross and undesirable people. Cologne is no exception to this rule, but the particular elements are not more conspicuous here than elsewhere. So far from hostility, I have received much courtesy and consideration from Germans with whom I came into casual touch. I am not denying the reality of other people's contrary experiences. I can only state my own. Temperament is a mirror which deflects the passage of facts, and some of the English in Cologne have arrived at fixed judgments about Germany before setting foot in the country. If they find the inhabitants civil they at once call them servile, if they show spirit they denounce them as insolent. In Cologne drawing-rooms English women will sometimes discuss the Germans much in the spirit of the Mohammedans who sat in a

circle and spat at a ham. I have never been able to understand on what grounds they founded that extreme view. Upper-class Germany has vanished from the Occupied Areas, and no one regrets their disappearance. But as regards the humbler classes with whom we of the Occupation come in touch, the working-men and country-folks, the shopkeepers, small business people and minor bureaucracy, I have no hesitation in saying that they are, generally speaking, hard-working civil people, correct in their attitude and bearing. Reasonable people should find no difficulty in maintaining the superficial amenities of life with them, even under the abnormal conditions which have thrown us together.

However varied the views among the officer class, the rank and file of the Army have settled down to friendly relations with the Germans—too friendly many people think. Men who have never understood the French temperament or outlook find themselves very much at home in Germany. From time to time agitated articles appear in the English papers deploring the fact that English soldiers are "getting to like Germans," and calling on some one to do something drastic. The fact that the bow of hatred does not remain tense and strung, as desired by some people, will certainly cause no regret to those who are appalled by the perils of the present state of Europe. Better relations between nations will, I believe, be built up ultimately on working-class levels. The diplomacy of the politicians in power is too bitter and too tortuous to further the cause of European reconstruction. From this point of view the Occupation has been wholly to the good, inasmuch as tens of thousands of Englishmen who

have passed through the country have gone home with a saner appreciation of the situation.

German households, on whom many of these men were quartered, found to their amazement that instead of proving, as they feared, demons incarnate, the British soldiers were good-hearted, good-tempered fellows who shared the family life, peeled potatoes, and played with the children. The soldiers on their side appreciated the kindly treatment they received and were touched by the many evidences of hunger and suffering among the working-classes. Some day I hope we shall have a "Book of Decent Deeds" showing that among all belligerents there is another side to war besides that of atrocities. We may smile at the true story of the British Tommy writing home to his mother to send him a feeding-bottle, with tubes and apparatus complete, for a German baby in his billet who was in a poor way owing to the lack of these things. The German mother burst into tears when she was given the bottle which meant the difference between life and death to the child. But such an act and the spirit it breathes is a ray of light in the darkness.

Loud protests are sometimes made by well-fed, well-to-do people as to the impropriety of helping the starving children of Central Europe. Very different was the attitude of the soldiers who had overthrown the German military power. It is to the eternal honour of the conquering army which marched into the Rhineland, that its first act was one of pity and mercy to the hungry women and children of Cologne. It was necessary for the Commander-in-Chief, Lord Plumer, to telegraph to the Peace Conference that, unless supplies were forthcoming for the underfed German civilians, he could not be responsi-

ble for the effect on the discipline of the Army. The soldiers were up in arms at the spectacle of starvation, and nothing could prevent them, contrary to orders, from sharing their rations with the enemy.

I think the question of hatred is one which calls for clear thinking at the present crisis in the world's history. Many people imagine that when they have abused the Boche in round terms they have "done their bit" towards squaring the accounts of devastated France or Belgium. All that they have done is to feed and sustain the spirit which led in the first place to the devastations. Whatever enormities Germany may have committed during the war, the task of punishment is not the problem of supreme urgency which here and now confronts us all. What we are face to face with is the question as to whether civilisation as a whole can survive the blows rained on it. The responsibility of Germany for this state of affairs is at the moment less important than the rescue of civilisation from the brink of the chasm on which it is trembling. It is useless to go on saying that Germany must be punished or that Germany must pay, if in fact the actual policy pursued is calculated to involve conquerors and conquered alike in common ruin. At times it is difficult to avoid the gloomy conclusion that we are approaching the end of a cycle of history, and that a period of darkness and chaos bids fair to overwhelm a world incapable of saving itself. The economic and political condition of Europe is grave in the extreme. In every country wild forces are surging upwards, the peril of which lies in the absence of any powers of moral and spiritual counteraction. The strain of the war has swallowed up the spir-

itual reserves of the world, and its moral credit is not only exhausted but overdrawn.

No nation ever went to war in a spirit more grave and more responsible than that in which the British people accepted the German challenge. The call to arms is invariably a great and inspiring moment. At such a time men and women realise that they are caught up and raised on the wing of ideals greater than themselves. But it is part of the evil of war that the longer it lasts the more black and the more bitter the spirit it breeds. From August 1914 and the hush of consecration which fell on the nation, to December 1918 and what was well described by a distinguished publicist as the "organized blackguardism" of the General Election, is a falling away in temper and standard almost unbearable to contemplate.

I have often wondered whether the men and women who lent themselves casually to "hatred stunts" during the war ever realised what cruel suffering was caused to a large number of humble and obscure folk. Now that the spirit of sanity and moderation is making itself heard again, English people must surely look back with shame on the treatment meted out to inoffensive enemy aliens. Busybodies obsessed by spy mania were merely a source of nuisance and ridicule to the Secret Service. That Service was highly efficient, and its agents were quite capable of doing their work without the interference of officious amateurs. The German wife and the English woman with a German husband were in many cases treated as outcasts. Years of residence in England, even the fact of children fighting with the British Army, did not serve in many cases to mitigate the violence and hatred of their neighbours. The German wives of English subjects, and

the English wives of Germans, were naturally in a painful and trying position and one which was bound to excite prejudice. The degree, however, to which a group of men within Parliament, and a section of the Press without, sought deliberately to inflame the lowest passions of the mob in this matter, is the most sordid page in the history of the war. Helpless, friendless, without money, unable to make their voices heard, these unhappy people, treated as pariahs both in the land of their birth and in that of their adoption, were hunted from pillar to post.

Periodically "intern-them-all" campaigns were worked up which led to obscure Germans of proved respectability being locked up. Many of these people had English wives and families, who suffered severely through the removal of the breadwinner. English women were forced to take refuge in Germany from the persecutions of their own countrymen. What are we to think of the spirit and policy which could drive from the shores of England—England the home of Liberty, England the safe asylum of the oppressed—women of our own race who found the treatment meted out to them too hard to be endured?

Wives and families landed in Germany not speaking one word of the language, to be welcomed naturally by a spirit as hard and bitter as any they had left. The lot of English wives resident in Germany was unenviable. But I do not gather that enemy aliens were treated with a greater measure of harshness in Germany during the war than what occurred in England. Many English women living in Germany throughout the war did not suffer in any marked degree from the hostility of their neighbours. Naturally these would-be pogroms never catch

the right person. Rich people who may be really mischievous escape; the poor man is hunted. The Junkers whom it would be satisfactory to punish are living in comfort and prosperity on their estates. The poor starve and are driven down into inconceivable depths of misery both of body and soul.

Even to-day the position of many English women in Germany who are married to Germans is most pitiful. Under the Peace Treaty the Allies reserved the power to retain and liquidate all property belonging to German nationals. I am not concerned at this point to raise the question as to how far this precedent of confiscation may prove a double-edged weapon in the capitalist world. But again, it is not the rich man who suffers. Large fortunes can always take care of themselves. The people who have been ground to powder by this provision are women with tiny incomes or annuities, the complete stopping of which has meant literal starvation. Most painful cases of this character came to my notice in the Rhineland. In some instances women are told that if they leave their husbands and return to England the money will be paid. Is a war fought for "truth and justice" to eventuate in alternatives of such a character? Are women, at the end of an agonising experience, to choose between husbands they may love and the stark fact of starvation? I heard of one English woman, too proud to beg or receive alms, who came by stealth and searched the swill-tubs of a mess in order to pick out food from it. The British military authorities have shown invariable sympathy and kindness to these unfortunates. They have done what lay in their power to mitigate the circumstances. Soldiers do not fail in compassion to the poor and needy. The little group of

politicians conspicuous for their Hun-hunting activities have not served with the colours. The British Army fights its enemies in the field. It does not persecute women and decrepit old men. But the soldiers cannot alter the confiscation clauses of the Treaty which press with such peculiar hardship on people of small incomes. If these clauses are directed to searching the pockets of the Stinnes and the Krupps, let exceptions at least be made on the lower levels. The Treaty of Versailles in many of its provisions merely reflects the current hatreds of the hour. Modification of these clauses is inevitable when the wave of passion has subsided.

Not sorrow, loss, and suffering, but the temper born and bred of war, is its real and essential evil. The ruthless and cruel spirit which dominated the German war-machine and the many crimes committed are mainly responsible for the bitterness which was developed among the British peoples during the struggle. However natural the growth of this temper, its survival to-day is a menace to the future of the world. Hatred when it takes possession of the soul of a man or woman is a wholly corroding and destructive force. Where hatred abides the powers of darkness have their being, ready to sally forth and work havoc anew. Meanwhile the breaking of this coil promises to be no easy task. The war let loose in every country a new and evil force called propaganda—in plain language, organised lying. It is one of the foibles of propagandists that they insist on speaking of themselves as super-George Washingtons. But during the war any fiction which came to hand was good enough so long as it served to inflame national hatreds. Propaganda during the last years of the struggle did a great deal to ob-

scure the moral issues for which we were fighting. It corrupted both character and temper. But the propaganda genie, having emerged from its bottle in clouds of smoke and dirt, entirely refuses to subside now the struggle is over. It is one of the horrid forces with vitality derived from the war which continues to pursue an independent existence. It is the weapon-in-chief for keeping open sores and exasperating passions which good sense would try to allay. Nations catch sight of each other dimly through mists of misrepresentation and bitterness. Truth and justice disappear in the welter, and without truth and justice the practical affairs of the world drift daily towards an ultimate whirlpool of chaos.

