

POULTNEY BIGELOW AND THE KAISER.

It is difficult to understand that a man who was once a personal friend of Kaiser Wilhelm II does not take sides with him, but instead is opposed to his cause. Nevertheless, such is the case with Mr. Poultney Bigelow to whose letter we give precedence in the present number. It is rather strange that a man who knows Germany so well would turn against her on account of some faults in her social system and some of her institutions. Her officialdom can easily become the object of satire; in her police arrangements, some comical habits lend themselves to ridicule; the frequent announcement of *Verboten* displayed in public places makes the traveler smile; there is a peculiar awkwardness in German behavior which often verges on real lack of tact, causing misunderstandings that become most serious in diplomacy. But other nations too have their faults, and I must confess that German bluntness is more respectable than British diplomacy. Mr. Bigelow loves Germans, but he is opposed to certain features which deserve censure. If this war were a personal war of the Kaiser or of his courtiers, or of a war party, of jingoes or of German officialdom, I might accept Mr. Bigelow's position myself, but the war is waged for the purpose of putting a check upon the German people, upon their increase in prosperity and power, their welfare and progress, their growing superiority not only in poetry, theoretical science and art, but also in military strength and naval efficiency, and as I see things, the curse of the war will fall heaviest upon Great Britain. I am pro-German because the German people deserve sympathy, but I repeat, I am not anti-British. I know enough British people to love them as much as my German and French friends, but I am deeply sorry for the war, and I blame the British government for having started it, and here lies the reason why I differ from Mr. Poultney Bigelow.

It is an old habit of mine to give full and prominent publicity to the views which are contrary to my own conviction, and I wish that the readers of *The Open Court* should fully understand Mr. Bigelow's position and the reasons upon which it is based. I agree with him in many points; I have read some of his books with approval and endorse his critique of German mistakes, e. g., in their colonial policy, so it is but right to present here his view of Germany in the present great crisis.

P. C.