

THE WORLD WAR

WHO IS TO
BLAME?

A REPLY TO PROFESSOR HAECKEL
AND DR. PAUL CARUS

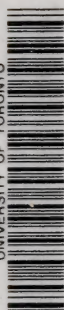
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[Continued on third page of cover.]

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THE WORLD WAR.

WHO IS TO BLAME?

AN Englishman cannot read the articles by Professor Ernst Haeckel and Dr. Paul Carus in the *Open Court* for October, 1914, without feeling tempted to "let his angry passions rise." But he will remember that anger is not necessarily the sign of a just cause; if it were, the German case in the Great War would be unanswerable. A man may be angry because the wicked machinations of his country have been exposed. Or he may be angry because he honestly believes such accusations as those of Professor Haeckel and Dr. Carus to be unjust and slanderous. At any rate, if he is a sensible man he will try to consider them with cold-blooded impartiality.

PROFESSOR HAECKEL'S CHARGES.

Professor Haeckel charges Great Britain with "blood-guiltiness." That means that Great Britain either began the War, or provoked the War, or took part in the War, without good and sufficient reason. On what grounds does Professor Haeckel rest his accusation? Apparently he considers the grounds so well known that it is unnecessary to state them. That

England brought about the War there is not a vestige of evidence to prove. It is the merest assertion, evidently the product of that anger which perverts the judgment even of the wise.

The eminent Professor maintains that "the freak trio of brigands, Russia, France, and England, have sworn to destroy the Triple Alliance of middle Europe, and, above all, Germany's position among the Great Powers." Does he bring forward any facts in support of this somewhat grave charge? Not one. No evidence whatever is thought to be necessary. Professor Haeckel deems it consistent with decency to abuse as "brigands" nations which believe they are defending the cause of right against unjust aggression.

After terming the *Entente Cordiale* "a freak trio of brigands," Professor Haeckel begins to inquire into—or rather to write about—the responsibility for the War. "Is it," he asks, "the French or the Russian nation that bears the burden of responsibility, and that we have most to fear?" That Germany had any share in the crime does not present itself to the Professor's mind as even a possibility. He states that when he was writing his article a fortnight after the outbreak of hostilities "the greater part of the responsibility was commonly imputed to Russia, because it had opened the attack on the Triple Alliance, and, in fact, had been the first to declare war." France, although the majority of her people were "in no way animated by a desire for war," was yet actuated by a national thirst for vengeance—a feeling of which German writers invariably make the most. Yet neither of these Powers is the arch-criminal. It very soon became manifest that "on England *alone* plainly rests the greater part of the responsibility for the

outbreak of this world war." These passionate assertions, together with the invocation of a curse on the boundless national egotism which knows no other aim than the extension of British dominion over the whole world, and some very foolish abuse of the "execrable" King Edward VII, form the substance of a serious accusation against the British people.

The Professor's reasoning presents some curious departures from the commonly accepted scientific method. Thus on p. 582 he assures his readers that "on England and on England *alone* plainly rests the responsibility," while two pages later he says: "When Russia in the beginning of August declared war on Germany and Austria, it meant for us but a difficult European war." On p. 659¹ he alleges that "it was Russia *alone* that gave a critical turn to the event, and Russia *alone* is to blame for the outbreak of the War." Yet again, on the following page, he arrives at the conclusion that, "as a matter of fact, it was not Germany, but France, that commenced the War." In the eyes of Germany all the allied Powers are of course desperately wicked, and she cannot be asked to respect "freak brigands"; but when the word "alone" is so emphatically used one would like to know which really was the original offender. It is to be hoped that ere now Professor Haeckel has made up his mind on that point. All he appears to be sure about is that his own country at any rate is innocent. That it must be so appears to be a necessary postulate of thought with German writers. It must be excessively mortifying that so small a portion of the civilized world shares their conviction.

¹ *Open Court* for November. Italics not in original.

It will be refreshing now to look at the facts. We are told that Russia was "the first to declare war." The simple fact is that Russia did not declare war at all. Austria proclaimed war against Serbia on July 28 last. Germany despatched an ultimatum to Petrograd on July 31, and declared war against Russia on the following day. Professor Haeckel may have meant that the mobilization of the Russian armies was the provocation which induced Germany to make her decision. This mobilization was ordered on July 29, and, being directed against Austria, was only partial. The general mobilization was ordered on July 31, one day before that of Germany. If this is Professor Haeckel's meaning, the recklessness with which he expresses it shows that he has allowed blind fury to usurp the place of reasoning. So many of his countrymen have since adopted his method that we have become accustomed to it, and familiarity has bred the proverbial result.

Professor Haeckel's abusive epithets are numerous and forcible. The Triple Entente is stigmatized as a "cursed band of brigands." Great Britain is "perfidious," "hypocritical," actuated by "brutal egotism," and with "no application whatever of that Christian altruism which she theoretically inscribed on her banners." Her object is "solely and alone to strengthen her world power." "With absolutely no thought of the weal or woe of the rest of mankind, and especially of her German sister nation.....she can laugh at all appeals to justice and righteousness." Apparently on behalf of a long-suffering world, though unprovided with its mandate, Professor Haeckel demands "complete liberation from the unbearable yoke under which the British empire would bend all other peoples."

Reckless fury and stone-blind prejudice cannot be reasoned with. If they could, it might be pointed out that Britain's system of Free Trade, her concession of practical independence to her overseas dominions, including that of a free constitution to South Africa, and her just settlement of the Irish difficulty, have not impressed foreign observers as being instances of "brutal egotism." Nor does it seem clear that they can be explained as "perfidious," "hypocritical," or coming under the head of any other of Professor Haeckel's pleasant expressions. And that "unbearable yoke" is as imaginary as some of his country's "victories."

"On August 4," we are reminded, "the fate of the entire world hung in the balance." England decided for "war, crime, and evil," issued against Germany a declaration of war, "which had long been in readiness," and thus "incurred the responsibility for the greatest crime mankind has known," for which "the curse of millions of unhappy beings is on the head of Britain." From these melodramatic flourishes it would be quite impossible to gather that Austria had started the conflagration a whole week before the fateful August 4, that Germany had begun war with Russia three days before, invaded Luxemburg two days before, and declared war against France one day before that date, in addition to attacking Belgium. Six nations were, therefore, already at war when Britain intervened, after persistent endeavours to maintain peace. Why is that country saddled with the responsibility for a war which, as will be shown, she earnestly tried to prevent? If it was right for Germany to rush to the assistance of her ally against a possible Russian aggression, why was it wrong of Britain to keep her

pledged word, and help Belgium against the actual aggression, the treacherous aggression, of Germany?