Great, therefore, as I see it is the responsibility of all who to-day throw their careless offerings on the altars of hatred, so that the flames of discord flare up anew. The men and women who talk and act thus must try to realise that the world is reaching its limit of endurance, and the situation calls not for any post-war fomenting of the terrible legacy of strife, but for a truce of God between victors and vanquished. No prejudices are harder to shift than those which ignorance has exalted into moral principles of the first order. Thought is apt to be an unpleasant and disturbing process; the clichés of hatred are easy to use—why alter them when they round off a sentence so well? But unless some movement can develop between nations, unless the forces of destruction can be checked, then civilisation in the form we know it would appear to be doomed.

Germany has still a whole volume of bitter truth to learn as to the part she has played in the world catastrophe provoked by her rulers. Until she recognises and ad-

mits the evil done she cannot regain her place in the fellowship of nations. But after the great bartering of ideals represented by the Treaty of Versailles, the Allies are hardly in a position to preach sermons to her day in and day out on moral failures. The practical fact which confronts us all is that the world is in ruin, and that where the politicians have failed hopelessly the decent people of all nations have to get together and make it habitable again. To dismiss the German nation as a gang of criminals unfit for human intercourse may be a magnificent gesture on the part of the thoughtless. But it is not business. There are good Germans and bad Germans, Germans animated by a quite detestable spirit, others who are conscientious and high-minded. The wholesale indictment of a nation is as absurd as the wholesale indictment of a class. Human nature falls into types of character far more than into social and racial divisions. In the ultimate issue society is divided into two sets of people: those who behave decently and those who do not. People of the first type have a common kinship whatever their race or colour, and the need for asserting that kinship was never more urgent than at present.

If the world is to survive, tolerable social, economic, and political relations must be resumed sooner or later between enemy countries. It is of the first importance that the better elements in Germany should be encouraged and strengthened, so that through their influence a new spirit should animate the general German outlook on life. When no effort is made to discriminate, when good and bad are branded alike in one sweeping condemnation, hope of improvement vanishes. A nation to whom all place for repentance is denied loses heart and ceases to try. Rea-

sonable men cannot make their voices heard under such conditions. Anger and bitterness at what is considered unfair treatment surge upwards again, and from them the desire for revenge is born anew. It is foolish to kick a man repeatedly in the face and then to complain that he does not behave like a gentleman. If the spirit of hatred is to rule in Europe we are heading straight for another war. This eventuality should, I think, be recognised clearly by the hotheads of all nations.

Germany cannot continue indefinitely to fulfil the function of the whipping-boy of Europe. The Junkers and soldiers who made the war, and were responsible for all that was cruel and brutal in its conduct, have disappeared. Owing to gross mismanagement in connection with the war criminals, many Germans guilty of specific acts of cruelty who should have been dealt with severely have slipped through the net. But where statesmanship has blundered inexcusably, it is unjust to visit vicariously on a whole community the sins of a class or of individuals. To do so is to destroy any chance of the growth of a better spirit among the German people as a whole. I recall the words of farewell addressed to me by a saleswoman in a Cologne shop to whom I was saying good-bye: "When you go back to England, tell your countrymen that we are not such dreadful people as they think, and ask them also to remember that we too have our pride and our self-respect."

Many Germans are as much blinded by hatred as to our actions and motives as we are about theirs. We recognise with angry exasperation the measure of their misconceptions about ourselves. Is it not possible that misconceptions may exist on our side as to the character

and attitude of, anyway, some Germans? We are sore, and sad, and bitter. So are countless Germans who are convinced that their lives have been ruined by our jealousy and ambition. Is it humanly possible to carry on the business of life in a nightmare world, where millions of human beings view each other through glasses so distorted? The moral deadlock at the moment is complete. It can only be solved by the spread of a new spirit of truth and charity. That cannot arise till reasonable men and women of all nations, realising the perils which confront us one and all, try and form unbiassed judgments, not only of each other's actions, but what is perhaps even more important, of each other's motives and principles. In all this there is no question of slurring over evil where evil exists, or condoning wrong where wrong has been done. It is a question of seeing these things in their true scale and right proportion. Righteous anger may rouse a sense of repentance where hatred only hardens and embitters. The wrath of man has had its full play through years of strife and horror. Judged as a constructive force, its fruits up to the present have been meagre. Is it possible that, after all, Paul of Tarsus was right, and that the fruits of the spirit, joy, peace, and righteousness, do not lie along this particular path? In so far as the spirit of hatred is cultivated and encouraged, it perpetuates all that is worst in war, without any of the redeeming qualities of heroism and self-sacrifice which make war tolerable. Hatred breeds hatred, strife further strife, violence yet more violence. From this vicious circle, so long as we allow ourselves to turn in it, there is no escape. Faith, hope, and charity alone can break the wheel of torment in which at present we revolve, and bring about the

necessary moral and spiritual *détente* without which the world must surely perish.

Peace is not a question of documents and treaties. The world is still in a condition of bitter strife, because the spiritual values which make peace in the real sense possible are at present wholly lacking in the relations of the respective nations. I am driven to the conclusion that in this, as in other respects, the instinct of the great mass of the people throughout Europe is sounder and better than that of their rulers. Whatever the schemes and intrigues of a tortuous diplomacy, it is already clear that the working-classes are determined not to be made pawns in any fresh war of aggression. The German working-man is saturated with the misery of war. He will have no more of it unless some policy of oppression, suicidal in its character, re-creates the temper and spirit of the post-Jena period. Among my memories of Germany I dwell on none with more hope than an incident which befell us one spring evening in the Eifel. We were spending Sunday at Nideggen, a village perched high on its red volcanic cliffs above the valley of a delectable trout stream. We stopped in the course of our walk to admire a cottage garden where peas and beans were growing with mathematical diligence and regularity. Care had obviously been lavished on every plant and flower of the little plot, which lay on a sunny slope facing south. The owner who was hard at work among the peas, seeing our interest, asked if we would like to go over his garden. We accepted the invitation willingly, and he conducted us with pride from one end to the other of his tiny kingdom. He was an admirable type of peasant, a tall grave man with honest eyes and courteous manners. He combined some market-

gardening with his business of stone-mason. The conversation drifted as usual to the war. He had served in a pioneer corps but had come through, "Gott sei dank," unscathed. Of war or the possible recurrence of war he spoke with that intense horror which marks all the German working-classes. Never must such a thing happen again, he said; never must there be another war. My mind fled across the seas to a corner of Kent where I was well assured on this fine spring evening, another friend of mine, one William Catt, a son of the soil, just as honest and simple, just as devoted to his home and family, was also attending to peas and runner beans. William Catt too had served in the war. What crazy system could send those two good men with rifles in their hands to shoot each other? The Nideggen peasant had reflected to some purpose on "Earth's return for whole centuries of folly, noise, and sin." Spade in hand he looked across the fair landscape at our feet, where the river lay like a silver streak winding among woods and meadows. Then he turned to me and said very seriously, "For a thousand years men have been mad; now we must all learn to be more reasonable."

Would that the diplomatists of all countries could take to heart words so true and so wise! Here was the spirit which alone can create and sustain the League of Nations. While the political wire-pullers of Europe seek to make of the League the unhappy pushball of their own intrigues, this German working-man had the root of the matter in him. May his vision of a world in which men are learning to be "reasonable" wax from dim hope into full and perfect realisation.

CHAPTER XV

THE GERMAN VIEW OF ENGLAND

PERSONALLY I am under considerable obligations to August Lomberg, Rektor in Elberfeld. His *Präparationen zu deutschen Gedichten* for the purposes of instruction in schools has been a lantern to my way and a light unto my path on the somewhat rugged slopes of the German Parnassus. August Lomberg's is the hand which has stayed my often stumbling feet when I first aspired to Goethe and Schiller, deities sitting enthroned aloft and remote. Guides to poetry are irritating books in one's own language. What a poet has to say, and what he means, are strictly private matters between the reader and himself. The views of a third person may even be regarded as an intrusion, not to say an impertinence. But when you are struggling with the verbal intricacies of a new tongue, guides to knowledge assume a very different light. So, I repeat, I am under many obligations to August Lomberg, Rektor in Elberfeld. As so often happens with German authors, he has taught me more incidentally than the surface content of his works. The Rektor has clearly a complete and painstaking acquaintance with the whole range of German literature. But his observations concerning the poets were, to me at least, of less value than the revelation of his own type of mind and general outlook on life.

August Lomberg is a garrulous writer. His explana-

tions are largely historical as well as literary. Every line breathes a narrow and aggressive patriotism of the type which has made the name of Germany detested. The great poets of the Liberation period have sung both of freedom and oppression on a note which rings clear and true to any lover of liberty. The Elberfeld Rektor, commenting on this verse long before 1914, can only do so in terms of abuse of France. To him a poet is really important, not for some immortal gift to the sum-total of the world's truth and beauty, but for the degree to which he may have added new stops to the full-sounding organ swelling the note of German excellence. The ironical anti-patriotic strain in Heine fills the Rektor with undisguised horror. So great is his reprobation of Heine as a world citizen, that he can with difficulty begin to do justice to him as a poet. And though like Wordsworth's Nun he is breathless with adoration before the genius of Goethe, I more than suspect that at heart Goethe's indifference to patriotic questions is a sore trial to him.

