

The Blunders of Edward VII. And How To Repair Them

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I.

Literary criticism at its best is an uncertain art; when it is shallow it is a dangerous snare.

Many and pompous have been the criticasters who have insisted on the dissimilarity between the Diary of Marie Bashkirtseff and the "Leaves from the Journal of Our Life in the Highlands." Max Beerbohm, truly enough, refers to the latter as "that masterpiece of poignant introspection and self-analysis," but I sometimes feel as if Max Beerbohm, like his own Matthew Arnold, were not always wholly serious.

If I am right, it is another case of the true word spoken in jest, for the Russian artist and the English Empress has at least one more important quality in common. Each, like Kipling's gorilla had too much ego in her cosmos. Neither could conceive the world as anything but a toy made to please her.

Each regards opposition as an incomprehensible obstacle, and develops a Manichaeian theory to account for a spot on her pinafore. Queen Victoria humbling herself before her Maker, and resigning herself to the will of God, falls not far short of saying: "Father, I forgive You, for You know not what You do!"

She treated the Prince Consort as a child treats a doll, and when the Prince of Wales began to grow up and have a soul of his own, she felt aggrieved.

The result was naturally an estrangement. Edward on his side began to wonder whether the old woman was immortal. She kept his pocket-money down, and drove him to the money-lenders.

Worse than that she drove him to recognize wealthy persons who were socially impossible. This matter came to a head. The Daily Telegraph, at that period a paper of some standing in England, published a historic leader.

Did the Prince of Wales cheat at cards, or did he not? was asked openly. If the suspicion were not laid to rest once and for all, royalty could not survive in England. So said the chief royalist organ.

The blow to the old Queen was terrible. Her whole domestic policy had been to aggrandize the throne. She had played on English Chivalry with masterly skill; she had doubled the number of peers during her reign so as to broaden the base on which she rested. (The fallacy appeared later; she had merely cheapened the peerage.)

In this crisis, then, the only possible course was taken. A scapegoat was selected in the person of Sir William Gordon-Cumming, who gallantly sacrificed himself to the honor of the heir-apparent. The characteristic farce of English jurisprudence was played to crowded houses. The Prince was whitewashed, and the dynasty saved.

But, as Solomon sagely saw, you cannot bleach a Hottentot, and the chloride of lime employed is itself apt to be malodorous. The intelligent classes in England were not fooled for a moment. Fortunately, they were as politically negligible then as they are now. So we heard, and heeded not, the constant scandals connected with the Prince's visits to Paris; the peculiar fashion of neckwear set by the Princess, and the tragic end of Lord Randolph Churchill, were matters of no importance.

In all this the Prince was hardly to be blamed. A Cato might have absolved him. He felt himself competent and was ambitious. Before him was a sorry line of forebears Thackeray had branded the Georges to eternity. He wished to make his mark. And the old Queen played with him like Punch. No sooner did he pop his head up, than whack!

She was jealous, and being a prude, quite out of sympathy with the broadening tendencies of the time, she was also afraid. So the thwarted and disgruntled Edward vacillated between Newmarket Heath and the Café Anglais, honestly envious of the scope of people like Roberts. Another factor, too, entered his mind. Hope deferred maketh the heart sick; and the worst of it is, that sometimes hope deferred becomes hope disappointed. He might die before his mother; and, for another thing, there was a vague rumor even among the people – and more than a rumor in those exalted circles which take dynasties seriously – that the German Kaiser had some claim upon the Crown. I happened to be in St. Petersburg when a hint of this sort in an after-banquet speech of Wilhelm II. caused the British Ambassador to “leave the room in a marked manner,” and I well remember the following nine day’s storm in the diplomatic teacup.

After all, the British people had turned out their own King for a German Elector – that was why he was Prince of Wales. And he felt that, except on Epsom racecourse, he was not much more popular than James II. History might repeat itself. All his urbanity and tact were thrown away on the Nonconformist conscience. He did not yet realize that Nonconformity was moribund.

And all he could do was to wait. Once he was King, he would be popular enough, he thought. Rightly; in a year he was the most popular King since Charles II. The real people of England, the people that rarely vote, and never write to newspapers, love a broad-minded, jolly King. To be a good sport covers a multitude of sins.

So on that point he felt safe. The only danger was that Cousin Wilhelm might pop up before he was in the saddle. The natural consequence in his mind, a sound, clear mind, was a growing irritation during the years of waiting, whenever Germany became obtrusive. Little by little, the idea took shape; he was ambitious and a Germanophobe. The resultant of these two forces was a

determination to go down into history as the King who conquered Germany.

