

HARROW WAR HELP MOVEMENT.

THE WAR And how it came about.

(By G. H. HALLAM.)

(Reprinted from Victoria League Notes for September 1914.)

[Copies may be obtained from the War Help Movement Office, or The School Book Shop (Mr. Moore), Harrow. Price $\frac{1}{2}$ d., or 1d. by post; 10 copies by post 4d.; 50 copies 1/6, or 1/9 by post.]

TWO distinct sets of causes are responsible for the War. 1.—The race hatred and rivalry of Slavs and Teutons in the East and South-East of Europe. 2.—The ambition of Germany to win a world-wide Empire, to which ambition Great Britain is the obstacle.

SLAV AND TEUTON.

In the Central and Eastern and South-Eastern parts of Europe there are two great races, the Teutons and the Slavs, between which there is a never ending rivalry. The Teutonic race consists mainly of the Germans of the German Empire under the leadership of Prussia, and of the Austrian Germans, whose capital is Vienna. (We English also, in our origin, belong to the Teutonic race, and our language, like those of Holland and Denmark and Scandinavia, is akin to German.)

The great Slav nation is Russia, which has always been looked up to as champion and protector, a sort of big brother, by the smaller Slav states such as Servia and Bulgaria. Another Slav people are the Poles, whose kingdom was wickedly broken up a hundred years ago, and divided between Russia, Austria and Prussia. The Poles of Galicia, which is the North-Eastern portion of Austria, and the Bohemians, or Czechs, are Slavs, and bitterly hostile to the German members of the Austrian Empire. It must be remembered that there is no such thing as an Austrian nation. The Austro-Hungarian Empire is made up of Germans, Hungarians, Slavs and a few Italians, and, though the Slavs are the most numerous, they are always kept down and bullied by their German and Hungarian partners. Here were materials enough for a deadly quarrel. We can easily understand how it was that, in the present war, Czech regiments have refused to fight against their Servian brothers, and have been shot down in hundreds by the German regiments of their own Austrian Army.

And now for the actual events which led up to the war.

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE WAR.

The immediate pretext was connected with the assassination of the Austrian Heir-Apparent and his wife on June 28th at Serajevo the Capital of Bosnia. Bosnia and Herzegovina are two Slavonic countries in the Balkan peninsula, which in defiance of treaty right, were annexed a few years ago by Austria. Russia, as champion of the Slavs, protested, but in vain. The German Emperor declared that Germany "in shining armour" would stand beside Austria her ally; and Russia which had not yet recovered her strength after the Japanese War, was powerless to help her friends. But she did not forget the wrong or the insult.

On July the 23rd, three or four weeks after the Serajevo assassinations, Austria declared that the plot which brought them about, had been concocted in Servia, and that Servia was responsible for it. She made a number of demands on Servia, some of them very humiliating, and made only with the intention that they should be rejected. Servia however,

wishing to keep the peace and on the strong advice of Russia practically accepted these conditions, humiliating as they were. Still Austria was not satisfied. Backed by Germany, she had made up her mind to "punish" Servia.

On July 27th, our Minister for Foreign affairs, Sir Edward Grey, did his utmost to arrange a settlement, but without avail, for Germany stood aloof, and as we know now, was secretly dictating her course to Austria. No opportunity was given for persuasion or explanation, but on the next day, July 28th, Austria declared war on Servia. Germany followed suit, on August 1st, by declaring war on Russia, and on France the ally of Russia. Italy, the third member of the Triple Alliance (Germany, Austria and Italy) and the old friend of Great Britain, stood neutral. On the same day August 1st, Germany invaded the small neutral state of Luxemburg. On August 2nd the French frontier was crossed.

GREAT BRITAIN COMES INTO THE QUARREL.

So far Great Britain, though her sympathies were with her friends of the *triple entente*, France and Russia, stood outside the quarrel. But on August the 3rd, the German Emperor sent an ultimatum to Belgium demanding a free passage for his armies through her territory. The neutrality of Belgium had been guaranteed by Germany herself as well as by France and Great Britain. But "necessity knows no law" said the German Chancellor, and throwing honour and good faith to the winds the German Emperor determined "to hack his way" through Belgium into France. Then at last, when all our protests had been disregarded, honour called us into the field on behalf of the outraged treaty and in defence of the weak against the strong, of liberty against tyranny, and we declared war against Germany.

