

PROFESSOR BURGESS AND THE WAR.

A SPLENDID book on *The European War of 1914, its Causes, Purposes and Probable Results*, has been written by John William Burgess, formerly professor of constitutional and international law, and dean of the faculties of political science, philosophy and pure science in Columbia University. It is easily the clearest and best exposition of this great bewildering conflict that has entangled Germany. It is sketched by an American for Americans, discussing all the essential questions connected with the war from an American point of view; and it is unquestionable that Dean Burgess is easily the most competent judge as to the different problems of this war, their history and their significance for the United States, for indeed international law, and the political history of both continents, Europe and America, have been his specialty, and the reader feels that the author is speaking with authority. He writes:

"Europe is now writhing in the agony of a great labor pain of human development, and while God grant that we may escape active participation in the suffering, we cannot avoid having our own interests most profoundly involved in the outcome. Let us make sure that we correctly conceive what those interests are and how they will be best subserved."

Professor Burgess sees with keen penetration through the schemes of British diplomacy and calls our attention to facts which many of us either overlook or have forgotten. He has watched with amazement "the anti-German craze" which has swept over this country. This craze has been prepared under some sinister foreign influence, says Dean Burgess:

"Everything has been done, and done systematically, and done according to a seemingly long-matured and sinister plan, to give the American people not simply an erroneous, but an absolutely false, conception of German institutions, purposes, and aspirations."

In discussing the occasions of the war, he points out that "the

diplomacy of Sir Edward Grey struck out upon a line which if [it had] not [been] intended to bring war" . . . would be "evidence of great dullness in the mind of its inventor."

In speaking of the proximate causes, the history of Europe during the last century is passed in review. In the chapter following, the British and the Russian empires are described, and it is astonishing how similar the two are. We read:

"The Russian economic and political systems have more points of likeness with the British than is usually conceived. Substituting the Czar for the almighty House of Commons, and the Grand Ducal circle for the Cabinet, and keeping in mind that the connection of the dependencies with the nucleus of the empire is territorial instead of oversea, and that, therefore, the necessary organ of military power is a vast army instead of an overwhelming navy, and you have in substance the elements whose play and interplay bring about something like the same results and produce something like the same policy as in the British system. At least we may say that the two are admirably adapted to supplement each other in the conquest of the world. They possess between them now nearly half of it, and if they can only agree between themselves to let the one have the whole of Asia and continental Europe and the other all the rest, then possibly will the Millennium be ushered in and, with the Bear and the Lion in loving embrace, mankind may enjoy everlasting peace."

We are accustomed to think that England is the freest country in the world, but in its political government Parliament dominates the empire with a rod of iron. Professor Burgess says:

"There is no judicial body which can uphold the rights of the individual against an act of Parliament; in fact, against an act of Parliament no individual right exists. There is no independent executive which can veto, modify, check, or delay an act of Parliament. And the House of Lords can now no longer thwart or even modify permanently the will of the House of Commons, wielded by the majority party in that House, under the leadership of its Executive Committee, the Cabinet of Ministers."

"There is no longer a British constitution according to the American idea of constitutional government. With us constitutional government is limited government, government limited judicially by the rights of the individual, expressed and guaranteed by a written instrument, ordained by the sovereign people and interpreted and enforced by the courts, and limited politically by the constitutional distribution of powers between, and the coordination of, separate and independent departments of government. In this only true sense of constitutional government, the British Government is a despotism."

Germany, though having the most military institutions, compelling every man to bear arms for the defense of the country, is the least warlike people on earth.

"In the twenty years of her wonderful industrial development between the years 1890 and 1910, she acquired less than two thousand square miles of

foreign territory, while Great Britain acquired nearly two million, Russia almost as much, France six to eight hundred thousand, Belgium a million, and even the United States of America about one hundred and fifty thousand, and while Germany acquired the bits of this small area, in about every case, by purchase or lease, all the other countries seized most, if not all, of their gains by military conquest."

German militarism is much misunderstood and purposely misrepresented. It is quite democratic in its constitution. In this connection Dr. Burgess writes:

"The German army is not simply an organization for drill, discipline and fighting; it is also a school of general physical culture, through which the average life of German men has been increased by ten years and their average capacity for any kind of work by twenty-five per cent; it is a school of intellectual culture in which, besides military drill and tactics, mathematics, engineering, physics, geography and sanitation are taught to all the men; it is a school of moral culture which prevents demoralization and dissoluteness in the young men at the most critical age; it is a school of politeness in which rudeness of manners gives way to habits of courtesy; and it is a school of genuine patriotism through which the spirit of provincialism is made to yield to national loyalty. These educational and practical compensations overbalance the economic burden of German militarism and distinguish it from the militarism of Russia and France, although they are all based upon the same principle of universal military service."