This extraordinary Professor states that "the annihilation of the independent German empire, the destruction of German life and works, the subjection of the German people to British domination—that is the proud dream of the English Government." Professor Haeckel will not take my word for it; but I want to tell him that he is profoundly mistaken. Great Britain has no such "proud dream." Beyond rendering German militarism impotent for future harm to civilization, we have not the slightest desire to subject the people of Germany to our domination. And we know that such a thing would be impossible.

After these ebullitions of German "kultur" (in one of its highest representatives, be it observed) we may allow Professor Haeckel to drop, "unwept, unhonoured, and unsung," out of the discussion.

DR. CARUS.

Dr. Carus likewise blames Britain for the War; but he does so with some approach to calmness and self-restraint. At the outset he admits that a condition of things existed "which made the War an inevitable necessity." If that was so, it is unjust to throw the responsibility on Britain, unless it can be shown that Britain alone brought about this provocative condition of things.

No such allegation is made, or can be made. Britain could not, and has never wished or attempted to, make every other Power in Europe her obedient tool. The responsibility for the dangerous state of affairs lies on all those who helped to create it. The mine was laid by many hands; but it was not Great Britain

that lighted the fuse. Jealousy and suspicion have, to a lamentable degree, influenced the relations of European Powers throughout their history. Has the foreign policy of Germany tended to alleviate the general distrust? If so, how is it that to so many nations Germany has become the main object of that distrust?

As Dr. Carus justly says, the murder of the Austrian Archduke was "a symptom only of the real reason" for the War. But there was a remoter cause, which Dr. Carus passes over. In 1878 the administration of Bosnia (let it be remembered that Bosnia was formerly part of the ancient kingdom of Serbia, and that its inhabitants are still of Serbian blood) had, by the Treaty of Berlin, been placed in the hands of Austria. Thirty years later Austria, in violation of the Treaty and against the will of the inhabitants, incorporated Bosnia and the adjoining territory of Herzegovina in her own dominions, thus creating a continuous centre of disaffection.

On June 28, 1914, one month before the outbreak of war, the heir to the Austrian throne and his wife were murdered in this Austrian territory by Austrian subjects, under circumstances of calculated atrocity. It was stated by the Serbian minister that one of the assassins "had been in Serbia, and that the Serbian authorities, considering him suspect and dangerous, had desired to expel him, but, on applying to the Austrian authorities, found that the latter protected him, and said that he was an innocent and harmless individual."

Austria alleged, probably with good reason, that the plot was hatched in Serbia, and that Serbian subjects (not the Government) were implicated. She therefore put forward the perfectly just demand that

the perpetrators of the outrage should be punished. Serbia promised full investigation, but Austria, distrusting her good faith, formulated on July 23 a series of demands to the following effect :—

THE AUSTRIAN DEMANDS.

- (1) That anti-Austrian publications in Serbia should be suppressed.
- (2) That Serbian societies engaged in propaganda against Austria should be dissolved, and not allowed to continue under another name and form.
- (3) That everything in the Serbian system of public instruction which might foment the propaganda against Austria should be eliminated without delay.
- (4) That all officials, civil and military, guilty of anti-Austrian propaganda should be removed from their posts, the Austrian Government reserving the right to name such persons.
- (5) That representatives of the Austrian Government should collaborate in Serbia for the suppression of the anti-Austrian movement.
- (6) That persons suspected of complicity in the murder of the Archduke should be prosecuted, and that Austrian delegates should take part in the proceedings.
- (7) That two persons named should be arrested.
- (8) That illicit traffic in arms on the frontier should be prevented, and that the frontier officials who had given assistance to the conspirators should be severely punished.
- (9) That high Serbian officials having expressed hostility to the Austrian Government,

explanation of these utterances should be furnished.

- (10) That the Austrian Government should be notified without delay of the execution of the above requirements.

This is a condensed but faithful summary of the demands which were the immediate cause of the European War. Looked at in bulk, they certainly appear to justify Sir Edward Grey's opinion that he had never known "one State address to another independent State a document of so formidable a character."

Were these demands reasonable? Did non-compliance with every one of them constitute a good reason for Austria declaring war on Serbia? It must be borne in mind that the terms of the undertaking to be given by the Serbian Government were dictated by Austria, its requirement being that the Serbian Government "shall publish on the front page of their official journal of July 26" a declaration condemning the anti-Austrian propaganda, promising punishment of the guilty parties, and shall "further undertake" compliance with the ten demands above summarized.

Now, this is undoubtedly a very "tall order" for one State to give another, and a people already disaffected could hardly be expected to obey it with enthusiasm. Obviously, time was necessary for the fulfilment of the demands. How long a time did Austria give? Forty-eight hours. Within that period the Serbian Government replied, conceding every point with the exception of Nos. 5 and 6. As to No. 5, it was stated that the Serbian Government did not clearly grasp the meaning or scope of the demand, but would admit "such collaboration as

agreed with the principle of international law, with criminal procedure, and with good neighbourly relations." As to No. 6, the Serbian Government admitted their duty to institute an inquiry, but were unable to accept the participation of Austrian representatives, "as it would be a violation of the constitution and of the law of criminal procedure." It was added that, if Austria was not satisfied with this reply, Serbia would be willing to refer the question to the decision of the International Tribunal of the Hague, or to the Great Powers.

The Austrian Government were *not* satisfied with the reply, though, in the words of the British Blue Book,¹ it "went far beyond anything which any Power—Germany not excepted—had ever thought probable." Austria preferred war to arbitration. Her Ambassador left Belgrade on July 25, the day on which Serbia's reply was despatched, and three days later Austria proclaimed herself in a state of war with Serbia. On the 27th Sir Edward Grey had told the Austrian Ambassador in London that it seemed to him "as if the Austrian Government believed that, even after the Serbian reply, they could make war upon Serbia anyhow, without risk of bringing Russia into the dispute," and expressed his opinion that that reply "already involved the greatest humiliation to Serbia that he had ever seen a country undergo, and it was very disappointing to him that the reply was treated by the Austrian Government as if it was as unsatisfactory as a blank negative." The attitude of Austria produced a similar effect upon M. Sazonoff, the Russian Foreign Minister, who stated on July 28 :

¹ *Great Britain and the European Crisis*. Introductory Narrative, p. vi.