These volumes of Lomberg's are well-known school-books in Germany. Hence their value as indicating a certain trend of thought. If the English are ever to form a reasoned judgment of the Germans, it is essential to understand something of that peculiar herbage on which the minds of teachers and pupils alike have been pastured. But Herr Lomberg has not been content to rest on his laurels as regards a critical study of the German classics. War poetry has also claimed his attention and his explanations. One afternoon in a bookshop I stumbled by chance on a volume of German war poetry. I bought it and went on my way rejoicing. I knew something by then of the general outlook of my friend the Rektor's

mind, and felt sure that his observations on the World-War would be worth reading. So indeed they proved.

The poems themselves were of very poor quality. Nothing remotely comparable to the verse of Rupert Brooke or Julian Grenfell or of half a dozen other English writers adorned these drab pages. Unless Germany has produced something better than the mediocre collection brought together by the Rektor, her inferiority in one respect at least to England is outstanding. Leaving literary values aside, the normal note struck was one of a boastful and irritating patriotism. The early poems, written in the days when Germany was still flushed by hopes of a speedy and overwhelming victory, are noisy and aggressive. One writer exults over the air raids. "We have flying ships, they have none," he shouts stridently. No less great is the enthusiasm for the U-boat exploits. The limits of degradation were reached by a poem about a pro-German fish in the North Sea. The fish kept company with a U-boat and followed the various sinkings with great interest. One day the U-boat sank first a cargo of sugar, next of lemons, thirdly of rum. The fish brewed a toddy of these various ingredients, and drank tipsy toasts to the U-boat. I suppose the poem was intended to be funny. Of humour it had none. The mentality it revealed was amazing.

As the first hopes of easy victory evaporated, a note of stress and anguish replaces that of the original bluster. A poem on Ypres was noticeable in this respect. But the particular interest of the book lay to me in the Rektor's explanations about the English. A fount of venom overflows whenever the name of Britain is mentioned. He sets forth in his own inimitable way how England, owing to

her acute jealousy of Germany, had deliberately provoked the war. England's sordid anxieties about her menaced commercial supremacy lay at the root of this action. Having plotted war and declared it at her own time, she then proceeded to wage it on the most barbarous lines. English soldiers murdered the wounded, concealed machine guns in their Red Cross wagons, and immolated whole platoons of innocent German soldiers by an abominable misuse of the white flag. The wickedness, the perfidy, the treachery of England, the outrages committed by her against every law of God and man—the Rektor lashes himself into a white heat on these themes. No less fulsome and subservient is the writer in his praise of the Kaiser and the Crown Prince. Germany's passion for peace, a peace destroyed only by the intrigues of a jealous and wicked world, is enlarged on over and over again.

This book, like its predecessors, is intended for use in schools. We can form some judgment, therefore, of the facts and fancies which writers of the Lombert type thrust as historical truth on the rising generation. The influence of such statements can hardly be exaggerated, and much similar poison has flowed through the whole German school system. German school literature is a real mine of information to any one who wants to study the root causes of latter-day German mentality. Little wonder that animosities and misunderstandings rend nations in twain when truth is subordinated to the worst purposes of political and interested propaganda. Children are malleable stuff, and certain long-sighted Teutons realised perfectly that what is driven into a child in the first impressionable years abides through life.

The accident of improving my limited knowledge of the

German language brought me in contact with primers and readers covering all standards and classes. In making my way from the Child's First Reader to the volumes in use in High Schools, I learnt a good deal more than the actual study of words and grammar. From the Infants' to the Upper Standards one note was struck again and again with monotonous regularity—praise of the Army, glorification of the Hohenzollerns. I came into rapid conflict with my Child's First Reader when on the first page I was confronted with a little poem saying that, though a tiny child, my great aim in life should be to shoot straight and grow up into a fine soldier. Then came a fulsome hymn to the Kaiser swearing lifelong fidelity to that noble man. Then followed a series of short stories, no less fulsome, about the goodness and greatness of the Royal Family. The book of course included other material, but glorification of the Hohenzollerns permeated its pages, and the same thing repeated itself exactly in all the following standards.

Thoroughly bored with the Child's Reader, I tried some of the more advanced books only to find an elaborated edition of the same theme. One priceless story in a middle-standard book told a marvellous tale about the adventures of a humble family in Berlin, the Empress, the Emperor's daughter, and a cow. The curtain rises on a child weeping bitterly in a Berlin park. The beautiful and tender-hearted Princess drives by in a glittering phaëton lined with plush and drawn by two spanking ponies. Flinging the reins to a groom, she hastens to the assistance of poverty in distress. A tale of woe is in due course unfolded. A family, humble but virtuous, have lost a cow on which the entire prosperity of the house-

hold pivoted. The Princess comforts the weeping child, gives her money, and says that though the matter lies beyond her powers, her mother will certainly call and deal with the cow situation. The Princess is as good as her word. To the stupefaction of the district, a royal carriage containing the Empress visits the humble home the next day. The Empress administers more consolation; virtue is to be upheld in the hour of trial. A cow is following immediately from the royal farm; indeed it is on its way, lowing, so to speak, at the moment in the streets of Berlin. The anxieties of the family consequently will be at an end. The paralysed couple, falling flat on their faces, stammer suitable words of gratitude and praise. Thanks to the cow and the prestige attaching to it, the family fortunes prosper exceedingly. The whole district tumbles over itself in the effort to drink a glass of Imperial milk. But unhappily one day the woman is knocked down and mortally hurt in a street accident. Lying in the hospital at the point of death, the matron sees there is something on her mind. On inquiry the patient replies that if only once again she could see her benefactress, the Empress, and hold her hand, she would die content. The matron, being apparently a person of ample leisure, sets off at once to the palace to find the Empress. She is interviewed by a lady-in-waiting, who declares it is impossible for her to see the august one. Unfortunately it happens to be Prince Joachin's birthday and the festivities in connection with it are about to begin; the Empress cannot possibly be disturbed. But the stout-hearted matron is not to be daunted by any lady-in-waiting or any birthday party. She gives battle vigorously on behalf of her dying

patient. "Who are you," she says reprovingly, "to stand between the mother of her country and the humblest of her children." The lady-in-waiting, routed and overwhelmed, retires hastily to tell the Empress. Her discomfort is completed by grave reprimands from the august one that any time should have been wasted at so critical a moment in bringing the facts to her knowledge. Poor Prince Joachim is caught in the backwash of these events. His birthday party is wrecked. The Empress hurries off to the bedside of the dying woman, but not before the table groaning under the weight of Joachim's birthday cakes and flowers has been stripped of half its adornments. With her arms full of roses the Empress enters the hospital ward. The expiring patient gives a cry of joy and, after an exchange of suitable sentiments, dies, holding the Kaiserin's hand. Even after death the connection of the humble family with the Hohenzollerns is maintained. Even more permanent than the prestige conferred by the cow is the prestige of the tombstone, erected in the cemetery at the Imperial expense, with an inscription bearing the Empress's name.

Other stories no less grotesque redound to the credit of the Emperor or the gallantry of the Crown Prince. Home workers were marked down as the special preserve of the Crown Princess. Sweated industries in Berlin might in fact exist to afford a channel for the altruistic impulses of the royal lady. One by one the various key points of the Hohenzollern family were dealt with in this fashion. The glorification of the Army went on as steadily side by side.

All this, of course, is systematic propaganda carried out with characteristic thoroughness and, be it added,

clumsiness. For even among the Germans it failed in many cases to carry conviction. I remonstrated with my Fräulein—herself a school teacher: “How can you bring your children up on this wretched stuff; with a country like yours so rich in history and legend, surely there is something more inspiring to teach than this nonsense about cows and sweated workers?” Fräulein shrugged her shoulders. The ferment of the revolution was working in her naturally liberal mind, and the unaccustomed liberty of thought and action which the revolution had brought in its wake moved her not a little. But she found it difficult to part with the sheet anchors of the past, and respect for the Imperial family was screwed very tightly into the average professional German. She admitted the stories were stupid, but said that the Kaiser was the symbol of Germany’s greatness and they had always been taught to revere him. Since the revolution the Social Democrats have made an end of Kaiser worship in the schools. Pictures and portraits have vanished. All totems of the faith have disappeared. Apparently the children were very much upset when they were first forbidden to sing hymns to the Kaiser. There were tears when the portraits were removed. The German mind, naturally docile, yearns for some concrete expression of faith to which it can rally. Of all fields schools offer the greatest scope to the corrupting influence of propaganda. And through the schools Imperial Germany twisted and distorted the spirit of the people with consequences no less dire to themselves than to the rest of the world.

One of the irritating facts about Germany to-day is that she refuses to say she is sorry. We English are outraged by the fact that no sense of guilt or of moral re-

sponsibility appears to have touched the spirit of the people. It is not a question of dragging Germany about in a white sheet and a candle from shrine to shrine, but of some guarantee that there shall be no repetition of events so lamentable. The best guarantee for the future is a clear recognition of what was wrong in the past. Truth permeates very slowly through German mentality, and few Germans seem to realise that they or their rulers have brought the world to the very brink of ruin; that millions of lives have perished as the result of their insensate ambitions. They are conscious, painfully conscious of the miseries of Germany to-day. But that civilisation as a whole is staggering under the blow they dealt it—this aspect of the situation apparently never strikes them. Facts which jump to our eyes as English people make no more impression on them than they would on a blind man. Over and over again I have been baffled by coming up against a blank wall of non-comprehension as regards circumstances about which there is no dispute.