Once formulated, the purpose grew consciously. His wits, sharpened by the Jews who were his bosom friends, saw how to execute the project. (Here was another pinprick by the way. He "insisted" in Austria on being accompanied to a hunting party by Baron Hirsch. They found themselves alone at the rendezvous. Such an insult would have drawn from a man far less proud than the Prince of Wales a secret oath of deadly vengeance.)

It may well have been, however, that all such plans were in the condition of a super-saturated solution of Glauber's salts. One touch of a needle, one focusing point, and suddenly all crystallizes. If so, such a determining factor was supplied by the incidents attending the Jameson Raid.

It is not certain that the Prince of Wales was privy to this affair. It is likely. At least it is doubtful whether the responsible Ministers of the Crown would have dared to befool their Sovereign unless they had been assured of exalted support and sympathy. The whole policy of Chamberlain was to thwart German expansion in Africa. So much was known to everyone. But the resort is so fantastic a device as the Raid argues such secrecy that Ministers were unable to trust their own information department. The Raid was evidently foreseen in Berlin as well as Pretoria. The famous telegram of the Kaiser, which has puzzled so many politicians, was a perfectly simple move. It was an inexpensive method of calling the British bluff. It forced the Government to explain that this elaborate expedition was a pure accident such as might happen to any one! It forced the Government to appoint a commission of the usual fake type to investigate the affair, and to report that nobody who lived on the spot knew anything about it. The officials had been appointed in pure pity, because they were blind and

deaf. The High Commissioner had supposed that Jameson was merely going after springbok!

Now there is no doubt that the Queen was really in ignorance of all that was going on. The Kaiser followed up his telegram by a private letter to Her Majesty that he knew for a positive fact that the plot was hatched in the Colonial Office. The Queen indignantly replied that, on the contrary, she knew absolutely that it was not so, that Mr. Chamberlain would never dare so gross an offence against her. (Indeed it amounted to high treason.) To all this she pledged her royal word. The Kaiser politely replied that he accepted the statement, that he was heartily glad to know that he had been misinformed, and that there the incident ended.

The imperial moustache must have twinkled as the wearer wrote it; for he thought he could count upon the patriotism of Sir William Harcourt.

This gentleman was indeed of the true breed. In his veins ran the blood of the Plantagenets. As far as England was concerned, the Guelphs were parvenus. And to him England naturally looked in this crisis. England could trust a Harcourt, as she could not trust a Chamberlain. The screwmaker of Brummagem was often cheered by the mob; the Hampshire squire was above all such. He was no demagogue. He was a real liberal; Chamberlain was a renegade from Radicalism. So the best elements of English society turned to Sir William. He would have the truth.

Consequently, he was prompted on every point. Proofs of the complicity of the Colonial Office were put into his hands. He began his cross-examination. It was immediately evident that he spoke from knowledge. Consternation fell like thunder upon the conspirators. Hurried whispers, slips of paper scrawled in desperation: the Commission was indisposed, and adjourned the proceedings!

Unfortunately, the sun was due to rise next day, and the newspapers to appear. The arch-plotters sat quaking in a hotel in Bond Street, abject.

Yet that evening the miracle happened. Lord Cross called on Sir William Harcourt, and held out his hands. "You have it all your own way," he said in effect. "You can ruin Chamberlain, and triumph over the Government, if you like. Only, you will prove the Queen was a liar." And he told the story just related of her correspondence with the Kaiser.

Sir William hesitated. He might save England for the time from her gang of swindlers, but at the cost of what a rude jolt to the Throne! In the long run this must be worse. The thieves would ultimately hang themselves; the Constitution must be saved.

So the next day it was Sir William that was indispensed; his cross-examination was first postponed, and then forgotten. The newspapers were tipped off not to comment. The Commission announced gloriously that everybody was either ignorant of his own acts, or ill-guided by a natural but mistaken patriotism. In the meanwhile, God was in His heaven, and all was right with the world.

One is incredibly informed that some people believed all this. In the background, however, the fight continued. The Queen, bound by her own letter, could do nothing. She foresaw the Boer War, and could take no steps to prevent it.

All these things passed before the eyes of the Prince of Wales. He naturally inclined to the side of his friends, and with great perspicuity picked out Germany as the enemy.

But great perspicuity is not the whole armor of a diplomatist. To understand the true nature of his error we must first make considerations of greatness.