"My interviews with the German Ambassador confirm my impression that Germany is, if anything, in favour of the uncompromising attitude adopted by Austria," adding: "The Ambassador considers that the Serbian reply is insufficient. This attitude of the German Government is most alarming.....There is no doubt that the key of the situation is to be found in Berlin."¹ The British Ambassador at Berlin also had, by August 1, come to the conclusion that "the German Ambassador at Vienna desired war from the first."²

EFFORTS TO AVERT WAR.

During the forty-eight hours in which Serbia was to mend her ways Great Britain made three attempts at peace, joining with Russia in a request for extension of the time-limit, and suggesting that Germany should urge this request on the Austrian Government. Berlin agreed only to "pass on" the message. Sir Edward Grey on the 25th hoped that Germany would persuade Austria to accept the Serbian reply. Again Berlin merely undertook to "pass on" this hope to the German Ambassador at Vienna. Sir Edward urged France, Germany, Russia, and Italy to work together in favour of conciliation. France, Russia, and Italy agreed to do so. Germany had no objection "if relations between Austria and Russia became threatening." The British Ambassador at Vienna reported that the tone of the Austrian press left the impression that a settlement was not desired, and that he considered the Austrian demands on Serbia were "so drawn up as to make war inevitable." Sir Edward Grey then proposed a conference.

¹ *Great Britain and the European Crisis*, p. 34.

² *Ibid*, p. 72.

France, Russia, and Italy at once agreed, France offering to request Russia, Austria, and Serbia to stop any military preparations, but pointing out that such a request would be useless unless the German Government exercised their influence on the Cabinet of Vienna. Germany, however, "could not fall in with the suggestion," stating (but giving no reasons) that it was "not practicable," and proposing direct negotiations between Russia and Austria. Although Austria at first declined the suggestion, these negotiations were begun; and, seeing that the two points in dispute could probably have been settled by business men in an hour or two, they might have been expected to lead to an amicable adjustment had they not been cut short by Austria's declaration of war.

Germany proclaimed her desire for peace, or, failing that, for the localization of the conflict. On the 28th, just after war had been declared, the Kaiser wrote to the Czar: "I am exerting all my influence to endeavour to make Austria-Hungary come to an open and satisfying understanding with Russia." As the predominant partner, Germany could have experienced little or no difficulty in inducing Austria to suspend military preparations in order to give time for a conference. Did she even make the attempt? If she did, it is most unfortunate for Germany's case that no record whatever to that effect appears in the Berlin White Paper issued on August 3. This White Paper is the "formal defence which the German Government has given to the world."¹ It contains nothing that bears out the Kaiser's assertion. "If Germany made any communication to Austria in the interests of peace, the text has yet to be disclosed

¹ *An American Verdict on the War*, by James M. Beck, p. 18.

to the world. A word from Berlin to Vienna would have given the additional time which, with sincerely pacific intentions, might have resulted in the preservation of peace. Germany, so far as the record discloses, never spoke that word."¹ Again, the British Ambassador at Berlin, in reply to his request that Germany should exert pressure on Austria in the direction of peace, was assured on July 30 by the German Foreign Minister that he had done so. This communication does not appear in the German White Paper. On the same day Russia offered to "stop all military preparations" if Austria would admit that the Serbian question had acquired a European significance, and would respect the sovereignty of Serbia. On learning that Austria was determined to decline intervention by the Powers and had mobilized her forces, Russia, on July 31, ordered a general mobilization.

"The Kaiser," says the American lawyer whom I have quoted, "can only convince the world of his innocence of the crime of his Potsdam camarilla by giving the world *the text* of any advice he gave the Austrian officials. He has produced his telegrams to the Czar. Where are those he presumably sent to Francis Joseph or Count Berchtold? Where are the instructions he gave his Ambassadors or Foreign Minister?"² Can such conduct be capable of more than one interpretation?

Recent events have strengthened the case against Germany in a remarkable degree. The Italian ex-Premier stated in December last that the German and Austrian Governments requested so long ago as November, 1913, the co-operation of Italy in an ultimatum to Serbia, in which the third party to

¹ *An American Verdict on the War*, p. 13.

² *Ibid.*, p. 18.

the Triple Alliance declined to join. This shows that, about eight months before the Serajevo murders, a joint aggression on the little Slav state was contemplated as a practical possibility. Again, only on January 31, 1915, did it become known that the Tsar, on July 29, 1914, telegraphed to the Kaiser a definite offer to submit the questions in dispute to the Hague Conference. Curiously enough, this telegram does not appear in the German White Paper.

It can hardly be maintained with justice that, in view of Austria's extremely threatening attitude and the mobilization of her troops, Russia was wrong in ordering a partial mobilization of her forces, with a view to the protection of a comparatively weak state like Serbia. Germany, however, regarded this action as a threat to her ally, and peremptorily demanded that Russia should cease her preparations and countermand the mobilization order within twelve hours. As Russia gave no reply to this demand, Germany, on August 1, declared war against her, and two days later against France also. Evidently Germany considers herself at liberty to threaten other Powers as much as she pleases, while any counter threat must be met by wholesale declarations of war.

On this question of mobilization Mr. Beck remarks: "The excuse of Germany that the mobilization of Russia compelled it to mobilize does not justify the War. Mobilization does not necessarily mean aggression, but simply preparation. If Russia had the right to mobilize because Austria mobilized, Germany equally had the right to mobilize when Russia mobilized; but it does not follow that either of the three nations could justify a war to compel the other parties to demobilize. Mobilization is only a

preparation against eventualities. It is the right of a sovereign state, and by no code of ethics a *casus belli*. The demand of Germany that Russia could not arm to defend itself, when Austria was preparing for a possible attack on Russia, has few, if any, parallels in history for bullying effrontery. It treated Russia as an inferior, almost vassal, State."¹

It may be added that, although Germany did not order mobilization until August 1, there is reason to suppose that (as was distinctly stated by the French Ambassador at Petrograd²) she had been secretly mobilizing her forces for some days previously—a supposition confirmed by the rapidity of her attack on Belgium, by her instructions to warships abroad, by her calling up reserves, by orders afterwards found on German soldiers, by her attack on the London and Paris Stock Exchanges, and by many other circumstances.