THE OLD GERMANY AND THE NEW.—Many people who are no longer young, loved and admired the Germany of 50 years ago. They are bewildered and dismayed by the Germany of to-day. In those far off times "the Fatherland" was an idyllic and romantic world, homely

and simple and thrifty in its ways. Its fair-haired Hans and Gretchen were home-loving, kindly and sentimental people. It was a world of "plain living and high thinking." Its pleasures and interests lay in music and poetry, science and philosophy. Its national heroes were Beethoven and Mozart, Schiller and Goethe. Still, even at that time, underlying the Germany which we loved and admired, there was, as we now know to our cost, a leaven of "high-vaulting ambition" at work, of a very different character. It aimed at a world-wide Empire, and the ablest men of the race, and no race has abler men, were for ever thinking and planning how this could be brought about. Some of them dreamed noble dreams, and their thoughts were fed on the romantic poems and legends of beautiful and godlike heroes and heroines, mostly of a passionate and violent spirit, such as we find in Wagner's great operas. These men dreamed of winning again for Germany the Empire of Charlemagne, and of conquests like those of Alaric, "the scourge of God" as he was called, and of Theodoric, the great Visigoth who reigned at Ravenna. War they considered glorious and beautiful, and the fighter the only kind of man worthy to be honoured. The leaders they desired were found in Prussia, and in its Hohenzollern Kings, the descendants of the great but unscrupulous Frederick. Let us not forget that there was, at the first, something noble and manly in such an ambition, if only it had been tempered by justice and fair dealing, and mercy, and respect for the rights of others. But, like the Empire of Napoleon a century ago, the spirit of this new imperialism has shown itself selfish, unscrupulous and ruthless. It has said in its heart "evil be thou my good." Its first active steps were taken in 1864, when Denmark was robbed by Austria and Prussia of the Duchies of Schleswig and Holstein. Then the robbers quarrelled among themselves, and in 1866 Prussia crushed Austria, whom Saxony supported, in a single fortnight, and deprived her of the headship among German States.

France in 1870 was the next victim. Besides being condemned to pay an enormous indemnity, she was deprived of her Eastern provinces Alsace and Lorraine. In the

arrogance bred by her success, in the wealth and unbridled power won by her sword, and also by her wonderfully organized commerce and manufacturing skill, Prussia, and the rest of Germany following her lead, lost what was far more valuable than anything they had gained. For the other parts of Germany all too soon caught the spirit of the Prussian teaching, and more and more every year Germany's spiritual and moral strength and influence declined as her material power waxed strong. The rights of ordinary citizens are now as nothing against the iron rule of the Prussianised official and the tyrannous domination of a military caste. A memorable object lesson in all this was given a few months ago at Zabern in Alsace, where honourable gentlemen and children were sabred, imprisoned and brutally treated for venturing to smile, or looking as if they were about to smile, as a swaggering soldier passed by. Worst of all the whole Empire, after some slight protest, accepted this state of things as natural and right.

Bismarck, the famous Chancellor of the first German Emperor William, laid the foundation of the German Empire in 1871. That man of "blood and iron" held openly the beliefs that "might is right," that "the end justifies the means," and that "war should be made as terrible as possible." It is now well-known that the war against France in 1870 was precipitated by his falsification of the King's telegram: and one of the standing instruments of German government is an organized system of deception carried out in the German press, and where possible in the press of other countries. The present Emperor has now gone even beyond Bismarck himself. The world cannot forget the orders which he gave to the German troops who went to China in 1900. "Gain a reputation," he said, "like that of the Huns under Attila." (Of Attila it was said that the grass never grew on the spot where his horse had trod.) In Belgium and in France we have before us many terrible examples of Prussian ruthlessness. In Belgium they destroyed the peaceful and historic city of Louvain, the seat of an ancient and famous University, the Oxford of Belgium. It is to-day nothing but a heap of ashes. In France they

have ravaged and all but destroyed the Cathedral of Reims, one of the treasures of the world and a masterpiece of Gothic architecture. Consecrated by memories of the heroic Joan of Arc, it was the Westminster Abbey of France, the place where her Kings had been crowned from the days of Clovis. This too is a ruin, another victim of baffled spite.

ENGLAND "THE ENEMY."