II.

The passive side of wisdom is understanding. Unless you "see life steadily and see it whole", you err when you take action. Great men are distinguished by these qualities, that they can separate the essential from the accidental, and that they can study nature without personal bias.

They look first at anything without reference to their own interests, so as to see what it really is. Only when they have a complete knowledge of it, do they coordinate it with the ego.

These rules are universal. In diplomacy they are of prime importance, because diplomacy never ends. One problem always begets another. The great man never forgets first principles.¹ A great chess player will not embark on any combination, however tempting, if in doing so he has to violate the main canons of strategy. "Take much thought rather than a distant pawn with your queen," said the wise, brilliant old James Mason.

And thus it is necessary for a statesman to consider not merely the balance of power in Europe, but on the planet, and to keep that idea subconscious yet luminous and dominant before he decides even to annex a barren rock a thousand miles from land. Victory in a war is not always victory. Spain is stronger, America weaker, as the result of their conflict. It is one of the ironies of the gods that nations usually fight against their own best interests. However, it is not possible in this short paper to consider the planet with more than eagle-glance. Such a study would demand a lifetime, and fill a volume. (No man, perhaps, could spend a lifetime better). Here we can only show what Edward VII. saw, and what he did not see, in European politics.

He was astute, but he was not wise. Randolph Churchill "forgot Goschen," and Edward VIII. forgot the partition of Poland.

III. (a)

The really great diplomatist, if he approached the globe from Mars, would first be struck by the fact that four-fifths of the surface is covered with water. If there be an amphibian race, he would say, that race must be master of the planet. From a military point of view its advantage must be overwhelming. Its soldiers could concentrate at every important point in the world and give the land dwellers not an hour's warning. Even if repulsed, they could retire to inaccessible vastnesses to renew the attack at their leisure.

(b)

Learning from his angel guide that there was no such race, our statesman would next consider continents.

He would see Africa as a huge, but inert bulk. No native nation in the whole continent shows an activity or any disposition to enlarge its borders. Or, if so, the natural obstacles are sufficient to inhibit any desire firmer than a hashish-dream.

Africa, then, can only be politically important as booty.

(c)

He next glances at Australia. The distance of the continent isolates it from the rest of the world, and its nature isolates it even from itself. It is little more than a ring of seaboard towns. It is really less a continent than Japan. It has no "interior," but wilderness.

(d)

He turns to South America, and finds it very like Africa. There is the same lack of internal communication. There is the same lack of national initiative. The races, too, are mixed. The elements of political conflict on the grand scale are absent.

(e)

He fixes somewhat more intently his gaze on North America. Here he finds a community of enormous numbers, politically as well as commercially active. He sees it ambitious, proud, touchy. But its members are not homogenous. The negro race has overrun the South. The Jew has fortified himself in New York and other cities. Another section is overwhelmingly Teutonic; a third contains the dwindling and deciduous Anglo-Saxon. The Irishman has captured politics; the Italian sways labor.

There is no true heart in the country. There is no true family life and no real God; no true social life and no real government. The States are always at loggerheads with the Federal authorities. There is no uniform law, even on so vital a matter as marriage. There is no uniform faith; there is neither head nor heart. America is anarchy.

And the raw material is uncompromising. America increases more by immigration than by breeding and the immigrant as a rule is a weakling forced out of Europe by economic pressure. So instead of one national tradition in religion, ethics, or politics, there are a dozen, all equally respectable. There is a superficial agreement on half a hundred ideas which are really little better than cant phrases, ideas which the first stress of conflict would shatter.

There is no national honor; peace at any price is the insistent wish.

There is no national morality; to sell goods is the only aim.

They have all the forms of civilization and none of the essence. Our statesmen would consequently conclude that this country might matter one day, but, for all its activity, not yet. No continent can act as a unity until it has solved its own internal problems; and America has hardly yet begun to formulate them.

(f)

He next sees Asia. Here is the only civilized country in the world, China, with its record of two thousand years of peace. Here, too, is India, a geographical expression as incapable as America of acting as a unity. No other part of Asia but Japan has size and number. India and China are separated by country so lofty and so wild that there are not a dozen white men alive to-day who have made the journey direct by land from one to the other. The same remark applies to the communications of North and South Asia. The continent is thus inert save for Japan.

(g)

It has been necessary to write these platitudes. People generally do not realize the basis in physical geography, in orography, and in ethnology, of present political conditions.