AUSTRIA WILLING TO NEGOTIATE.

The suggestion by Germany that Austria and Russia should negotiate was acted upon. On July 29 "Germany had suggested to Austria that she should stop as soon as her troops had occupied Belgrade. Late on the same night Russia offered to stop all military preparations if Austria would recognize that the conflict with Serbia had become a question of general European interest, and would eliminate from her ultimatum the points which involved a violation of the sovereignty of Serbia. As the result of this offer Russia was able to assure His Majesty's Government on the 31st that Austria had at last agreed to do

¹ *An American Verdict on the War*, p. 22.

² French Yellow Book, Dispatch No. 118.

the very thing she had refused to do in the first days of the crisis—namely, to discuss the whole question of her ultimatum to Serbia. Russia asked the British Government to assume the direction of these discussions.”¹ On August 1 Sir Edward Grey learnt that the “Austrian Government have informed the German Government that, though the situation has been changed by the mobilization of Russia, they would, in full appreciation of the efforts of England for the preservation of peace, be ready to consider favourably my proposal for mediation between Austria and Serbia.”²

Thus the whole trouble seemed in a fair way to being smoothed over in the only reasonable manner—by full and fair discussion. What prevented it? On July 31 Germany flung her ultimatum at the head of Russia, and next day followed it up by declaring war.

The dispute with Serbia was not a matter for Austria alone to settle, as was contended by Germany (if it was so, why did she not let Austria settle it?), for the obligations entered into by Serbia, and referred to in the Austrian ultimatum, were not given solely to Austria, but to the Powers, and it was for the Powers to see that they were fulfilled.

THE ATTACK ON BELGIUM.

But why did Great Britain intervene? It is clear beyond the possibility of dispute that she did not *begin* the War; but ought she not to have kept out of it? Essentially the War may be, as Germany contends, a struggle for supremacy between Teuton

¹ *Great Britain and the European Crisis*, p. viii. ² *Ibid.*, p. 69.

and Slav. If so, it was the more incumbent on Germany to pursue a conciliatory policy on her Western frontiers, instead of adopting courses which were certain to bring Great Britain into the field and to estrange the sympathies of the world.

Fearing an attack by France, Germany had applied to Belgium for permission to march her armies through that country in order to forestall such an attack and invade France by the shortest and most convenient route. Both these powerful nations had been asked by the British Government on July 31 if they would respect the neutrality of Belgium. France on the same day agreed to do so. Germany returned no answer, but on August 2, in pursuance of her policy of "Christian altruism," marched her troops into the adjoining Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, and immediately afterwards into Belgium itself, whose sole offence was that it stood in the way of the German advance and had declined to sanction it. Belgium appealed to Britain for help, and on August 4 Sir Edward Grey delivered an ultimatum to Berlin requiring withdrawal within twelve hours of the German forces. No reply was given, and before midnight the two great countries were for the first time in a state of war.

The Powers pledged by the treaty of 1839 to maintain in perpetuity the independence and neutrality of Belgium were Great Britain, Russia, France, Austria, and Prussia. Dr. Carus doubts whether this obligation extended to the German Empire, which was not formally constituted till 1870. Will he deny that the German Empire took over the treaty obligations of the kingdom of Prussia? Did not the Emperor William I, in 1870, sign a treaty renewing the pledge to preserve the neutrality of Belgium? Is it not the

fact that at the Hague Conference of 1907 both Austria and Germany agreed in writing that "the territory of neutral Powers is inviolable," and that future disputes should be referred to arbitration? To Germany the treaty was, to use the expression of her Chancellor, a mere "scrap of paper," and neutrality a word without definite meaning.¹ His interpretation is apparently favoured by Dr. Carus, on the ground that treaties are often nullified by events, and that circumstances change so greatly that it is neither possible nor advisable in all cases to secure a literal observance of the obligations. In some cases this is, no doubt, perfectly true; but in the case of Belgium conditions had not so changed as to make the treaty of no effect. Each nation was well aware that it was understood and intended to be still operative. Belgium had prospered; her people were industrious and contented; she wished only to live in peace. It seems probable that had Germany respected the neutrality of Belgium, which her King and people desired to maintain, the horrors of war might never have been inflicted upon that unfortunate little country. France had not only expressed her willingness to abide by the Treaty of London, but, as far as can be seen, was not prepared for a German advance through Belgium, and jeopardized the early stages of the campaign by massing the greater proportion of her troops on the borders of Alsace and Lorraine. Had France been the aggressor, she would have placed herself in the wrong, and encountered the opposition, or at least lack of support, of Britain. But she declined to be

¹ The explanation offered by the Chancellor six months later was well exposed by Sir Edward Grey. A subterfuge as transparent as it was dishonest fits readily into German conceptions of honourable dealing.

the aggressor; in spite of the fact that German patrols had, before July 30, penetrated her territory on two occasions, her troops were drawn back ten kilomètres within the French frontier.

Dr. Carus not only makes light of the German violation of Belgian neutrality, but asserts that both Great Britain and France had also infringed it before the War began.

In what did this infringement consist? French officers are alleged to have visited Liège and conferred with the Belgians upon measures of defence. English airmen are said to have flown over the country. Lord Kitchener is reported to have been in Belgium before the War. Now, I have no evidence to disprove these statements. It is just possible they are true, though we need not forget that very many equally confident German assertions have been proved to be false. But the point is: What evidence is there to show their truth? And, if they are true, how do they justify the action of Germany? It is not only supremely silly, but argues some moral perversion, to allege such things as justification for wholesale devastation and slaughter.

Webster's Dictionary gives the following definition of neutrality as a feature of International Law. Neutrality is "the condition of a nation or government which refrains from taking part directly or indirectly in a war between other Powers." The occurrences referred to by Dr. Carus are said to have taken place, and must have taken place if at all, before the War broke out. How, then, do they infringe the above definition of neutrality, which applies to an existing conflict? Belgium, it is true, was bound to maintain her own neutrality. But was it a breach of the obligation to take measures for self-defence if she

thought herself in danger? Belgium was warned in 1913 by the late King of Roumania and (it is said) by the Kaiser himself that she *was* in danger from Germany.