We Americans owe much to German militarism, and it is worth while reprinting Professor Burgess's sketch of this chapter of American history. While we have suffered almost all our ills from the hands of British militarism and even more from British navalism, it is perfectly correct to say that the independence of the United States would not exist if German militarism had not given us strength to resist the forces that threatened to crush us, first our rights and liberties and then our union. Our author says:

"In our colonial period almost the entire western border of our country was occupied by Germans. It fell to them, therefore, to defend, in first instance, the colonists from the attacks of the French and the Indians. They formed what was known in those times as the Regiment of Royal Americans, a brigade rather than a regiment, numbering some four thousand men, and the bands led by Nicholas Herkimer and Conrad Weiser. Many of the men composing these bodies had been schooled in military tactics and discipline in their German fatherland and the service which they rendered in creating, organizing, and drilling this little army of some six thousand men cannot be overestimated. It enabled us to resist successfully the French and their Indian allies in the Seven Years War, which they made upon us from 1756 to 1763, and it gave a nucleus for our Revolutionary Army.

"At the outbreak of our War of Independence, Herkimer, Mühlenberg and Schlatter gathered the Germans in the Mohawk Valley and the Virginia

Valley together and organized them into companies for service. Baron von Ottendorff, another German soldier, recruited and drilled the famous Armand Legion. And when Washington's first bodyguard was suspected of treasonable sentiments and plans, it was dismissed and a new bodyguard consisting entirely of Germans was formed. This new bodyguard was supported by a troop of cavalry consisting entirely of Germans, under the command of Major Barth von Heer, one of Frederick the Great's finest cavalry officers. This troop stood by Washington during the entire war, and twelve of them escorted him to Mt. Vernon when he retired.

"But the greatest contribution of German militarism to the cause of our independence was Baron von Steuben, the famous aide de camp of Frederick the Great. He came to us at the most critical period of the revolution, that awful winter of 1777-78, when the remnant of our forces, a small band of ragged, starved, and discouraged militiamen, were trying to keep body and soul together at Valley Forge. He shared their sufferings. He introduced the Prussian organization, discipline, and drill among them. In a few months he made a real army out of them, which turned defeat into victory and made our independence possible. He then proceeded to the south and organized and disciplined the army for General Greene. He was present at the siege of Yorktown, and, as the only American officer who had ever witnessed the storming of a fortified place, he rendered most invaluable service, and it was his fortune to be in command in the trenches when the British flag was hauled down.

"And besides Steuben, there were Baron de Kalb, the most brilliant cavalry officer; Johann Schott, the most efficient artillery officer; General Lutterloh, the quartermaster general, and Christopher Ludwig, the master purveyor, all Germans, who had had the training of German militarism. It is not too much to say that German militarism did probably as much as any other thing to make our final triumph over Great Britain in our war for independence possible.

"But we have had another and more recent war for our national existence: the war of 1861-65, the Civil War, as we of the North called it; the war between the states, as they of the South called it. Let us see if German militarism played any part in that great struggle, and if so, what that part was.

"Every one, even only slightly acquainted with the history of this war, knows that the question of first and greatest importance which arose and demanded solution was that of the position in the struggle of the border slave states, namely: Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri. Mr. Lincoln's administration gave its attention most seriously and anxiously to the work of holding these states back from passing secession ordinances, and preventing them from being occupied by the armies of the southern confederacy.

"The most important among these states was Missouri. It was the largest; it reached away up into the very heart of the North; it commanded the left bank of the Mississippi for some five hundred miles; and the great United States arsenal of the West, containing the arms and munitions for that whole section of our country, was located in St. Louis. It had been stacked to the utmost capacity by the Secretary of War of the preceding administration, Mr. Floyd of Virginia, in the expectation that it would certainly fall into the hands of the South. The governor of the state, C. F. Jackson, manifested the stand he would take in his reply to President Lincoln's requisition for Missouri's

quota of the first call for troops. He defied the President in the words: 'Your requisition, in my judgment, is illegal, unconstitutional, and revolutionary in its object; inhuman and diabolical, and cannot be complied with.'