It is no accident that Europe is the storm centre; for, in casting his eye on Europe and allowing it to rest there, our statesman sees a condition of affairs utterly different from that of any other continent.

Europe is inhabited by active and ambitious races with hardly an exception. Each of these is tenacious of religion, tradition, language, culture, and is unified, patriotic, often aggressive. Each hates all the rest. When I crossed China my Indian servants were much less in-

tolerant of the Chinese than is the average English tourist of the average French innkeeper.

The interior of Europe is mainly a cultivated plain. The Alps and the Carpathians are the only natural frontiers presenting important obstacles; and now-a-days these are traversed in every direction by roads and railways. Nearly all these countries, again, press upon each other by virtue of internal expansion, the increase of their populations.

IV.

Let our diplomatist now regard Europe in detail with his most philosophic eye. He will dismiss certain countries as not dangerous to the common welfare on account of their not feeling the need of expansion.

France, with its falling population; Spain with its idle population; Greece and Italy, in their flickering decadence, are not to be feared.

Portugal is hemmed in by its big neighbor; Switzerland by its mountain ranges and its tradition, as well as by the certainty of destruction at its first move. Holland, Belgium, Sweden, Norway and Denmark are in the same class. The Balkans are too small and too well balanced both by Turkey and by internecine hatreds to threaten their neighbors. They were only the fuse of the still-exploding bombshell. By a process of exclusion, then, we see only two dangerous forces in all Europe – on one side, Germany and Germanic Austria; on the other, Russia.

And as we look at the map the frightful disproportion of Russia almost shocks us. It is pretty well half of Europe, and this is but the flower; the root is in Asia and reaches clear across it. Russia is nearer to the United States than Panama is! There is a third great power, a power in a sense more disproportionate still; that is England. But a sane England is not dangerous to the balance of power, for Continental occupation would be im-

possible for England; it would be suicide. From an honest England, vowed to her own true interests, Europe would have nothing to fear. On the contrary, it is England that should hold the balance of power; and while she is intact, she must do so, since geography rules strategy. Sedulous to defend herself, her one aim should be to prevent any predatory power from upsetting the natural order of things.² She might be as predatory as you please, herself, but not in any place where a Continental power could get at her. Henry VI. lost nearly all his French possessions; Mary lost Calais; Charles II. wisely gave up Dunkirk. Gibraltar would be untenable if Spain were an aggressive power. India is only guarded by the Pamirs, and Canada by U.S.A. anarchy. England is really hemmed in by the sea as much as Switzerland by her mountains.

So in the dear dead days beyond recall, when England had statesmen and not politicians in her councils, we find a perfectly consistent and conservative policy. Before 1812 Russia was hardly on the map of Europe. Its people were boors and sots; its distances untraversable, as Napoleon found. It took one back to the Stone Age. It mattered no more to European politics than the moon did.

But times changed. Napoleon made Russia accessible. Leipsic made Russia important. No sooner was the great emperor safely at St. Helena than Pitt took another look at the map. He saw the obvious, and made a note in his diary to beware of bears. From that moment the persistent policy of England has been dictated by the dread of Russia. She saw the Indian adventure compromised; and that was next to her heart (which is in her pocket).

For India, and the route to India³ she gave up everything. She supported the Turk in good report and in evil report; she joined hands with Napoleon in the Crimea; she resisted Russian aggression tooth and nail. There was no principle unviolated, no treaty regarded, if

only she could stem the Russian tide. Christian England allied with the infidel Turk and the pagan Japanese! Who cares? Does not the Greek Church spell Credo with a K?

But besides these ill-reputed allies whom has England? The Roof of the World, as regards a direct attack; that, and a strong Afghanistan. (Observe the agony of England to put a docile Amir at Kabul.) In the East, Japan is subsidized and excited against Russia; but these are later developments, rendered necessary only by the building of the Trans-Siberian Railway. On the south, as we have said, Turkey, and, of late, Persia; on the north, the ice of the Arctic Ocean. On the west – all Europe. Then England needs unconquerable Europe as a buffer State. And the actual frontier must be of hardened steel.

The proper barrier was Poland. England needed an heroic Poland. The savage patriotism of the Poles was her sure shield. And when Poland was finally divided the European War of 1914 became a certainty. Whoever consented to that division was a criminal lunatic; and his heirs must have been in power in France, Belgium and England when they threw in their lot against Germany instead of for her.

V.