Dr. Carus quotes from a telegram sent from Berlin to the German Ambassador in London the following words: "Please impress upon Sir E. Grey that German army could not be exposed to French attack across Belgium, *which was planned according to absolutely unimpeachable information*. Germany had consequently to disregard Belgian neutrality, it being for her a question of life or death to prevent advance." Thereupon Dr. Carus asks: "Why, when Germany, as stated in this message, claimed to know that the French were about to break Belgian neutrality, did not England then guarantee Belgian neutrality?..... England gave no such assurance in time, for the declaration of Sir Edward Grey came too late."

BRITAIN'S POSITION MADE CLEAR.

The answer to this extraordinary question is very simple. First, let me ask Dr. Carus why he does not give the date of this telegram. It was August 4. On the morning of that day, before the telegram was received, Sir Edward Grey informed the German Government, by telegram to the British Ambassador in Berlin, of the appeal made by Belgium for Britain's intervention, and protested against the violation of Belgian territory threatened by the German ultimatum. Britain had on July 27 indicated to Austria, and on the 29th to Germany, that she could not undertake to remain neutral in the event of a European war. "We gave no pledge to our present Allies; but to Germany we gave three times—on July 30,

July 31, and August 1—a clear warning of the effect which would be produced on our attitude and on the sentiment of the British people by a violation of the neutrality of Belgium.”¹ Five times within a week, the last of them three days before the date of the telegram quoted by Dr. Carus! Excluding Sir Edward Grey’s telegram on the morning of August 4, Germany was on three occasions distinctly informed of Britain’s intention to uphold the neutrality of Belgium. Yet Dr. Carus finds it possible to assert that “the declaration of Sir Edward Grey came too late”! It is difficult to see how it could have been given earlier, for the question of Belgium’s position arose with startling suddenness, and in the British Blue Book is mentioned for the first time on July 29. No honourable State would expect a fresh assurance of an existing and fully understood obligation.

That Berlin dispatch of August 4 needs a little more attention than Dr. Carus has bestowed upon it. The first two sentences (which he does not quote) run thus: “Please dispel any mistrust that may subsist on the part of the British Government with regard to our intentions by repeating *most positively* formal assurance that, *even in the case of armed conflict with Belgium*, Germany will, *under no pretence whatever*, annex Belgian territory.”² Sincerity of this declaration is borne out by fact that we solemnly pledged our word to Holland strictly to respect her territory. It is obvious that we could not profitably annex Belgian territory without making at the same time territorial acquisitions at expense of Holland.”

Dr. Carus, as an honest man, will, of course, com-

¹ *Great Britain and the European Crisis*, p. viii.

² Italics not in original.

pare his assertions with the facts. Germany solemnly promised that, even in the event of war with Belgium, she would not annex any of her territory. Germany has made war upon Belgium, driven out a large proportion of her people and slain many others, occupied and administered her territory, and has announced her intention of remaining there and treating it as a province of the German Empire. The precise value of Germany's good faith is not very difficult to determine. It may be hoped that Dr. Carus stands alone in the touching confidence which leads him to say that the Germans "would have been satisfied to have the Belgian assent to their march through the country, and would gladly have paid every penny for food and forage or occasional destruction of property." That is, Belgium should have regarded as sacred a promise by a Power which was then engaged in breaking previous promises.¹

Dr. Carus says nothing about Holland. Fortunately for that country, she has not been drawn into the War, and up to the present Germany has kept her pledged word. Judging, however, from the Berlin dispatch of August 4, it is part of the German plan that Holland also shall come under the rule of the Kaiser, and certain German writers, von Bernhardt among them, make no secret whatever about it. To them it is obviously impossible that the Dutch coast, including the mouth of the Schelde, should remain permanently in the hands of any other Power than Germany. The dispatch plainly intimates that the seizure of Belgian territory must be followed by the seizure of Dutch territory—that is, if the former

¹ In later numbers of the *Open Court* Dr. Carus weeps copiously over the misfortunes of "poor Belgium," and generously attributes them to—Britain!

proves "profitable" to Germany, which at present seems a little unlikely. Presumably, neither proceeding comes under the head of the brigandage condemned by Professor Haeckel. According to German ethics, it is brigandage to defend a weak nation ; it is not brigandage to attack and murder it. Dr. Carus is doubtless prepared to defend the extinction of Holland on the principles by which he has already defended the extinction of her neighbour. It is the old story of the wolf and the lamb. But other nations have something to say about the ethics of the wolf.

If, in the matter of international morality, Britain is as guilty as Germany, I, for one, shall allow no patriotic sentiment to commit me to sophisticated defence of her crimes. "My country, right or wrong," is not a sentiment that appeals to my sense of right and justice. Dr. Carus alleges an instance of England's bad faith. She violated the neutrality of Portugal during the Boer War by landing troops at Delagoa Bay. Technically, this seems an indefensible act. But that it presents any real analogy with the case of Belgium cannot be admitted. The article in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* terms the incident an "unfortunate precedent" (not an "important precedent," as Dr. Carus states), but remarks that the South African War was exceptional, because "Portugal exposed itself to no international difficulty through allowing a belligerent, whose final victory was certain, to cross its colonial territory." Thus it appears that in two respects the circumstances (and Dr. Carus stresses the force of circumstances) were widely different :—(1) Portugal allowed a violation of her (colonial) territory, whereas Belgium resented a violation of her (home) territory ; (2) no international

difficulties or serious consequences arose, or, indeed, could arise, in the case of Portugal, whereas the consequences in the European War have been of unexampled gravity.

JOHN BULL AS MEPHISTOPHELES.