A personal experience in this sense, at once exasperating and amusing, overtook me on a journey between Cologne and Paris. I shared my cabin in the sleeping-car with a German lady from Cassel, a typical fair-haired, solid-looking Prussian. We exchanged the ordinary politenesses of travellers thrown together on the road. I was interested to hear that not only did the lady conduct a large business enterprise in Cassel, but that she was a prop of the Volkspartei and took a keen interest in politics. She spoke of Bolshevism and the Red Peril with the fear and disgust always noticeable in the German Bourgeoisie. The train by which we were travelling crossed the devastated area in the night. Before going

to bed my companion asked me whether we should see anything of the ravaged districts. I replied that I thought it would be too dark for any view of the country. It happened, however, that I woke up at 3 A.M. and, drawing the blind, found we were just moving out of Péronne. It was a grey July dawn, with driving rain, which intensified the unspeakable desolation of the Somme. Tragic beyond words were the massacred orchards. In some cases the stumps of trees not wholly cut through were throwing up fresh leaves in a painful effort after new life. My heart was stirred at the thought of my Prussian stable companion slumbering peacefully in the bunk above. She had wanted to see devastations; devastations she should see.

"Gnädige Frau," I said in a firm loud voice, "wake up. We are in the middle of the devastated area, you had better look at it." Sounds as though a person had been disturbed from deep sleep issued from the top berth. Personally I do not like to think what I should have said or done had a strange woman in the train woke me up at 3 A.M. But Prussian docility responded to an order. Gnädige Frau got down meekly from her berth and established herself at the window. A suitable flow of exclamations and adjectives then took place: "entsetzlich," "furchtbar," "schrecklich," "böse," and so on. Comfortably wrapped up in my bunk I surveyed the scene with virtuous satisfaction, feeling that I was bringing home the war to one Prussian at least in an entirely right spirit and manner. Gnädige Frau, however, turned my flank with the military efficiency of her race. To my intense disgust I found that the text I had provided by this view of the Somme only led to an elaborate sermon on

the devastations of the Russians in East Prussia. "You cannot imagine what awful things were done by those terrible Cossacks," said the lady, "and how our poor cities were ruined. The rich German towns have had to become godparents to whole districts in the devastated area." She rattled on in this sense as though the German legions had never set foot in France. I replied tartly that I hoped the trifling inconveniences experienced in East Prussia might afford some scale by which she could measure the sufferings of France, but I could only feel my moral lesson had miscarried sadly. Still, I got her out of her bunk at 3 A.M. and the morning was not only wet but chilly.

I have mentioned this story because it is very typical of the average German obtuseness which has an exasperating effect on their former enemies. We are bound, however, to try and study patiently the root causes of this vast moral myopia, because in it lies the key to the whole German attitude to the war. This myopia cannot be appreciated without some grasp of the real points of failure in the German character. During the war they haunted our imaginations as wily and strenuous children of the devil. In fact they are a very stupid, very insensitive, very docile people. Their ideas are as limited and often as absurd as those which people the nursery. Still worse, they are incapable apparently of understanding what other races think and feel. They have many excellent qualities, and an admirable capacity for hard work and patient research. But they do, I believe, possess three more skins than the ordinary man. Mixed up with the docility and unlimited power for submission to authority, runs a considerable strain of brutality which throws back to the unpleasant habits of the remote Germanic tribes. They can be and

are very brutal to each other, as well as to their enemies. People so constituted were doomed to become the tools of miscreants in high places.

The average German, for all his powers of hard work and his marvels of applied science, is at bottom little better than a stupid child. His docility, his credulity, his lack of any real subtlety of spirit have left him at the mercy of the monstrous theories preached and practised by the ruling military class. Like a child he believed all he was told; like a child he was immensely proud of the vainglorious bombast of military trappings. Children too, it must be remembered, can be both cruel and callous. Unless this attitude of mind is realised, the riddle of German mentality appears as insoluble. But granted a docile and stupid people, governed by a ruthless military class endowed with the same practical diligence and ability as the mass of the nation, and no less insensitive to the finer issues of the spirit, all that has happened falls into place.

For years past a certain view of England as a sinister and aggressive power was preached steadily for their own ends by the military party. On the outbreak of war the German people were told that England was bent on the destruction of their country. They were fed on tales of atrocities and horrors. It was represented to them that Germany was fighting for her life a war of defence. Even in a country like our own, in which liberty is an old-established principle, the censorship and other conditions imposed by war resulted in a great darkening of truth and knowledge. But in a country like Germany, with no representative government, with no freedom, with a Press wholly subservient to the ruling junta, it is not

astonishing that the people as a whole blundered on to ever lower depths of ignorance and prejudice.

I have described the sort of food on which the German school child is reared. No less instructive are the German memoirs which have been published recently, for they show in turn the view impressed on the adult population. Bethmann-Hollweg, Admiral von Tirpitz, Ludendorff, Bernstorff, Hindenburg, have all had their say on the war. With the exception of Hindenburg, who observes a generous reticence about his colleagues, the general tone of these memoirs is one of acrimonious controversy. One is reminded of a group of naughty schoolboys caught out in some misdeed, each saying, "Please, teacher, it was the other fellow." Admiral von Tirpitz's *Recollections* is the longest and most garrulous of these volumes. It is a book of absorbing interest, and throws a flood of light on the origins of the war. Here we see laid bare the whole spirit which provoked the conflict. Here, too, we see that even among the German governing class, this spirit in the extreme form represented by Admiral Tirpitz himself met in some quarters with opposition. If one person deserves to be hanged in connection with the war, then the halter should surely be placed round the neck of the old Admiral.

Von Tirpitz reveals himself in these pages as an able but most unsympathetic figure. He lays the lash generously about his colleagues, and the Emperor in particular is not spared. Creator of the German Navy, he lays bare the whole ruthless spirit animating the German war lords. English readers will notice with interest, and perhaps some surprise, the view of themselves and their country on which the Admiral enlarges. According to

Von Tirpitz, the growth of the German Navy was not only directed towards making any English attack on German trade risky, but served the philanthropic purpose of supporting the non-Anglo-Saxon races in their struggle for freedom against the intolerable dictatorship of British sea-power. It was, in fact, the special mission of the German Empire to free the world from the strangling tyranny of the Anglo-Saxons. The English reader learns with surprise as he makes his way through these volumes how ruthless was the spirit in which England marked Germany down for destruction. Finally, through craft and Machiavellian principles of the worst kind, she accomplished her end. While German statesmen were weak, vacillating, and hopelessly pacific, a succession of English Governments, Radical no less than Conservative, animated one and all by the same fell purpose, only waited for the appropriate moment to fall on the European Simon Pure.

Lord Haldane during his visit to Berlin in 1912 figures as a skilled and determined mock negotiator, adamant as to concessions on the English side, but bent on sowing discord among German statesmen and reducing the fleet to impotence. Tirpitz accuses him of an evil conscience. Did not Lord Haldane shut his eyes to the wholly pacific intentions of Germany and invent a Berlin war party with which to inflame public opinion in England?

The Admiral speaks feelingly of the "armed battue" against Germany. He lays his hand on his heart and declares that in 1914 the German Empire was "the least preoccupied of all the Great Powers with possibilities of war." Yet in spite of "our suicidal love of peace" the world would persist in laying the guilt of all that had

happened on Germany. "It is really extraordinary how unpopular we are," cries the Admiral naïvely in one of his letters. But he sticks to his point. The historical guilt of England is irrefutably clear. The "old pirate state" has once again torn Europe to pieces. Thanks to the most brutal methods she has secured a victory, and liberty and independence have perished. But the Admiral is not only concerned to abuse England. He deals faithfully with his own countrymen. If on the one hand English readers obtain a fresh insight through German eyes into their own villainies, they obtain information possibly less fantastic as to the discord which raged inside the German war machine. If in the interests of truth we are compelled to say that the Germans overrated our powers of conducting a war with supreme efficiency, it is clear that we were no less at fault in attributing super qualities to our enemies.

When these various memoirs are read side by side and compared, they reveal strife, division, and hesitation of a remarkable kind in the higher direction of the war. Tirpitz, as head of the war party, writes with extraordinary bitterness of Bethmann-Hollweg the Chancellor. No words are bad enough for the man who had struggled sincerely enough, according to his lights, for the preservation of peace between England and Germany. His hesitations, vacillations, errors of policy are dealt with in a ferocious spirit. But the Army and even the Navy do not escape severe criticism. "The end of July 1914 found us in a state of chaos," writes the Admiral. The generals made "frightful mistakes," the war was one of "missed opportunities," the Navy in particular was never allowed to do its work. The troops were heroic, but

“the hereditary faults of the German people and the destructive elements among them” led to the downfall of the whole nation.

The popular view of Germany, which most English people held during the war, was that for forty years the German nation from the Emperor downwards had pursued the definite and determined end of the destruction of England. The real situation appears to have been far more complex. To credit the Emperor and his entourage with an inflexibility of purpose so great is to rate their capacity far too high. The mediocre statesmen of our own generation were not Bismarcks. They were incapable of the far vision, the sinister purpose, the iron will of the old Chancellor. Unlike him they did not know when to stop. An influential section among the soldiers was certainly bent on a war of aggression and pursued this end with unflinching determination. They had considerable influence both among the Press and the professors. Consequently they loomed large in the public eye. But even among the governing class, as Tirpitz's angry complaints reveal, there were certain weak-kneed statesmen who were anxious to pursue a pacific policy. As for the German nation as a whole, the unparalleled growth of the Socialist party during recent years proves that the views of the German militarists were meeting with considerable opposition among sections of their own countrymen.

The militarists largely controlled the machine and were therefore in the stronger position. An autocratic form of government and an Executive divorced from all control by Parliament made the Socialist vote, large though it was, of no practical value in determining policy. The

General Election of 1912, when the Socialists and Progressives who had definitely challenged the Chauvinism of the Government secured considerable gains in the Reichstag, caused dismay in military circles. It is clear that the dread of democratic control was one of the causes which impelled the soldiers to bring matters to a head. A shadow had fallen on their power which a successful war, so they thought, would dispel. Had Germany possessed a democratic constitution, which would have given due weight and place to the anti-military elements, it is difficult to believe that the war would ever have occurred. It was a race between the forces making respectively for peace and for aggression, and time was on the side of the former.