I said earlier in this article that Edward VIII. forgot the partition of Poland. The meaning of that remark is now clear. With Poland gone, the terrible salient of Warsaw thrust like a spear at the heart of Europe. There was the shield of the Carpathians to the south; there was the net of the Mazurian Lakes to the north. West was no obstacle but the sheer danger of lengthening the communications. Yet this was enough. Russia so clearly saw the impossibility of moving in the face of a strong Germany and a united Austria that she made the desperate efforts of the fifties to the south. In 1866

she was still so impotent to deal with the lack of communications to the west that Germany could coolly attack Austria without fear of interruption. What did the great Bismark do with his victory? He refused to humble Austria. He wanted the flank held, for he knew the real enemy. And when in 1870 he consummated his work by building up the Empire, what did England do? She held aloof and let him smash France at his leisure. Why? Because her statesmen realized that Germany was her necessary friend.

In 1870 railways were beginning to assume importance. It was realized that sooner or later Russia would build them, and that Russia was not only on the map, but near the middle of it. The Trans-Siberian Railway puts Moscow a long way west of the median line from Brest to Vladivostok.

Yes, English statesmen realized that after 1870 Berlin was the centre of gravity in Europe. If you look at the map of Europe, and imagine it a map of something small, you see at once that Germany-Austria is a buffer state. Destroy or diminish these, and there is nothing even comparable to Russia. Hence the cynical abandonment of Napoleon III. to his fate.

Then Germany, against the counsel of Bismark, made an error. She annexed Alsace-Lorraine. She had military reasons for the act, and these outweighed Bismark's sane political sense. I shall lament later a similar blunder in 1914. But mere ethics be damned; right or wrong, it is no odds. The consequence is the bias of the bowl. It left a thorn in the crown of peace. The arguments of ethnologists, historians (and fools generally) should not weigh here. The peace of 1871 ought to have been turned into an alliance. Germany had won Austria for her ally even to this day; she should have done the same with France.

Austria must be sympathetic to her by race, and France by culture. There was nothing to fear from France, but the ghost of Napoleon. It was only the old

wounds of the first decade of the nineteenth century that bled afresh at Gravelotte and Sedan. It would have been better to have kept in mind the correspondence of Voltaire and Frederick!

VI.

However, the whole of this argument passed over the head of Edward VIII. He only saw Germany as the one strong military power in Europe. He saw her reaching out for naval power. He saw her trade increasing, apparently⁴ at the expense of England. He saw "designs" on his own crown. And he saw nothing more. With the utmost astuteness and tact he went to work to isolate and destroy Germany. It was the cleverest, the most successful and the most suicidal piece of work ever accomplished in history. It was the complete reversal of all previous policy — just at the moment when railways emphasized the necessity of that policy.

It would have been so simple merely to let Germany alone. Alsace-Lorraine was giving enough trouble to prevent an extension of that principle of blunderplunder. England should have helped Germany to colonial expansion. She should have striven to heal the breach with France. If she wanted to make trouble for anyone, she should have made it for the sake of Poland.

Edward VII. was so brilliant a diplomat that only personal rancour could have blinded him to the plain message of the map. And I give him this credit: I believe that if he had lived until 1913 he would have seen his error.

VII.

The Balkan war would have restored a political Bartimaeus to sight, one might have thought. The fall of Abdul Hamid and the subsequent and consequent ruin of Turkey were signs "which, if they had been graven with

needles upon the eye-corners, were a warning to such as would be warned." Indeed, there was enough good sense in Sir Edward Grey to make him acquiesce in a German Albania, had that been possible. As we know, it was not. But so startled was the inner group of political thinkers that I was positively assured in January, 1914, by a gentleman deep in the confidence of the Kaiser that an Anglo-German alliance was only a matter of months! Germany sincerely thought so, and desired it passionately; hence the storm of hate aroused by Sir Edward Grey's insane duplicity.

Conceive of Palmerston in the Elysian Fields hearing that an Anglo-French fleet is bombarding the Dardanelles in order to open Constantinople to the Tsar!

It is against all political sense.

VIII.

Let us proceed to the congenial task of the reconstruction of the map of Europe!

In these days Germany is being blamed in many quarters. Let me at least play the piccolo in the anti-German band! Above, I blamed her for allowing the military advantages of possessing Metz and Strasbourg to outweigh the political advantages of winning the friendship of her western neighbor.

I accuse her of even worse mismanagement in 1914. The perfect statesman, had he been in absolute power, would have looked to permanent and not to temporary conditions.