As I want to deal only with the present war, I content myself with a passing reference to, and protest against, the manner in which Dr. Carus saddles Britain with the moral responsibility for other wars also. He remarks (just as if he knew) that "the plan of the English Government has for a long time been to make other nations carry on wars intended to benefit Great Britain. A short time ago this method caused them to use Japan for the purpose of humiliating Russia, and soon after the Russo-Japanese War the same principle led to the formation of the Triple Entente between England, Russia, and France." Now, Great Britain has a good deal of power, and, in the opinion of this very "candid friend," rather more than her share of craft and subtlety. But will Dr. Carus be kind enough to inform an inquiring Britisher by what means this remarkable influence has been exercised? Is it a fact that Britain has been able so to bend other nations to her will as to make them go to war for *her* benefit? Is she so unscrupulous, and have they been so weak and pliable? It would be wiser not to make statements of this kind without bringing forward some evidence in their support. As to the Triple Entente, it is clear that Dr. Carus knows it was arranged simply as a response to the aggressive tendencies of Germany, for he quotes Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's statement that "The first fruit of the new German fleet was the Entente Cordiale."

That the aims of the Triple Alliance were essentially aggressive is conclusively shown by the fact that one member of it has declared war against Serbia, knowing that Russia would intervene; that another member of the Alliance has declared war against Russia, against France, and against Belgium, knowing that Britain would help the last-named; while the third member of the Alliance is so convinced of the aggressive character of these proceedings that it has flatly declined to countenance them.

FRENCH VANITY—AND GERMAN.

The assumption that the French are "theatrical and vain," though not altogether untrue, is singularly inappropriate to the present state of affairs. According to Dr. Carus, "the French well know why they have their war news ornamented with a most exaggerated optimism, for they know that under the gloom of truthful reports their troops are not likely to display overmuch courage, and a little lie is condoned if it buoys up the soldiers in battle." These unfortunate libels on one of the bravest nations in the world (utterly refuted by the heroism it showed in the hopeless struggle of 1870) have been curiously falsified by the events of the present war. The extraordinary steadiness and resolution with which the French have withstood an enemy superior in numbers, equipment, organization, and heavy artillery has been one of the great surprises of the conflict. At the beginning of August the German army was admitted on all hands to be the finest in the world. What was the avowed intention of its leaders? They loudly announced that they would march through Belgium and be in Paris about the middle of August. They are not there yet.

The advance was a wonderful military achievement, but it failed. Unable to break the obstinate resistance of the French and British, and defeated at the Battle of the Marne, the Germans were compelled to retreat, and took up strong positions in north-eastern France. And there they have stuck ever since, unwilling to go home and unable to advance. And it has been mainly French firmness that has produced this remarkable result. Then the German troops were ordered to capture Calais at any cost. Stupendous have been their efforts. For five weary months they have been trying to get to Calais, with the result that they are getting farther and farther away from it. During November they hurled themselves against the thin British line around Ypres, and were repelled with a loss of probably more than 100,000 men killed, wounded, and captured. This is a dreadful price to pay for military "glory." But it is not for glory, say the defenders of Germany; it is, on our part, a war for defence and self-preservation. Why, then, have the German troops advanced far beyond their own strongly fortified frontiers? Why, indeed, did Germany throw down the gauntlet and declare war on half Europe?

The French are vain. Perhaps they are. Are we expected to believe that the Germans are free from this national weakness? You can scarcely read an extract from a German paper or a speech of the Kaiser without meeting such shameless bombast, such overblown pride, such worship of force, such blasphemous religiosity, such reckless threatenings, as are not to be found in the war literature of any other people. Germans—not the dregs of the populace, but learned professors—do not hesitate to proclaim in cold print their conviction that the German

people are superior not only in military power, but in intelligence and morality, to all other peoples, and therefore (so the deduction would appear to run) entitled to rob them of their lives and possessions. While proclaiming the highest civilization, they advocate principles which would bring it to ruin. Their "might is right" theory means the destruction of all morality, the death of civilization. A system which glorifies physical force is an anachronism in civilized life, and indeed incompatible with it. German boasting during this war has been enough to make Baron Munchausen ill with envy and Pistol hide his diminished head. Compared with the colossal conceit of the Teuton, the lively good-natured vanity of the Frenchman is modesty "in excelsis."

As to exaggerations, the accuracy and restraint of the French official reports have been very noticeable, and in strong contrast to those perpetual German "victories" which prove to be more or less illusory. A British war correspondent declared in November last that he had not in all the French reports come across a single instance of exaggeration. It is a pity that Dr. Carus is unable to be just to men who are heroically defending their country against invasion. We on our side are not quite so grudging; tributes to German valour appear in our papers almost every day. That there are exaggerated and unreliable reports is perfectly true. But whose reports? The testimony of many British and American travellers who have during part of the War been in Germany is that, while there, they had not the remotest idea of the real state of the campaign. German newspapers announced that Paris had been captured, London attacked, Sheerness was in flames, the British fleet destroyed, the French President assassinated, the

German armies everywhere triumphant, and so forth. To this day the German people seem to have no conception of the actual position of affairs. Their official reports have become a by-word for suppression of the real facts. The shattering blow dealt at the end of November by the Russians in Poland was loudly trumpeted as a great German victory. The Berlin official reports of the battle in the North Sea on January 24 led the German people to believe that their fleet had defeated that of Britain. In England we get our bad news as quickly as we get our good news, and we take both with the traditional British phlegm.

ATROCITIES.

The subject of atrocities is so difficult to clear up that I shall content myself with a few observations. Dr. Carus disbelieves the accounts of German excesses. I claim the same liberty to disbelieve the accounts of French and Belgian excesses. But, assuming both to be true, there are differences which cannot fairly be ignored. To the Belgians, maddened by an attack which, as far as they were concerned, was absolutely unprovoked, any reprisals may have seemed permissible. The Germans began their campaign in Belgium by an orgy of slaughter and destruction which is avouched by many eye-witnesses, and is alleged to have been carried out under the definite orders of superior officers. Did not the Kaiser issue a proclamation authorizing the German troops to inflict severities which by their "frightfulness" should reduce the Belgians to submission? These instructions recall those given by the Kaiser to his troops during the Chinese troubles of a few years ago. They were to show no mercy, but were to gain a reputation

like that of the Huns under Attila. The present war has shown how successfully they have acted on the precepts of their Christian monarch.