Just before the South African war, Mr. Joseph Chamberlain made a speech in which he spoke of the two great Anglo-Saxon nations, Great Britain and the United States, and Germany their Teutonic cousin, as the natural allies who should combine to keep the peace of the world. His words were greeted throughout Germany with howls of derision and anger and indignation. But even this did not open the eyes of our countrymen. In spite of Germany's prodigious and ever-increasing army, the astonishing growth of her navy, the challenge which the Kaiser himself threw at Great Britain when he styled himself the "Admiral of the Atlantic," and the world-policy to be attained by the overthrow of England, and openly proclaimed by hundreds of German professors, historians and philosophers no less than by her soldiers, Englishmen could not believe that Germany "the home of culture" had changed her point of view and her ambitions, and would ever attack us.

German writers and thinkers were never tired of expressing their contempt for Great Britain: "she was played out," "she had gone soft" and "made a god of comfort and of happiness," she was "a nation of shopkeepers," "her boasted power was a sham, and she lived only on her reputation," she was "the robber state" which had stolen the best things all over the world, "her Dominions and Dependencies only waited for the opportunity of striking a blow for their freedom." "Why should Britain stand in the way of a far nobler state, the noblest of all states?" They even persuaded themselves that it was a holy duty to depose the imposter, she must make way for a more manly, more thorough, more efficient race. To attain this righteous end all means were justifiable, "all is fair in war," and war begins before the clash of arms.

Germany had the might, and "might is right." Germany claimed and would seize "her place in the sun." As Cato had cried of old in the senate of Rome, so she cried without ceasing "Delenda est Carthago."

It may be thought that all this is pure imagination and delusion. Those who doubt its truth, should read the writings of Nietzsche, and of Treitschke, historian and philosopher, who more than any man has moulded the thought of modern German imperialists, and the soldier Bernhardt's book on the "next war," the war against England.

And at last Germany felt that "the day" had come. The enlarged Kiel canal, giving passage to her newest Dreadnoughts, was just completed. Russia was believed to be still weak and unready after her Japanese war, she would grow stronger every year. All was not well, she believed, with the French army. Austria was her subservient ally, the wishes of Italy might be neglected. As for Great Britain—they could not realize that our domestic differences, on which they had counted, would disappear like mists before the rising sun, in the face of national danger and at the call of national honour. She understood just as little the spirit of our Dominions Oversea, and of the princes and peoples of India.

And we on our part knew but too well that if we could have found it in our hearts to desert our allies, it would be our turn next. We should have had to bear the brunt without a friend to stand by us, and amid the contempt of the world.

The diplomacy of Germany was cunning, but at times extraordinarily blundering and blind to facts. She could not believe that "that this cock would fight." So she made her 'infamous proposal' to us of a price for treachery. "What! make war for a scrap of paper!" said the German Chancellor, when reminded of our solemn promise to protect the independence of Belgium, a promise by which Germany was equally bound. Sir Edward Grey, the proved friend of peace, strove to the uttermost to preserve it, but in vain. To the last they could not believe that we really meant what we said. They seemed incapable of understanding an

Englishman, that he prefers to under-express rather than over-express himself ; his quiet way of taking things and his dislike of superlatives : that when he feels most strongly he says least.

Their historic memory too is short : or they would have bethought them that Great Britain had not once or twice only, made a stand for the rights of small nations and the common liberties of Europe ; that we had withstood Philip of Spain and Louis XIV of France, and, alone in Europe, the great Napoleon ; and that we were not likely to be false to ourselves and our traditions, and our plighted word now.

BRAVE LITTLE BELGIUM.

Nearly 2,000 years ago Julius Cæsar wrote : "the bravest of all the Gauls are the Belgians." He knew, for he had fought against them.

A few years ago Belgian oarsmen astonished the rowing world by winning at Henley Regatta the "Grand Challenge" (for eight-oared boats), the blue ribbon of all fresh-water rowing.

And in these recent weeks the brave little nation, nerved by the love of liberty, held up for many long and priceless days, under the steel cupolas of the Liège forts and elsewhere, the might of Germany, and, as Mr. Asquith said at the Guildhall "has won for herself, the immortal glory which belongs to a people who prefer freedom to ease, to security, even to life itself."

Truly "God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty."

THE HAPPY WARRIOR.

Who is the happy warrior? Who is he
Whom every man in arms should wish to be?
One who, if he be called upon to face
Some awful moment to which Heaven has join'd
Great issues, good or bad for human kind,
Is happy as a lover ; and attired
With sudden brightness, like a man inspired.

WORDSWORTH.