

THE WAR WITH GERMANY.

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another German philosopher, Nietzsche, whose views have so tremendously influenced Germany throughout these last thirty years. Even more fiercely than Treitschke he glorifies war, going even to the extent of denouncing Christianity as a religion of the weak; in his view it is fit only for "shopkeepers, cows, women, and Englishmen." Here is his doctrine as given in his own words:

"What is good? All that increases the feeling of power, the will to power, power itself, in man. What is bad? All that proceeds from weakness. What is happiness? The feeling that power increases, that resistance is being overcome. . . . Not contentment, but more power! Not peace at any price, but war! Not virtue, but efficiency! . . . The weak and the botched must perish: that is the first principle of our humanity. And then they should be helped to perish! . . . I am writing for the lords of the earth. . . . You say that a good cause hallows war? I tell you that a good war hallows every cause!"

There is your wild, intoxicated deification of war—that deification for which militarist-mad Germany stands: the doctrine that strong nations must crush the weaker ones, and glory in the crushing like a drunken man rejoicing in his murder. Nietzsche himself does not shrink from the most brutal avowal of his principles. What means life? he asks in "The Joyful Wisdom," and he answers: "To thrust away from us everything that wants to die; to be cruel and inexorable towards everything that grows old and weak; to be murderers all the time."

Let us be perfectly frank and admit that the average German in his mind does not wholly accept the doctrines of these writers. Nevertheless, one has only to study Belgium and the Lusitania to see that Treitschke and Nietzsche are the true exponents of official Germany. Not only is it true that in no other nation has such a school of philosophers won popular approval, and not only is it true that their brutal cave-man doctrines have been accepted and translated into action by the German government, but we must also acknowledge that the German people, though ordered as soldiers to execute these principles in ravaged Belgium or on pirate submarines, have not yet rebelled or made one historic protest against a government so controlled. They have not differentiated themselves from their government.

Force, then, is the German ideal: military force, and force seemingly unrestrained by moral scruples. Moreover, force is limited by no sense of the government's responsibility to the great masses of the people. Over and over again the Kaiser proclaims the medieval doctrine of the divine rights of kings; over and over again he declares that he is anointed of God to rule Germany as he pleases. The American doctrine that the people have a divine right to choose their own rulers has no place in German thought.

In saying what we have said, we intend to draw no indictment of the masses of German people. They are naturally a people of many admirable qualities. But in submitting themselves to the autocratic government of a ruthless military despotism, they have been mesmerized into a character out of keeping with their natural tendencies. I knew an old man born in Germany long ago who just prior to the outbreak of the present war in 1914 lamented the tragic change that had come over his Fatherland: the change we have suggested in the in the paragraph we have just quoted from Dr. Lowell. Nearly every year he had gone back to his home land. "I don't want to go again," he sighed. "The Germany I knew and loved has been transformed by the ruthless Force-god of the Prussian."

Let us keep these facts in mind, therefore, all through the present war. There is no excuse for any man quoting that somewhat repellent maxim, "My country, right or wrong." America is right and she did right to enter the war. We cannot afford to live in a world dominated—as the world would be dominated if Germany should win—by the doctrines we have indicated. These doctrines are:

1. Militarism.—German triumph would threaten every country with war at any time, and make every nation thereafter an armed camp.
2. Autocracy.—Not only does the Kaiser hold that he and not the people should rule Germany, but he would discourage democracy in other countries in order to keep its spirit from spreading to his country. It was not without reason that the President summoned America to war with the battle-cry, "The world must be made safe for democracy."
3. "The state can do no wrong." Not only would all diplomacy and all international relations be thrown into chaos by German victory, but

the ideals and principles of humanity would change. If the dominating governments of the world were to act on the theory that promises might be violated at will when this observance "becomes inconvenient," how long indeed would or could private morality endure? How long would it be possible to enforce in business and in ordinary human relations the principles of the sacredness of contracts, and Jehovah's stern high doctrine that he who would dwell in his holy hill must be a man "who sweareth to his own hurt and changeth not?"

"But what about our allies?" some one asks. "You say it is a war between democracy and autocracy; and yet is not our chief ally—Great Britain—itsself a monarchy, governed by a king?" It is important, we think, that the facts in this case be clearly stated. England, in fact, is probably a truer democracy today than the United States itself. The king is a mere figurehead, stripped of all real power. He doesn't even write the speeches or messages read in his name. The real ruler of England is not King George, born to the purple, but Lloyd-George, the Welsh lad born in poverty and reared by his cobler-uncle and made Premier of England by the power of the common people! Some Englishmen advocate the abolition of the kingship and the substitution of a president as in our case, but the sufficient answer is that nobody in England wants to give a British ruler as much power as an American President has!

And then there are our other allies—France, glorious immortal France! the land which glorifies sentiment and honor and the things of the spirit as Germany glorifies force and blood and war! Some say that already the French people have made such sacrifices, have offered up so many gallant sons on the bloody altars of this war, that they can never again be a strong nation; that they are irretrievably weakened. Yet even if that be true, she is nevertheless immortal: and when men have forgotten Thermopylae they will still remember Glorious France standing beside the Marne and throwing her own bleeding body against the advancing Huns and thus saving the future of mankind for a higher civilization than would ever have been possible but for her self-immolation!

Moreover, it is our faith that Russia will yet justify the high hopes of her friends. We shall not be surprised to see established within her borders the most advanced democracy this world has yet seen—a government intent on establishing a more genuine equality among all men than any other nation now enforces. And when that is done, we cannot but believe that something of the same heaven will begin its work among the German people; that they will free themselves from the hypnotic spell of a brutal autocracy unworthy of them, and that out of it all will come at last the realization of the poet's dream of the time when—

"The war drum throbbed no longer, and the battle flags were furled In the Parliament of Man, the Federation of the World!"

It is in service to such a high and holy cause that America today summons all her sons and daughters. Millions will answer the call to the colors, but to millions of others at home there open up opportunities for patriotic effort hardly less definite and no less real. Let the embattled farmer think on these things as he entreates the fruitful earth for its utmost yield of food for his home-land and its allies! Let the housewife think on these things as she does her part in conserving the nation's food supplies in her own home! And let boys and girls, young men and young women, think on these things as they set themselves to their own not unimportant duties—the duty of avoiding all idleness the duty of using every possible hour in some really fruitful service to America and to humanity in this hour of need!

In the language of President Wilson's own concluding words in his wonderful war-message to the American Congress:

"It is a fearful thing to lead this great peaceful people into war, into the most terrible and disastrous of all wars, civilization itself seeming to be in the balance. But the right is more precious than peace, and we shall fight for the things which we have always carried nearest our hearts—for democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own governments, for the rights and liberties of small nations, for universal dominion of rights by such a concert of free peoples as shall bring peace and safety to all nations and make the world itself at last free. To such a task we can dedicate our lives and our fortunes, everything that we are and everything that we have, with the pride of those who know that

the day has come when America is privileged to spend her blood and her might for the principles that gave her birth and happiness and the peace which she has treasured. God helping her, she can do no other."

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