

## ENGLAND AND GERMANY IN THE GREAT EUROPEAN WAR.

BY CHARLES H. CHASE.

I HAVE read the last three numbers of *The Open Court* with a good deal of interest and disappointment as well. I cannot understand how men as high intellectually, and, as I believe, morally, as the editor of *The Open Court*, Professor Münsterberg, and others of German descent can defend the German emperor in the present great struggle in Europe. To me it is incomprehensible how men can take such a position. My ancestors, mostly English, have lived in this country since 1631, but on both sides of my ancestral tree I have a large admixture of Dutch and German blood. I say this to indicate to all who read this article that I am in a position to be unbiased by near descent from any of the belligerents.

I wish to state what I believe to be deep-seated influences which have actuated both English and Germans in the present struggle. The English and Germans are the same people, of the same Teutonic blood, divergent only by the varying environment of the last fifteen hundred years. In England there has been a continuous struggle for liberty during all that period. To go into the causes which have made England the cradle of Anglican liberty, the highest and best in all the world, that which guarantees to every individual the right to do any and everything which will not interfere with the equal rights of his fellow,—to go into details respecting these causes, would require a volume. I can only say that Anglican liberty has been a development which has affected favorably every country where the English language is spoken, as well as every land over which the English flag floats. India and Ireland are only just coming into their rights; but the time is not far distant when they, too, will enjoy the same measure of Anglican liberty as is now enjoyed by the Scotch, the Welsh, the citizens of the United States, Canada, and the Boers of South Africa. Within

the few short years of English government these latest inheritors of Anglican liberty are, with few exceptions, well pleased with English suzerainty, which gives them greater liberty than they ever before enjoyed. England, too, has been a robber state; but the fangs of her absolutism have been drawn in the course of an age-long struggle. In her insular position what might have become Cæsarism, has through the ages grown beautifully less.

Cæsarism (or militarism as generally designated) has been the dominating influence of continental countries, age-long in France, Austria, Spain, Italy, Germany and Russia. In France, Italy, and other Romance countries there has been a gradual breaking away from Cæsarism; but in Russia, Turkey, Austria, and Germany we have Cæsarism in its unadulterated form, where the individual has no rights, no freedom in any proper acceptation of the term. The appeal to force in the duel is a fair indication of their ideas of honor. Here a soldier can run a civilian through with his saber, with impunity; the latter has no rights as against the former. In these countries every man is a slave to some one who is his overlord; except that the Kaiser, the Czar, the Sultan, the Emperor acknowledges no master but God, of whom he is vicegerent.

That the Kaiser and the Austrian emperor wanted this war, planned for it, there can be no kind of doubt for one who has investigated the ante-bellum conditions. The proof is to found in a thousand documents and volumes. When the Kaiser applied to the bankers for a war loan a few years ago, they protested that they could not float it; they were not ready. The Kaiser enjoined them with: "The next time I call I want you to be ready." Prussia's national egoism and egotism has been growing ever since she humbled Austria in 1866. These two great robbers joined three years before in wresting Schleswig and Holstein from Denmark. It was inevitable that they should fall out; for honor among thieves is ephemeral. The seven weeks of war in 1866 was provoked by Prussia, to take from Austria her share of the plundered territory. Prussia with her needle-gun was victorious. Then she sought a quarrel with her ancient enemy, France. The all too willing usurper emperor, Louis Napoleon, influenced by his empress, was equally anxious for the fray. France was humbled, and emperors in France became anathema. In 1874, Prussia was again possessed with the itch for war with France, too rapidly rising out of her valley of humiliation. But England and Russia warned Prussia; and the recently united Germany was not ready for a struggle with England and Russia. But for several years the most popular toast in the German mili-

tary ranks has been "To the hour," the hour when the wished-for struggle should come with her now inveterate enemy, England. England, mistress of the seas, England whose flag floated over one-fifth of the earth's surface, whose commercial trade was with every land and people, was a standing menace to Germany's advancement. She it was whom Germany must crush, in order to carry out the ideas of world empire by which Germany is to impress her culture upon the rest of the world.

In 1831 Hegel, the last of the great school of German idealists who dominated and led the thought of Germany, passed away. From idealism and the moral code taught by the great school of Kant, Fichte and their followers, Germany has degenerated into the crass materialism of Haeckel and the neo-Darwinians. The materialistic philosophies have dominated German thought for more than half a century. Might is the only right of her universities; and her ethics may be properly denominated "hog ethics,"—take what you want when you can, and don't be particular how you get it.

The teachings of her historian Treitschke, her philosopher Nietzsche, and her materialistic philosophers and scientists, led by Haeckel, are bearing their legitimate fruit. Germany has appealed to the sword, and she (at least her autocratic government) will perish by the sword.

Prussia and Austria have been properly criticized for their autocratic and arbitrary governments, which deny to the ordinary citizen any rights as such, his whole duty being to obey the powers that be in the state. Their people are intelligent, progressive, peace-loving, and liberty-loving; but the only force in these countries that makes for liberty is the socialist party. This party might have been successful in pushing forward the struggle for liberty, but for the crisis which enabled the militarists to bring on a general European war, the only thing which could put off the fall of Cæsarism, and that only in the event of German success. The defeat of Germany in the present struggle means the rapid decline and fall of Cæsarism, imperialism, militarism and autocratic government, by whatever name called.

The boasted culture of Germany has degenerated from the idealism of a hundred years ago to mere materialistic industrialism; her ethics from the intuitional axioms of right and wrong to a base system of energetics, which makes force, energy, the only criterion of human action. In the adoption of Darwinism most German philosophers out-Darwin Darwin. Darwin recognized at least three

factors of evolution, in his later writings more; but the neo-Darwinians recognize but the one negative factor which selects the stronger by the destruction of the weaker. The inevitable result of such a philosophy is to abolish all moral principles and to paraphrase the beatitudes, so well stated by Professor Cramb, as follows:

“Ye have heard how in old times it was said, Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth; but I say unto you, Blessed are the valiant, for they shall make the earth their throne. And ye have heard men say, Blessed are the poor in the spirit; but I say unto you, Blessed are the great in soul and free in spirit, for they shall enter into Valhalla. And ye have heard men say, Blessed are the peacemakers; but I say unto you, Blessed are the war-makers, for they shall be called, if not the children of Jahve, the children of Odin, who is greater than Jahve.”

I am driven to the conclusion that the most potent cause of the present war is the shift of Germany from idealism to materialistic mechanicalism (energetics) and industrialism. The common people of Germany are still untainted by this philosophic poison, and in them lies her hope. Both Austria and Russia are priest-ridden, and their condition is about that of England in the time of Henry the Eighth or earlier. Later claimants to absolute power in that country were either beheaded or driven from the realm. That is the course which events must take, rapidly or slowly, in Russia, Turkey, Austria, and Germany; and it is to be hoped that the present great struggle may bring about this greatly to be desired end.