Dr. Carus gives the testimony of five American journalists who failed to discover any German atrocities whatever. Judging from their report, they do not appear to have gone to the places where the outrages are alleged to have been committed. Of the towns which have become so notorious in this respect they mention only Louvain, which, according to their account, merely got what it deserved. Did they not inquire at Termonde, Aerschot, Malines, Visé, Dinant, Tamines, Surice, or Andenne? The various Reports of the Belgian Committee of Inquiry, the Report of the French Commission, the Report of Sir Mackenzie Chalmers, form a long catalogue of horrors well nigh incredible in their wanton ferocity. There may be much exaggeration in these stories, but they cannot all be false. Nor does it avail to allege that such crimes are inevitable in war, that stories of "atrocities" are incidental to every campaign. The fact is not so. For centuries past, with the exception of the Thirty Years' War, no modern conflict has furnished a parallel to the excesses committed by the "civilized" Germans of to-day. The campaigns of Wellington, the Civil War of America, and others, were to a remarkable degree unstained by the barbarities at which the world now daily shudders. Some of these infamies are beyond all denial, and, in fact, have been the occasion of public rejoicings in Germany. The shelling of Scarborough was hailed with wild demonstrations of delight. The air-raid on Yarmouth and King's Lynn was, in German eyes, a noble feat of daring. If Germany is waging war as humanely as possible, why have her troops

bombarded many defenceless towns and villages? Why did she avoid the forts of Paris, and drop bombs on its defenceless citizens? Why does she threaten London with attack from the air? Why did a German submarine torpedo the *Amiral Ganteaume*, with more than two thousand civilian refugees on board, many of them women and children? Why was the hospital ship *Asturias* attacked, and why have a number of merchant ships and fishing-boats been sunk?

In evident desperation Germany, on the false plea that Britain has stopped her imports of food from abroad, has now established a war zone around the British Isles with the avowed intention of "blockading" this country into submission, and has announced that neutral ships will enter this zone at their peril. Great Britain has throughout acted with scrupulous regard to the recognized usages of war. Germany deliberately violates them, and asserts that the positions are parallel. Practically she claims the right to wage war in her own ruthless fashion; but when retaliation comes she raises an outcry of rage and horror at British barbarity and perfidy. She wants things all her own way.

The allegations of Belgian atrocities have a highly suspicious look, and most people in this country believe them to be an ingenious attempt to divert attention from the real culprits. Some of these allegations have been disproved by the inquiries of Germans themselves. Thus the statement that the eyes of German soldiers have been gouged out was investigated, and proved to be false. The libel seems to have been put into circulation by no less a personage than the German Chancellor, who gave the Kaiser as his authority. The Berlin paper, the *Vorwaerts*, went into the matter, and the following is a transla-

tion of its report, as given in the *Daily News* of November 19 last :—

Rumours of German soldiers whose eyes have been put out by franc-tireurs are afloat all over Germany. Not one single instance of the sort has been officially confirmed, and, as far as the stories could be tested in detail, they have proved untrue. Every nose shot off or even bound up, every eye injured or destroyed, is promptly converted into an instance of the handiwork of franc-tireurs. We have already reported that the *Volkszeitung* of Cologne was able to prove that, contrary to the most emphatic assertions, there neither lies nor has lain in Aix one single soldier whose eyes have been put out. A widely-circulated Berlin mid-day paper recently reported in leaded type that “in the hospital of Lichterfelde alone there lie ten slightly wounded German soldiers whose eyes have been put out by accursed hands.” Dr. Liebknecht inquired of the medical director of the aforesaid hospital if the report was true. On October 18 he received the following reply :—“Dear Sir,—I am glad to say that there is no truth whatever in the reports you mention.—Yours, etc. (signed), Professor Rautenberg.”

Here is testimony (honour to those who gave it!) much more explicit than anything to the contrary furnished by Dr. Carus. It is a categorical refutation of positive charges. The *Daily News* of February 19 reports a similar, though reluctant, contradiction by the *Kölnische Zeitung* of outrages alleged to have been committed upon wounded German soldiers. The fact that some persons have failed to substantiate other charges reminds one of the Irishman who, when charged with an offence on the evidence of an eye-witness, replied that he could bring a dozen witnesses who did not see him commit it.

It thus appears that accusations of this sort are made on both sides. The question is which of them, if any, are true. This can only be settled by a complete and impartial investigation of the facts, and it is

highly desirable that the inquiries which are being made should elicit "the whole truth and nothing but the truth."

As to the use of dum-dum bullets, the evidence available goes to show that they have *not* been used by the Allies, but that they *have* been used by the Germans. A memorandum issued by the British War Office in November last embodies the result of an inquiry made by Sir Victor Horsley, the eminent surgeon, explains the nature of the bullets used by the British, and shows that the charge rests on an entire misapprehension; also, that the bullets are in accordance with the provisions of the Hague Convention, and the most humane that can be used. On the other hand, the memorandum states that bullets of a type prohibited by that Convention have been found on the bodies of German soldiers, both in Togoland and in France. It may be added that an English lady who was in Germany during the War is reported in the *Daily News* of November 19 last, as declaring that to her knowledge the use of expanding bullets by German troops is freely admitted in Germany, and no secret is made of it. France has officially and positively denied that any such bullets have been issued to her troops. That bullets marked "Dum Dum" have been used by the British appears to be true; but that simply means that they came from the factory at "Dum Dum" in India, from which place these bullets derive their name. They are, of course, ordinary bullets, no more destructive than any other kind.

OUR INCAPABLE GENERALS!

Dr. Carus recommends his "dear English friends" to have their Generals "replaced by capable men who

are able to meet an enemy as great as their Saxon brothers of the Continent." Our Generals are, it appears, incapable. How have they proved their incapacity? They have met the German army—that vast, ruthless, perfectly organized war machine—have foiled its long prepared plans, and repulsed its most furious assaults. Outnumbered two, three, four, and five times over, the thin British line has, in a hundred desperate struggles, driven back the very flower of the Kaiser's troops in disorder. The brain which forestalled and defeated the German plan for seizing the French coast proved itself at least as efficient as the brains of the whole German staff put together. If the British Generals are not "capable men," what are we to say of German military capacity? Almost every German move has been frustrated, almost every German calculation has gone wrong. The Kaiser wanted our men to meet his Bavarians "just once." He had his wish, and what was the result? The Bavarians were badly beaten, and hundreds of them taken prisoners. The invincible Prussian Guards were ordered to take the British lines. They were beaten back with appalling loss. What has given Dr. Carus his strange under-estimate of the British soldier's fighting powers? Certainly not the present war. Do not brag so much, says Dr. Carus to his "dear English friends." Why does he not give this advice to his countrymen, who most need it? Perhaps he knows that it would be like telling the wind not to blow.