The military party consequently forced the pace and precipitated the conflict. That on the outbreak of war the whole German nation, Socialists included, closed its ranks and presented a united front to the enemy is natural enough. The view of the defensive war was widespread, and German myopia could not see straight about the threatening character of the armaments which had been piled up. But between the guilt of the rulers, which is black indeed, and the guilt of the nation as a whole, wide discriminations should in justice be made. If it were not so the future outlook, dark as it is at the moment, would be quite hopeless.

The part played in the middle of this welter by the arrogant and inferior figure on the throne is not easy to determine. The Emperor was not necessarily insincere when he expressed his abstract desire for peace. But his vanity was flattered by the vision of himself as Supreme War Lord ashore and afloat of a submissive Europe. He

did not necessarily want to fight. He wanted very much to be in a position which enabled him to bully. Probably the governing classes in Germany held much the same view. The Emperor lent himself to the creation of huge armies and a threatening fleet, and then expressed surprise that his perpetual sabre-rattling and histrionic performances created anger and alarm throughout Europe. Other nations refused to think that Dreadnoughts were built as pets, or that armaments were piled up for the purposes of ceremonial salutes. Having surrounded himself with material of this character, he was in all probability genuinely appalled when the inevitable explosion occurred. He had no real wish to trade with the devil, but he was always in and out of the shop, turning over the wares and listening to the flatteries of the salesman. A man of his type was bound, sooner or later, to become the tool of villains with a purpose clearer than his own.

Lord Haldane in his book *Before the War* has given an account, both sane and dispassionate, of the causes and forces which led up to the struggle. He analyses with admirable clarity the weakness and the strength of the German machine. In a striking passage he draws attention to a fact too little realised by the vast majority of English people, namely, that highly organised though the German nation might be on its lower levels, on the top storey not only confusion but chaos existed. Instead of a Cabinet representing the majority of an elected Parliament to whom it was bound to submit its policy, the governing body in Germany was an irresponsible group of men animated by wholly divergent ideas.

In the centre of this group was a vain, feather-headed monarch, not devoid of good impulses, and at times of

generous feeling, but cursed with an instability of character which made him lend an ear first to the promptings of one counsellor and then of another. The Emperor swayed from side to side according to the fancy of the moment; at one time drawing close to the war party, at another inclining to the more sober counsels of the peace party. Such a temperament does not improve with the flight of years. Time only deepened in the Emperor's mind the sense of his own importance in the eyes of God and man. His unstable brain was more and more bemused with ideas of power and infallibility. Already in 1891 he had caused deep resentment throughout working-class Germany by a speech to young recruits at Potsdam. He referred in acrimonious terms to the Socialist agitations, and went on to say: "I may have to order you to shoot down your relations, your brothers, even your parents—which God forbid!—but even then you must obey my commands without murmuring." Criticism was treasonable; criticism was therefore not audible, but the words were never forgotten nor forgiven. Vanity and megalomania steer an erratic course, and the consequent vagaries of German high diplomacy kept Europe in a chronic state of nerves which deepened the general sense of anxiety and suspicion.

Since the revolution the diplomatic documents in the Berlin archives relating to the plot against Serbia, together with the Emperor's marginal notes, have been published by order of the new German Government. The war has produced no volume more painful than that of Karl Kautsky in which these documents are set forth. The revelation is of the blackest, so far as the Emperor is concerned. His personal responsibility for creating the

situation which led to the war is established beyond question. His marginal notes, always foolish and often vulgar, are almost incredible in their criminal levity. The Emperor comments, for instance, on the most solemn and impressive of Sir Edward Grey's warnings to the German Ambassador, Prince Lichnowsky, in the words "the low cur!" We watch this vain unstable figure flitting with a lighted torch round the powder magazine of Europe. With the lives of millions in his hand, the mediocre intelligence of the Emperor seemed unable to forecast the elementary consequences of his own acts. At the start his sole object in view was the dismemberment of Serbia and the creation of a new Balkan situation. The German Ambassador in Vienna, who counselled moderation in the demands made on the Serbian Government, was reprimanded severely. William was concerned to stir up his more sluggish ally, Austria, to warlike purpose. If Russia objected—well, never mind about Russia. The implications of a general European war do not seem to have occurred to him. When as huntsman he laid on the hounds, the magnitude of the quarry was not apparent. Later on, when the chasm into which he had dragged the world dawned before him in its appalling immensity, he shrank back aghast on the brink. But too late. The terrible vitality of deeds had taken charge of the situation and hurried on the tragedy to its final consummation.

A curious point arises not only from the study of the Kautsky documents, but of the various German memoirs which have appeared. The primary responsibility of the Emperor for staging the scene is proved beyond doubt. But he was away yachting in the weeks before the war,

and it is not clear with whom the further responsibility rests for converting the Serbian intrigue into the wider act of world aggression. At this point history has further secrets to reveal. The Great General Staff were in all probability determined not to let slip so golden an opportunity, and engineered matters in the sense of war during the Emperor's absence.

Strangely enough, Tirpitz, though ultimately more responsible for the war than any one else in Germany, did not want to fight in August 1914. His fleet was not ready and had yet to attain its maximum strength. He denounces Bethmann-Hollweg's refusal of Sir Edward Grey's proposed conference as a capital blunder. War at that moment should in his opinion have been averted. Germany was not sufficiently prepared. Further, the old Admiral with great shrewdness deplores the sabre-rattling against England on various occasions. Do not irritate your enemy until you are ready to fight him, was his principle.

It is a strange fact that Bethmann-Hollweg, who had always desired peace, seems to have lost his head completely in the crisis and showed a fatal obduracy which might have been expected from Tirpitz. The conference for which Sir Edward Grey pressed would in all probability have avoided the war. Bethmann-Hollweg wanted peace, yet he banged the door on the one possibility of maintaining it. One gathers the impression of a group of men groping blindly on the edge of a precipice over which finally they hurl themselves. But the hand which pushed them into decisions, certainly unwelcome to some of the actors, has yet to be revealed. We know it must in effect have come from a man or group of men among the mili-

tary party. The exact personalities are not at present clear.

The German memoirs written by statesmen of the old régime, which throw so much light incidentally on the tragedy of Europe, must be read in detail in order to obtain any real appreciation of their atmosphere. Their great value lies in the fact that they make the German view of England more intelligible. We are able to measure the vast distortion of truth as it has reached the average German, and the profound misconceptions under which he labours. Exasperated though we may feel by such aberrations, we begin to understand why the rank and file of the German nation, trained from their youth in subservience to the ruling house, still believe they were the attacked, not the attackers, in the war. I have heard recently of Germans meeting pre-war English friends with personal feelings quite unchanged. The English found, however, to their bewilderment that the Germans, out of delicacy to their feelings, would not discuss the war—it must be, so they hinted, terrible for them to realise the crimes England had committed both in her unjustifiable attack on Germany and in her practical conduct of the war. Naturally as English they would desire to avoid any reference to so painful a subject.

Hence Germany's reluctance to say she is sorry. So far she will not admit there is anything to be sorry for. Never was there a nation more exasperatingly devoid of the spirit of self-criticism. Everything German is perfect in the eyes of a German. In the crash which has overtaken the nation little realisation exists of the moral issues involved. Among the Socialist party alone would much difficult and unpalatable truth appear to be per-

meeting. At the meeting of the Second International held in Geneva during August 1920, the responsibility of the Kaiser's Government for the outbreak of the war was admitted in precise terms by the German Socialists. The wrong done to France in 1870 in the matter of Alsace-Lorraine, the wrong done to Belgium in 1914 and the just claims of reparation, were all acknowledged and incorporated into a formal resolution. Though the Bourgeoisie may clasp their hands tightly over eyes and ears, the Socialists at least have no illusions as to the crimes and follies of the Imperial Government. But, crushed as they are by the heavy burthens of the Peace, they are more concerned to dwell on the trials of the present than the failures of the past.

What we should remember, I think, is that the bulk of the German nation did its duty in the war just as we did ourselves. Alongside the organised atrocities and brutalities which disgraced the higher direction of the military machine, must be set the courage and self-sacrifice of large numbers of humble people. The average German fought for his Fatherland with a conviction just as great as that of the average Frenchman or Englishman. In view of the rigid censorship which ruled, it is clear that the rank and file knew little or nothing of many deeds which outraged the conscience of the civilised world. They served a bad cause with a fortitude from which it would be ungenerous to withhold praise. The future peace of the world lies in the hope that their powers of loyalty and service may be turned to other and better ends.

Meanwhile the existing veils of ignorance and misconception can only be raised by a frank and free contact

of men and women of both nations who are not afraid to come together and face facts however unpalatable. These distorted values can only be redressed through a determined effort to seek truth for itself undeterred by false conceptions of national honour. A nation which claims to be great should be great enough to admit the wrong she has done. Germany must learn to see straight about herself before peace in the real sense can be restored between her and nations who have suffered grievously through her action. Peace is here and now the urgent need of the world, but peace cannot live if perpetually pelted by prejudices and ignorances. The Supreme Charity has not left us without guidance in this matter, and as on another famous occasion, let the man or woman in the happy position of having no fault come forward to cast the first stone.

CHAPTER XVI

WATCHMAN—WHAT OF THE NIGHT?