"It happened most fortunately, however, that the commandant of the arsenal was a staunch Unionist, Nathaniel Lyon. He immediately recognized the peril of the situation. He had only three men to guard the arsenal and there was in the city a full company of secessionist militia calling themselves Minute Men. Moreover, two companies of the state militia composed of Germans had shortly before been disarmed by the general of the state militia. Under these conditions Lyon turned to F. P. Blair for advice. Blair was acquainted with the views and sympathies of the inhabitants perfectly, and knew that he could rely only upon the Germans to save the arsenal and then the city and the state for the Union.

"The Germans of the city were organized in Turner-Unions, in which they had, besides practising gymnastics, kept up their knowledge of military drill and evolutions. After some hesitation, during which the movements of the secessionists to seize the arsenal became more and more threatening, Lyon called the German Turners into the arsenal, armed them thoroughly and garrisoned the place with them. Five regiments of Germans were now hastily organized and armed. They were the regiments commanded by Blair, Börnstein, Sigel, Schüttner, and Salomon. The arsenal and city were now safe, and some thirty thousand stands of arms with munitions were sent over into Illinois to arm the Illinois troops for the occupation of Missouri. This was the first great service which German militarism rendered to the cause of the Union in the perilous month of April, 1861.

"It would fill a volume to recite the services which followed this throughout those terrible four years, during which Union was preserved and slavery destroyed. Without the Germans, who almost to a man knew military drill, discipline and organization, I do not know how we could have prepared our armies for the work which they were called upon to do. The people of the North were unaccustomed to the use of arms, knew little of military organization, and were restive under discipline. We had our Westpointers and they were good, but far too few in number to train the vast hosts of raw recruits which were now called under arms. The two hundred thousand native born Germans who served in our armies were nearly all of them experienced in the use of arms and accustomed to the severities of military discipline. A very large proportion of these were engaged as officers in teaching our men to become soldiers. Among the taught were nearly four hundred thousand men of German descent, many of whom, through their practices in their Turn- and Schützen-Hallen, were the quickest of all our volunteers to become efficient soldiers.

"The German and German-American contingent in our armies amounted thus, first and last, to some five hundred thousand soldiers. They were led by men such as Heinzelman, Rosecrans, Schurz, Sigel, Osterhaus, Willich, Hartranft, Steinwehr, Wagner, Hecker, and a thousand others. Mrs. Jefferson Davis, the wife of the Confederate President, has often said to me that without the Germans the North could never have overcome the armies of the Confederacy; and unless that had been accomplished then, this continent would have been, since then, the theater of continuous war instead of the home of peace."

Such is our debt to German militarism. It makes our blood boil to read how the English have treated us, and while the prophecy is so often expressed that something terrible may come to us and to the world through German militarism, British navalism passes almost unchallenged. We have forgotten how formerly President Lincoln was maligned in England—at times in the same terms as are now applied to Kaiser Wilhelm—in those days when Great Britain favored the southern states, in an attempt to disrupt the Union into two hostile confederacies.

That Dr. Burgess should condemn most vigorously the export of arms and ammunition is but to be expected. In allowing this vile traffic to go on we Americans “will prolong the war without altering the final result.” He quotes Charles R. Bryson, president of the Electro-Steel Company of Pittsburgh, who justifies his refusal to fill any order. Mr. Bryson says: “We believe that the time is at hand when any firm or individual who accepts a contract to further add to the horrible slaughter now going on in Europe will do so to his own disgrace.” And Professor Burgess adds: “These words should be printed in gold and in letters large enough and upon a tower high enough to be seen all over these United States.”

Professor Burgess has followed up German victories, and he declares that in spite of our assistance, in furnishing war materials to the allies, “there is no power on the face of the earth sufficient to crush the German empire.”

In the chapter on Belgian Neutrality, Professor Burgess exposes the sinister British policy. Britain could have protected Belgium effectively if Sir Edward Grey had only given an unequivocal promise to remain neutral; but by refusing to give any promise and thereby threatening Germany to join in the war, he forced her to forestall the danger and break the neutrality of Belgium.

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Professor Burgess knows Germany not only as a traveler or globetrotter may know it, but as a specialist who has been a close student of social and political science. He bases his exposition upon exact data. The following quotations will give the reader a fair idea of the great significance of Germany for modern civilization:

“The present organization, economic and political, of the German Empire, bears in its constitution the significant title of the United States of Germany. Its economic system is by far the most efficient, most genuinely democratic which exists at the present moment in the world, or has ever existed. There is no great state in the world to-day in which there is so general and even

a distribution of the fruits of civilization, spiritual and material, among all the people as in the United States of Germany. And there is no state, great or small, in which the general plane of civilization is so high. Education is universal and illiteracy is completely stamped out; there are no slums, no proletariat, and no pauperism; prosperity is universal; and the sense of duty is the governing principle of life, public and private, from the highest to the lowest.