Like Professor Haeckel, Dr. Carus will have it that Great Britain provoked the War, and is proving herself to be blind to a greater danger than that which faces Germany. Nowhere does he attempt to show that Britain's action made it necessary for Germany

and her ally to declare war on Servia, Russia, Belgium, and France, before England intervened. It would have been the maddest and most wicked folly for Britain to enter designedly into a European conflict for which, as Germany knew, she was not prepared. And the proof of England's unreadiness is that she has had to improvise an effective army after hostilities had begun, and is still at the gigantic task. A perusal of the diplomatic correspondence—even the German diplomatic correspondence, mutilated though it is—suffices to convince any reasonable person that Britain did *not* provoke the War. She entered upon it because she felt bound in honour to assist the weak and safeguard her openly menaced interests. There are Englishmen who think their country hypocritical because, while proclaiming that she made war for Belgian neutrality, she was really acting in her own selfish interests. It must be perfectly evident that both motives operated, and both were legitimate. A Government defending the interests of many millions of citizens may act injudiciously and immorally; it is not necessarily selfish. Every nation has a right to defend its own interests, and because Great Britain has behaved honourably and chivalrously to her friends, that is no reason why she should not act in defence of herself also. She knows her danger, and faces it without fear or foreboding. Dr. Carus completely misinterprets the spirit of Great Britain when he alleges that her people have become “impervious to reason.” “They have grown mad; they have become incapable of arguing calmly and impartially. They believe all; they hope all, they suffer all. They believe all accusations against their enemies—the most impossible ones. They hope for victories where there is but little, if any, chance. They suffer defeats with

patience, in anticipation of a final triumph which they in their vanity think must be theirs."

One may be pardoned for considering this a particularly apt description of the attitude prevalent in *Germany*. As a representation of the British temper it is not very relevant. Apart from the retreat after the Battle of Mons, to which the British troops were forced by overwhelming numbers, what "defeat" have they suffered? Why is there "little, if any, chance" of victory for the Allies? In combination they are vastly superior to Germany in population, wealth, and resources—even military resources. Britain alone is so greatly superior to Germany at sea that the latter's fleet has never yet risked a general engagement, while the German overseas trade is practically extinct. The hope of a final triumph for the Allies is therefore not a fantastic dream, springing from national vanity, but a reasonable expectation founded on undisputed facts.

THE ALLEGED PLOT AGAINST GERMANY.

In the November number of the *Open Court* Dr. Carus states that documents were found by the Germans in the archives of the Belgian General Staff at Brussels proving the existence of a plan for the dispatch of an Expeditionary Force from Britain in the event of war with Germany. Now, I may as well bluntly avow my conviction that this story is a German invention, that no such documents exist, or, if they do, that they are clumsy forgeries. It is very unlikely that the Belgian staff would have left behind them documents which could be used to damage their claim to have their national rights respected. But, assuming such evidence exists, how is it an

infringement of the obligation of either country to remain neutral? Belgium was about the last nation to desire war; she was solemnly bound to peace; but she foresaw the possibility of an attack by Germany, and, in common prudence, was compelled to consult with less aggressive neighbours upon the steps to be taken for her own protection. It is solely the action of Germany herself which made Belgian neutrality impossible. At any rate, if there is evidence, let Germany produce it (the original documents, of course) to any independent person, body, court, or tribunal. Until this is done I decline to believe that any such evidence exists. And I feel warranted in taking the same view with regard to the statement attributed to Hanris Aal, "for which he claims to have good evidence, that during the Boer War the Czar proposed to the Kaiser to attack Great Britain and reduce her to a second-class Power." Let this "good evidence" be produced, and then it will be time enough to pay serious heed to it. We in England have been informed that the proposal was made *to* the Czar *by* the Kaiser. The one statement is probably about as true as the other. As to the assertion that Lord Kitchener was in Belgium shortly before the War and conferred with the military authorities, why are we not given something more than unsupported assertion? If this one is true, how does it violate any treaty obligation? The statement is probably false; but Lord Kitchener's visit, if really made, was not a violation of neutrality; it was a wise and proper precaution to take against a contingency which actually happened. Why is it wrong for Belgium to take those measures for self-protection which Germany claims are all that she has been adopting for a long time past? Legitimate self-defence by

other Powers appears to be a conspiracy against the majesty of Germany!

Dr. Carus says that Germany did not want the War. She "stood for peace." German militarism exists only for self-defence. All nations adopt this formula. Their practice of it needs to be examined with care. Germany stands for peace! Yet she abets Austria in a reckless assault upon Serbia. She stands for peace, but declares war on Russia, war on Belgium, war on France. Germany's militarism is for self-defence only, yet she prepares armaments the like of which the world has never seen, and her military writers proclaim the necessity of conquest and of expansion at the expense of small states, and glorify war as the mightiest agent of civilization. Can we doubt who is to blame?

ADDENDUM.

IN the February number of the *Open Court* Dr. Carus asserts that Belgium, France, and Britain planned an offensive attack upon Germany and an invasion of her Rhenish provinces. Why has not Dr. Carus published the evidence for this charge? In view of Belgium's position and obligations and Britain's well-known anxiety to keep out of European complications, the steps alluded to (if taken at all) could have had only a defensive character and intention, yet they are now exaggerated into a design to attack the most formidable military power in the world. According to Sir Edward Grey, any consultations that took place were merely between the military authorities, and were without the official sanction of their respective Governments.

Even in August, 1914, Britain was far from being ready for war. Dr. Carus gives the reason: "England was unprepared for war because she thought it would be an easy game"(!). He over-rates the simplicity of the British Government—and under-estimates his own.

"No one," says Dr. Carus, "who has studied the diplomatic events of the last days of July, 1914, doubts that England brought about the War." To millions of people a study of the "diplomatic events" has proved the guilt, not of England, but of Germany. The article which follows that of Dr. Carus contains an emphatic statement to this effect.

In flat contradiction to his previous assertion, Dr. Carus concludes his article by saying: "Wars are not made by kings or emperors, nor are they made by the people. They come upon mankind like Fate." If the present war was made by a convenient but irresponsible Fate, why does Dr. Carus persist in laying the blame for it upon this country?

Continued from second page of cover

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