It is probable that at no moment in the history of the world has a spirit of disillusion been so widespread and so profound as at the present time. Not only apparently have the high ideals which sustained us during the war evaporated completely, but they have yielded place to a sullen exasperation and ill-will dangerous in its temper and purpose. Moral war-weariness has sapped mind and body to such an extent that no powers of resilience remain. Suspicion as between class and class and nation and nation corrodes the foundations of life. Surly ill-will and a wholly anti-helpful attitude permeates the grudging performance of essential social services. People and classes pursue their own ends with complete disregard as to their reactions on other sections of society. Self-interest reigns supreme. The joy as of comrades of the open road faring together in a spirit of common service and brotherhood appears to have vanished. In England unrest and discontent wholly refuse to yield to the opportunist devices of a Government to whom all principles are mere questions of expediency. But England, mercifully for herself, whatever her spiritual sickness, knows nothing of the stark levels of practical misery and starvation on to which millions of continental people have been driven. We have no standard with which to gauge misery and hunger on a scale so appalling as that which has overtaken

the dwellers of Eastern Europe. At times one wonders how it is that England, so great, so generous, so magnanimous in her traditional policy, has apparently neither eyes to see nor ears to hear what is going on. The voice of Gladstone could once rouse the country to a white flame of indignation over the sufferings of an oppressed people. But with the tragedy of Europe before our eyes; with women and children perishing by the thousand; with a volume of discontent growing and surging among every nationality, England, always the world's hope in matters of practical justice, seems incapable of rousing herself to action worthy of her own great tradition. Instead of some fine and generous appreciation of the world's woes, she looks on dully and from afar.

America has for the moment withdrawn from the European chaos. Her reasons for doing so are intelligible, but the result has been a disaster for the rest of the world. It is not a question, as so many Americans think, of a desire to exploit the better financial position of the United States. It is because America with many faults and crudities has a driving power of idealism behind her—the same motive force which brought her into the war. Some American business men and supporters of the great financial interests have sought—as is the habit of their kind—to exploit the post-war situation to their own profit. As against this must be set qualities of a very different character among the mass of the people. America's absence from the European council-chamber involves the loss of a great influence at once restraining and constructive. We cannot measure fully as yet the infinite damage caused by her withdrawal from the task of Reconstruction. We know, however, that no blow since the Peace

has been so severe. America was particularly fortunate in some of the representatives sent to Europe during the war—men of the highest capacity and honour. Through her absence every undesirable force or principle has gathered weight. Conversely every force working for good has been weakened.

The rest of the world looks on in an attitude as helpless as that of the former combatants, as month by month the shattered fabric of European life sags yet wider. The post-war chaos appears so complete that men turn from it in despair. Moral disillusion and weariness have their counterparts in recklessness and wild extravagance. There is a sense of an approaching Twilight of the Gods; of a collapse of the foundations of society. Therefore let us eat, drink, and be merry, on the brink of the chasm though it be, before the darkness swallows us up.

How is it that a war fought for principles and ideals so clear and so noble as those which animated us at the outset of the struggle can have resulted in a condition of practical moral bankruptcy? Of that moral bankruptcy the Treaty of Versailles is the sign and witness. On the plane of practical politics it may be said that the world could have survived the war, but it is doubtful whether it can survive the Peace. Yet the Peace only registers the sickness which has invaded our souls. Indeed, from one aspect it may be asserted that the present situation, dark and threatening though it be, is not devoid of consolation of a lofty and austere character. The moral bankruptcy which has overtaken the world is in itself the most august testimony to the inexorable truth of moral principle. Because the light in the spirit of man has burned so low, we are able to estimate what darkness falls when

the lamp is untrimmed. The very chaos we deplore is the result of outraged moral laws, neglect of which brings a sure Nemesis in its train. Just in so far as the world has forsaken abiding standards of justice, truth, and mercy, the world has been stricken down. We are perishing to-day owing to failures in principle, and health can only return when principle is no longer flouted but resumes its reign over men's souls. The tricks and turns of an opportunist policy cannot stem the rising flood of restlessness and disgust. The world grows daily more sick of men who have not sufficient character to make their cleverness tolerable. Thus viewed, our present confusion is fraught with profound spiritual significance.

In this, despite grave present peril, lies the chance of salvation. History has never known so great and so terrible a testimony to the inexorable character of moral law, and the reality of Divine Truth which it is death to challenge. *Docet umbra*, and in the darkness which has fallen, we who stand in the shadow may learn anew of the vision which shines behind all earth-drawn clouds; and so, may be, lay firmer hold on those forgotten truths which, alike to men and nations, bring peace at the last. If even now the better side of human nature will rally to the task of rescue, the future may yet be saved. The terrible sufferings of those who have fallen by the way cannot be made good. But if the nations will rouse themselves to make a determined moral effort, any repetition of such sufferings may be checked.

The greatest and gravest charge which can be brought against Germany is not so much that she killed men's bodies and laid waste their houses and lands, as that she has poisoned the soul of Europe. The evil spirit let loose

by the Prussian theory of life has reacted throughout the world. It has darkened counsel and silenced the voice of charity and moderation. Not to be dragged down to the level of the person who has wronged you is the hardest of all moral tests. It was one which proved too hard for the conquerors in this war. The Peace was bound to have been very stern towards Germany and very exacting in its demands. Severity was inherent in the situation. Wrongs had been committed which called for judgment; balances had to be redressed. The more necessary was it, in view of these stern measures, to adhere strictly to principles of justice and honour in our treatment of Germany; to give neither history nor a defeated foe any justification for the charge that in the hour of victory we cast behind us principles for which we fought.

The degree to which the Terms of Peace violated both the letter and spirit of conditions laid down in the Armistice is a blot on the Treaty which must be painful to all honourable men. The Allies would have been within their rights in insisting on the unconditional surrender of Germany. But conditions having been permitted, they should have been adhered to. Mr. Lloyd George and President Wilson had indicated on various occasions that peace made with a democratic Germany would be of a different character from a peace made with the Hohenzollerns still in power. But Germany, having rid herself of her Emperor and of her former Government, found that the treatment meted out to the new Republic differed in no particular from what would have been justifiable had the Emperor remained on the throne. The conscience of the world has been troubled by these things, and by an uneasy sense of undertakings given but not fulfilled.

Those of us who see in the Peace a supreme failure in constructive statesmanship do not take that view because we are pacifists or have some sentimental wish "to be kind to Germany." So long as the issue of the war hung in doubt it was our duty to make war to the last man and the last shilling. With the evil spirit dominating Imperial Germany, neither truce nor parley was possible. The effort frequently made in pacifist circles to represent the war as a general dog-fight, for which all the nations involved have a common responsibility, is not only bad history but bad morality. Victory creates, however, a wholly new situation. War, in certain terrible cases, is the necessary prelude to a settlement. But of itself it settles nothing, any more than an operation essential to check the spread of disease is a natural or healthy process. The surgeon's knife is merely a means to an end—the recovery of normal life by a normal and healthy body. The knife is not kept flourished permanently over the patient's head or turned periodically in the wound.

The great charge against the Peace is its failure to envisage a normal and healthy life for Europe. Our quarrel against its provisions is that they are in many cases fully as short-sighted and as lacking in imagination as what Prussians themselves might have evolved. The precedents of Brest-Litovsk, at which we raised our hands in justifiable horror, are not agreeable ones to follow. The fatal flaw of the Peace is that it does not look beyond the period of punishment and reparation to an ultimate pacification of Europe. It lays down no principles for the establishment of good relations between nations. Its economic provisions are a nightmare calculated to lay a strangle-hold on any possible recovery of

European trade and commerce. With a world crying out for goods and that increased production which can alone bring about a drop in prices, the Peace Treaty is directed to keeping one of the greatest producers, namely Germany, in chains, while a group of little states, erected as military buffers of the most futile character, are allowed to distract themselves and their neighbours by the erection of tariff walls behind which they carry on crazy forms of economic guerilla warfare.

Let us admit that the difficulties of the Peace were quite enormous and that mistakes and blunders were inevitable. Criticism is roused not so much by the practical provisions of the Treaty as by the general spirit animating it. It is, in effect, a peace of revenge uninspired by one generous gesture as regards the future. It is a peace of tired old men with their eyes fixed on the hatreds and animosities of the past, and their minds obsessed by the territorial jealousies of the old diplomacy. Consequently it has outraged and disgusted the young generation just stepping from school and college into the political arena. Youth is generous and impulsive; it is the age of chivalry and high ideals. The younger men and women ask what this Treaty is doing for the future, at what point it is binding up the wounds of Europe, what contribution it makes towards creating that "new world" of which politicians discoursed so eloquently. The rising generation has a right to demand an answer to these questions. It is their future which is at stake in the matter. The provisions of the Peace are burthens laid upon their shoulders. Naturally they are concerned with the contents of the load. But from no direction comes any satisfactory

reply to these inquiries, only the dull echo returned by barriers of hatred and negation.

Yet another consequence results from this state of affairs, the seriousness of which has not, I think, been fully grasped. The failures of democratic statesmen, so called, in this matter of the Peace have jeopardised the whole principle of democratic government. "If this is the best that the statesmen of the three great democracies can produce, then away with such a sham and failure as democracy has proved itself to be. Let us try something else." This spirit is stirring in many quarters. It leads young minds, at once eager and disappointed, to explore the alternatives of anarchism, direct action, Bolshevism, and the rest. We may deplore the direction in which their ideas are moving. Let politicians in power recognise, however, that this spirit of revolt is rooted in the vast failures of the old diplomacy. Is there yet time to recognise the hopeless dead end into which we have blundered and to retrace our steps along a better way? The first condition is to purge our minds from some of the illusions which run riot among the men who control the machine. The peace of Europe cannot be secured by any variation of the old tortuous adjustments concerned with the balance of power. Strategical frontiers, military dispositions, the creation of buffer states, leave the problem exactly where it stood. Neither will the effort to reduce a feared and hated enemy to a condition perilously akin to that of economic servitude dispel the menace of a future appeal to arms. No nation can lay enduring shackles on the life of another, as the history of Germany from Jena to Leipzig proves conclusively. But as that suggestive period also shows, the effort to oppress and dominate, so far from crushing

the spirit of a people, rouses it to the highest point of effort and endeavour. The German poets of the Liberation period have sung in vain if they have not taught that lesson to an unheeding world.