"German agriculture has been systematically developed, improved, and protected until it has reached the highest point of productiveness known to the world. It is a land of small proprietors, where relatively few great estates exist and where the relatively few tenant farmers hold leases of communal land rather than of land in private ownership. Forests are preserved for furnishing wood and lumber and protecting the water courses, but pasture land is limited and the greatest possible area is kept under the plow. Fostered by law, pursued with intelligence and individual interest, and enriched by science, German agriculture is so intensive that one acre of German land produces as much as three acres of Russian land, although originally poorer and more difficult to cultivate. Feed the people with home products, has been the first principle of the German system. With two hundred and eight thousand square miles of territory, an area not as great as our single state of Texas, the United States of Germany can sustain seventy millions of people.

"Upon this natural and healthy foundation for their economic system, consciously and tenaciously preserved, the Germans have built their manufactures and their commerce. They have built these carefully and scientifically, and with unwearying industry. They have not allowed factory life to make slums of their cities, nor to produce a proletariat. By requiring employers to contribute with the state and the employes to the establishment of insurance and pension funds, they have secured to labor its proper share in the wealth produced.

"The German Government is constitutionally limited, limited politically by the distribution of governmental powers between the Imperial Government and the States of the Union and by the distribution of the powers of the Imperial Government between the legislature and the executive, and limited judicially by the bills of individual rights in each of the State constitutions and by the fixing of certain of the fundamental duties and rights of the individual in the Imperial Constitution.

"One among these duties, which must also be regarded as a fundamental right, is the constitutional requirement upon every able-bodied male German to bear arms, and the fixing of the time for which his services are or may be required, which also means beyond which they may not be required. I call this a right as well as a duty. In the Constitution of the United States of America it is so treated and is declared as follows: 'As well-regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed.' It is the German way to put the duty first and treat the right as the attending incident. This is the keynote to the German character, political and economic as well as private. The rights guaranteed to the individual by this constitutional provision requiring universal military service are that there shall be no professional army separate from the general citizenship of the Empire with separate interests from those of citizenship.

"The German communal and local governmental organization is the most perfect known to modern politics. Under it the most honest, efficient, and prosperous communal life which the world has ever known has been produced and developed. No slums, no illiteracy, and no proletariat are to be found in any German city or commune, while the control is more genuinely democratic and the distribution of the fruits of civilization is more even and general than what prevails in any other country."

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The two concluding chapters of Professor Burgess's book are of special interest: one on the Austrian empire and the character of its aged sovereign, the Emperor Francis Joseph; the other on the Kaiser; the characterizations of these two rulers show both in a sympathetic light, and Dr. Burgess's view is based upon careful study and, in the case of the Kaiser, personal acquaintance as well.

We conclude our review with a quotation from the chapter on the character of the war lord of the Huns, Kaiser Wilhelm II. Dean Burgess says:

"The Emperor impressed me as a man of heart, of warm affections and of great consideration for the feelings and well-being of others. He can not, at least does not, conceal his reverence for, and devotion to, the Empress, or his love for his children, or his attachment to his friends. He always speaks of Queen Victoria and of the Empress Friedrich with the greatest veneration, and once when speaking to me of an old American friend who had turned upon him, he said that it was difficult for him to give up an old friend, right or wrong, and impossible when he believed him to be in the right. His manifest respect and affection for his old and tried officials give strong evidence of the warmth and depth of his nature. His consideration for Americans, especially, has always been remarkable. It was at his suggestion that the exchange of educators between the universities of Germany and of the United States was established, and it has been his custom to be present at the opening lecture of each new incumbent of these positions at the University of Berlin, and to greet him and welcome him to his work. He is also the first to extend to these foreign educators hospitality and social attention. . . .

"But the characteristic of the Emperor which struck me most forcibly is his profound sense of duty and his readiness for self-sacrifice for the welfare of his country. This is a general German trait. It is the most admirable side of German nature. And the Emperor is, in this respect especially, their Princeps. . . .

"One of his sons once told me that from his earliest childhood his father had instilled into his mind the lesson that devotion to duty and readiness for sacrifice were the cardinal virtues of a German, especially of a Hohenzollern. His days are periods of constant labor and severe discipline. He rises early, lives abstemiously, and works until far into the night. There is no day laborer in his entire empire who gives so many hours per diem to his work."