The peaceful relations of nations cannot be achieved through the strategy of force and the tactics of hatred. A change of heart, a new moral orientation are essential if the world is not once again to become a shambles. Such a spirit can only permeate the existing welter little by little. We cannot afford to take risks with the ruthless and wicked people who in many instances control the destinies of nations. But the touchstone of statesmanship at the present time is the degree to which it is helping or it is hindering the forces which make for sanity and reconciliation; the degree to which it clears away barriers or helps to erect them. Nations, like individuals, can only live and grow through what is highest and best in themselves. Further, unless nations are prepared to treat each other with some measure of confidence and goodwill, and to have some sort of faith in each other's good intentions, the moral chaos remains insoluble.

It is my earnest wish in this matter to write with complete understanding and sympathy of the position of France. French fears regarding the future are largely responsible for the tone and temper of the Peace. The fact is so well known that I cannot feel any useful purpose is served by a refusal frankly to face the issues involved. The Entente, if it is to flourish, must draw its strength from truth and candour. It cannot live on shams and make-believes. The better mind of England is disturbed increasingly over the policy pursued by the Entente, and feels that the influence of France is dragging us along a

path remote from the traditional views of the British democracy. We must recognise this fact and face its implications, if sooner or later a point of sharp collision is to be avoided between the two countries. France and England are united by ties of a sacred and abiding character. Side by side have they upheld the torch of liberty while the foundations of the world rocked. The blood of their sons has been poured out on hundreds of battlefields in a common defence of liberty. The courage and the fortitude of France during the struggle was an example and an inspiration to the whole Alliance. Why are we conscious, therefore, to-day of so heavy a fall in all those values which made France heroic during the war? Again we must bring patience and understanding to a situation fraught with possibilities so grave of future trouble.

France to-day is dominated by two sentiments, one is hatred, the other is fear. Both are evil counsellors, both are destroyers of life. France through fear is pursuing a policy the only result of which can be to make the confirmation of her fears inevitable. Now, it is not for us English while recognising these facts to pass any sort of censorious judgment on them. Had we suffered like France, had we endured what she has been called upon to endure, in all probability our own spirit would have been even more black and more bitter. Such powers of detachment as we may possess do not imply the least merit on our part. It is only because relatively we have suffered less that we can afford possibly to be more broad and more generous in our outlook. France for the last fifty years has lived under the shadow of a nightmare. Enticed into war in 1870 by the devilish skill of Bismarck, she was forced to drink to the full of the German cup of

humiliation. Marvellous though her economic and political recovery after the war, she could feel no security about her eastern frontier. The aggressive character of German diplomacy cast a deepening shadow on her life. Periodically she was threatened; periodically she was insulted. Finally came a climax of horror—the invasion of her soil, the devastation of town and country, the agony of four and a half years of a war unparalleled in its ghastliness. Little wonder, therefore, that France sees red all the time and that she demands an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.

I often think that if in the course of the war it had so happened that a strip of German soil near the Rhine had been laid waste, it might in the long run have promoted the peace of Europe. I do not say this from any desire to destroy German homes or cause suffering to German women and children. But one of the difficulties in dealing with France to-day is that she feels that her wounds gape wider than those of any other nation. She is haunted by the horror of her own experience, to which no enemy country affords a parallel. Her devastated areas do not, so to speak, cancel out. Had they cancelled out, even in a limited measure, she would have lost something of the sense of unique and peculiar outrage which fills France to-day with a bitterness as of death. Let me repeat it is not for us to pass any censorious judgment on this attitude. Unlike France, we are not up against the fence of a land frontier with an hereditary foe on the other side. But we fail in our duty if in a spirit of entire friendliness and understanding we do not urge her to consider where this policy is leading.

The quarrel between Germany and France is a very

old story. It did not start, as many people imagine carelessly, in 1870. Long before that date a barrier of bitter memories had already been piled up between the two countries. Germany too has had her grievances, heavy grievances, in the past against France. Louis XIV. carried fire and sword through the Rhineland and Palatinate during the wars of the Spanish Succession. His generals left an imperishable memory of outrage. The Napoleonic occupation laid a hand of iron subsequently on the German people. Read the poets of the Liberation period, Arndt, Rückert, Körner, Schenkendorf, and realise how deep that iron bit into the soul of the nation. Travel among the Rhineland towns and study their history. It is one long record of French occupation and destruction either in the seventeenth or early nineteenth century—Mainz, the cathedral used as a magazine and barracks; Cologne, horses stabled in the cathedral nave; Speyer, town and cathedral ravaged with fire and sword by the generals of Louis XIV., ruffians who exhumed and scattered to the winds the bones of eight German emperors; Worms, reduced in 1689 to a smouldering heap of ruins; Aachen, Bonn, Coblenz, Baden, all with bitter memories of military conquest and occupation.

If I draw attention to these old unhappy far-off things it is not from any desire to rake gratuitously among painful memories of the past. But the German attitude towards France can never be understood unless due weight is given to these black and bitter pages in their earlier relations. France must face candidly the historical truth that Prussian militarism came into being as a reply to the aggressions first of Louis XIV., then of Napoleon. The sins of older generations of French rulers have been vis-

ited on innocent heads, but the sins were there. The memory of French tyranny in former years was the driving force which welded the German states together. To the average German 1870 appeared the vindication of his national honour, the signal proof that the humiliations of the Napoleonic period were wiped out. Once again the old coil of evil is seen unfolding itself in a monotonous succession of wrongs done and revenge exacted, the revenge creating new wrongs which in turn lead to further strife.

Are we prepared to weave yet further sequences of this disastrous character? Or shall the spirit of man rise up and say the coil must be broken?

It is this problem that has to be faced with both tact and candour so far as the French are concerned. We sympathise to the full with their sufferings and their wrongs. All that is best, however, in the British democracy will neither sympathise with nor support policies which if pursued to their logical ends can only work fresh havoc for Europe. It is strange that the French, after their bitter experience of 1870, seem unable to apply lessons wholly learnt by themselves as to the strength of national feeling. It is impossible to stifle the spirit of a people whatever it may be. Germany failed completely in her effort to crush France. It is no less hopeless for France to think that she can crush Germany. Yet at bottom the destruction of Germany is the aim of the Chauvinists, who have considerable influence at the moment in the direction of French policy. For people of this type the European situation is the same to-day as it was in 1912. It is as though the years 1914-1918 had not happened. The German nightmare oppresses them as much as it has ever done. They still envisage Germany as a great

military power whose existence is one long menace to the security of France. They want to see Germany crippled beyond the hope of restoration, though with an entire lack of logic they also want Germany to pay them large sums of money. Many French soldiers and politicians feel it is a great mistake to miss the present golden opportunity for making, as they think, a complete end of a formidable enemy. Among them are men who would welcome any pretext which might justify the further crushing of Germany. Theory reacts of course on practice. The actual policy pursued in the Occupied Area is often irritating and exasperating in the highest degree. Feeling between the Germans and the French has to my knowledge grown more sore and more bitter during the last year. But pinpricks will not produce the indemnity, and an atmosphere of general exasperation does not promote the best interests of France. Judged by rough and ready standards of expediency, it ought to be clear that less than forty millions of people cannot coerce indefinitely more than sixty millions of tough, hard-working men and women. This blunt truth governs the present situation. Such a policy if pursued is bound to fail. But before it breaks down in the turmoil of another war it may extinguish the last hope of saving European civilisation. Europe presents to-day common needs and common problems. It will recover as a whole or collapse as a whole. No illusion can be more fatal than the theory that the safety and prosperity of one member of the European family can be secured by the dismemberment and destruction of another. Statesmanship, while securing for France necessary material guarantees of safety, should have sought to win her round to a wiser appreciation of the principles on

which her future security must rest. Similarly as regards Germany; while exacting adequate reparation and reducing her militarists to impotence, statesmanship should no less seek to encourage the growth of a new temper among her people which will, by making them decent and responsible members of the European family, render any repetition of past horrors impossible.

Lamentable indeed was the failure of the Peace Conference to make any contribution to these fundamental principles. The Peace Treaty registers accurately the violences and hatreds of the war. To the creation of a better state of affairs in the future it makes no contribution of any kind. Whatever the attitude of France, the moral failure of England and America as regards the exercise of any restraining influence is far more culpable. The collapse of President Wilson, a man of high ideals but without the power of dealing with facts needful to give them practical effect, is one of the most tragic chapters in history. Mr. Lloyd George, gifted as he is with vision and imagination, could have thrown the light of his indisputable qualities had he so willed over the chaos of Europe. Unhappily he became involved in a sordid chapter of domestic politics, the consequences of which hung round his neck like a millstone. The present chaos of Europe is in no small degree a consequence of the General Election of December 1918 and the temper and policies it inculcated. The British nation was rushed on that occasion with fatal results to the cause of permanent peace. The Peace Conference met at Paris in an atmosphere charged with passion, and passion weighted the scales at every critical issue. Meanwhile the democracies of the world, impotent to control peace negotiations

the spirit and policy of which became increasingly unacceptable to all thinking people, looked on helplessly while the unwieldy vessel of the Conference, buffeted first by one influence and then by another, drifted on a stormy sea of opportunism towards the rocks of strife. As for the result, it was well denounced as the Peace of Dragon's Teeth by Mr. J. L. Garvin, who throughout the tests of war and peace devoted his eloquence and great powers of idealism to the cause first of victory and then of European appeasement.

The Treaty as it stands has sown the world with fresh discord, and ultimately can lead to nothing but repudiation and revenge. Still further, the Treaty as it stands is unworkable. Already it shows signs of breaking down under the weight of its own contradictions. By demanding too much it bids fair to create a situation in which nothing will be obtainable. It is not business to tell a bankrupt he must pay thirty shillings in the pound, and at the same time sit on his head so as to make it impossible for him to earn thirty pence. If a bankrupt is to discharge his debts, he must be put into a position to earn. If he is to be loaded with chains, that spectacle may have its own satisfaction, but it will not produce money on the credit side. A hungry bankrupt Germany cannot work to pay off the indemnity on which France has just claim. If Europe crumbles further; if Bolshevism finds a new recruiting ground in the anger and despair of a whole people—where is France likely to stand in this matter of payment?

We must in common fairness recognise how serious are the difficulties even of a well-intentioned German Government in carrying out the demands it has to meet. The peo-

ple as a whole are inexperienced politically. The nation has had no training in self-government. It has been run in the past by a highly efficient bureaucracy saturated in autocratic and Bismarckian traditions. To-day the old machinery of government is in ruins. We cannot expect that Germany with a wave of the wand can suddenly produce public men and civil servants of the type with which we are familiar. The cry that the government is in the hands of men "steeped in militarism" is far from untrue. The real problem, however, is to find men of any sort of training or experience in government work outside the close ring of Prussianism. Inevitably the public has to rely, anyway for the present, on officials trained in the old theory that a lie was a virtue so long as it served the State.

From this grave disadvantage there is no immediate escape, and the circumstance calls for special vigilance and care in our relations with the German official classes. We can, however, help or hinder the growth of another spirit. In so far as we support a democratically constituted German Government and give it some encouragement and consideration, we shall tend to produce men of a new type. But if these early steps in democratic government are at each stage to be associated with rebuffs and humiliations, we play straight, as I have pointed out in an earlier chapter, into the hands of the military party. The old gang, though they dare not raise their heads at the moment, are a compact body among themselves, and desire nothing so ardently as the failure of constitutional government in Germany. We cannot expect German mentality to be changed in a night. The new forces must be given time and space in which to develop.

Further, they must be given encouragement. The situation in Germany to-day is in many respects dark and difficult. The reactionary forces are entrenched strongly in more than one direction. We must not ignore the evil influence of some tens of thousands of embittered and irreconcilable soldiers and of certain officials of the old régime, whose careers have been broken and who have nothing to hope from any constitution acceptable to the democratic mind of Europe. Again, the old fire-eating doctrines are still to the fore at many centres of education and have an unfortunate influence on the student life—a serious fact borne out by much evidence. Thirdly, there is the danger of the irrecoverable rifle in the back garden—an impossible administrative problem, as we have found to our cost in Ireland. Undesirable factors of this character will have proportionate weight in Germany just so far as the spirit of unrest and despair spreads through the people. They can only be reduced to insignificance through the establishment of an ordered and settled government which is in a position to maintain a decent level of life for the nation, and a life consistent with a fair measure of national self-respect.

The revision of the Peace Treaty on lines which will bring it into harmony with enduring principles of justice and right is the crying need of the hour. A practical point in connection with the present situation should not be overlooked. The Germans know as well as we do that modifications of the Treaty are inevitable. So long, however, as the present unhappy instrument holds the field, the doubtful clauses offer a most undesirable scope for duplicity and intrigue. The men of the old tradition to whom I have just referred are experts in fishing in

troubled waters. They have sufficient skill to play off Allied scruples and hesitations one against another. What we should aim at is a Treaty just and reasonable in its demands, stripped of provisions which involve exasperating administrative problems. Above all, the Treaty should be revised to command the moral assent of the Allied democracies, an assent wholly lacking in the case of the Treaty of Versailles. Then the provisions should be enforced rigidly, and the German Government made plainly to understand that there is to be neither humbug nor shirking about their fulfilment. There cannot be two opinions about Germany making the fullest material restitution in her power for injuries done. Opinions may and do differ fundamentally as to the manner and spirit in which these claims should be put forward.

If politicians and statesmen turn a deaf ear to the cry of a world in distress and to a growing demand that the policies pursued should be reasonable and constructive, the voice of the people themselves swelling in volume bids fair to overwhelm all triflers with peace. For despite the bluster of the fire-eaters and a Press which encourages their empty violence, the world is sick of blood and strife. Germany has suffered such a defeat as history has never known. Sixty millions of people, however, virile, disciplined, hard-working, cannot be obliterated from the map. Greatly though certain zealots may desire the complete annihilation of the German tribes, vapourings of this kind are remote from the realm of practical politics. The statesmanship which at the moment haunts the Chancelleries of Europe would not appear to be of very high quality. But statesmanship of an order infinitely higher might well recoil appalled from such problems as would

result from any general collapse of the German Government and people.

A far-sighted policy, which while never failing in fairness is withal generous and reasonable, is as the poles removed from that of a weak sentimentality which refuses to face the difficult facts of the present situation. The withdrawal of any great nation from the urgent task of work and production means loss and detriment to the world at large. Hence the need to let Germany both eat and work; more, the need to help her start afresh. She lies a beaten and prostrate nation to-day. We may push her over the brink and so precipitate new catastrophes. Or without sentiment and without illusion we may take a longer view; we may direct our policy towards ultimate ends of appeasement, towards the establishment of a saner and a better Europe unhaunted by the menace of vast aggressive forces, towards the recovery by Germany herself of her old birthright of music, poetry, and philosophy bartered by her for evil dreams of world power and domination. That new order cannot be founded on any basis of enduring hatred. We cannot offer the ideal of the League of Nations with the one hand, and policies which resolve themselves into starvation and oppression with the other. The policies are incompatible, and we must choose between them.

The miserable suggestion frequently advanced, that as a victorious Germany would have ground us to powder, we should do to her as she would have done to us, cannot be sustained for a moment. Is our policy to be directed by German standards and influenced by German principles? All along we have proclaimed loudly that the war was fought so that the spirit and the principles

of Germany should no longer terrorise the world. To adopt her principles, even in some modified form, is to give her in defeat a victory lost by her in the field. Our moral pretensions in this struggle have been very high ones, and moral pretensions are intolerable unless some effort is made to live up to them.

Not all the dark and sordid happenings which wait inevitably on five years of world conflagration, not all the dragging in the mire of many a noble idea, should make us forget the great principles of liberty and justice which drew us originally into the war. It was no idle phrase that England staked everything for an ideal when the wrong done to Belgium brought her into the field. At no moment in her history has she risen to moral heights so great as when she stepped forth in August 1914 to vindicate the cause of the oppressed. The principles to which she consecrated herself in that supreme moment of testing demand a service no less inexorable from us today, though to hold by them steadily in the dark and stony ways of peace is proving, as we all know to our cost, a test of endurance greater far than that of the actual conflict. Yet surely failure at this point is to fail our dead most miserably—the men who died with the light of a great vision in their eyes: that vision of a world purged from evil through their sacrifice. No miracles of leadership won the war. It was won by the grit and by the endurance of the great mass of the British peoples. And where statesmanship has failed, we look to the rank and file of the nation to win the peace. It rests with our countrymen to see that there is no further deepening of the ruts of hatred and mutual ignorance, for what England wills in this matter is decisive as regards the future.

And France—France who was in such a special sense the soul of the war? Is it too much to ask that France, despite her sufferings and sacrifices, should brace herself for one supreme effort, nobler than all which have gone before—the effort to make herself greater than the wrong done to her? Then would her triumph over the dark and evil forces which brought about the war be supreme indeed. France who means so much to the mind of Europe, who has given to it eternal principles of truth and liberty—will not France in this matter rise to the level of her own heroic stature?

The established democracies of the world have in these troubled times to hold up each other's arms. So long as the great Republic of the West stands aloof, the chain of brotherhood and common effort is broken at a vital point. The darkness is greater, the task infinitely more hard, because she has withdrawn her companionship from what should have been a united purpose. The intervention of America led to the complete overthrow of Germany. Without her great resources flung on the Allied side the war must have had a very different end resulting in compromise, not victory. We appreciate her difficulties; we do not presume to dictate. We would, however, beg her to remember she too has responsibilities as regards the burthen of Europe. But though the action of the United States may have made the goal of European appeasement more remote, more difficult to attain, the goal itself is clear.

The Watch on the Rhine is of value just so far as it helps to clear our minds as to the true objectives that we are seeking. The soldiers have done their work well and truly in the war. Their task accomplished, its results

have now passed largely into other hands. Our unworthiness and unfitness to carry so great a responsibility are but too painfully apparent. Yet the responsibility is there. The dead have in special measure left a sacrifice to be perfected. The torch fell lighted from their hands. Supreme shame would it be if it suffers extinction through the sordid ambitions and mean desires of men who live because other men have died. The threat of moral bankruptcy, real as it is, can only be averted through a steady devotion to ideal ends. Those ideal ends have been sung by one of our younger poets in words which, to me at least, sum up the faith I have endeavoured haltingly to express as regards the future :

“This then is yours; to build exultingly
High and yet more high
The knowledgeable towers above base wars
And sinful surges, reaching up to lay
Dishonouring hands upon your work, and drag
From their uprightness your desires to lag
Among low places with a common gait.
That so Man’s mind not conquered by his clay,
May sit above his fate
Inhabiting the purpose of the stars,
And trade with his Eternity.”

THE END



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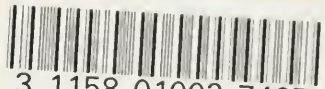
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