Germany was hemmed in by an unscrupulous coalition of political maniacs; but she had a very simple resource. There was no quarrel with France or with England or with Belgium. The enemy of Germany was the enemy of all Europe — Russia. Had I been in power I should have said:

"Monsieur le Président, we propose to defend our frontier if you attack it. We have no enmity for you, and

no provocation shall induce us to send a single Uhlan beyond the black and white posts.

"We sacrifice all the military advantage of taking you unprepared, of overrunning Belgium, of holding all Northeastern France, as we could easily do.

"Our quarrel is with Russia. Russia has treacherously intrigued against us in the Balkans, has turned our flank and rendered our position untenable. She has deliberately upset the peace proclaimed last year; she has overthrown Albania. She has even resorted to the foulest murders to gain her ends. Germany and Austria are your fortress against the savage Tartar hordes; leave us alone and we will hurl them back as we hurled the Turk from Vienna."

Had France and England joined against her after such a declaration the world would have stood aghast. They would have been compelled to undertake a campaign of aggression. They would have been forced to elaborate and provide unconvincing explanations of obscure and dishonorable treaties.

However, the plan of the General Staff prevailed. The allies were able to misrepresent the intentions of Germany in a perfectly plausible manner. The press was able to utter its barbaric yawn about neutrality and to spread its ridiculous calumnies about "atrocities." (Invading armies always commit atrocities in the press. And of course invasion is itself an atrocity.) Nobody would have cared – or does care, now it has happened – about atrocities so far off as Poland. And the abnegation of Germany in refusing to attack would have been patent to the world and must have won its sympathy. In the face of such an attitude, I say fearlessly that England would never have dared to declare war. And the United States, which is naturally pro-German, must have been most friendly neutral. As it is, the public opinion of most responsible people sways toward the Allies.

I may be told that I overrate the intelligence of the world at large; that all this would not have been appar-

ent; that Germany would have thrown away her trump cards for nothing.

If so, I apologize to the General Staff, and increase my contempt for the world at large, though that means straining my faculty of contempt to the breaking point.

In any case, the deed is done. It is no good crying over spilt milk. Our task is to reconstruct Europe so that these disturbances may not recur.

IX.

To do this needs only the general recognition of one salient fact, the fact which has been insisted on repeatedly in this article. The enemy of Europe is Russia.

It is Russia, and Russia only, that stands to gain any advantage in this war. True, Poland is invaded, but that merely saves the Tsar from his constant preoccupation – that of befooling and massacring Poles.

The French have a bare foothold on some scraps of German territory, but a sixth of their own country is in Teuton hands. Belgium is pulped, and the flank turned to the north. England is besieged by submarines and sweats daily in fear of zeppelins. German commerce on the high seas has been destroyed – that merely ruins British commerce.

But Russia has conquered quite a slice of Austria;⁵ Russia has destroyed the balance of the Balkans in her own interest: Russia has a claw poised over Constantinople.

Russia has cleared the way to Egypt. Russia will be able to cut England from India within ten years.

Russia must absorb Hungary; Austria must crumble. One can already foresee Pan-Slavism unifying the whole of Eastern Europe, Balkans and all, and reaching mercifully out to the Atlantic. She has stolen Finland; she will steal Scandinavia. If she wins the Dardanelles she will next complain that Gibraltar throttles her commerce.

How Petrograd must laugh at Paris and London! Suppose Germany sued for peace tomorrow, what could the Allies demand? France, a few square miles of land; England, some quite impracticable limitation of the fleet; Belgium, the snows of yester-year. But Russia could and would demand everything; and could and would get it. It is not merely the interest of Europe, but the interest of humanity, to check her.

X.

Russia is a country not well known; but I know her. As far back as 1897 I traveled Russia to acquire the language. I visited Moscow and the interior still further East as recently as 1913. I know her.

The Russian aristocracy is a foreign element. The middle classes are all Jews or Germans. The peasant is an ignorant fanatic sot. He rarely reads or writes. He works only to obtain enough money to drink himself into insensibility. He has no better initiative, no thrift, no energy. His religion is no better than the fetish worship of West Africa. In August, 1913, I knew an Englishwoman of good position raped by two Russians in a perfectly reputable hotel in Moscow. She had no redress.

Much-lauded Russian art is either mere barbarian Asiatic crudeness or base imitation. Russian poets ape Byron; Russian painters copy Bougereau or Luke Fildes! Russian novelists model themselves on Zola; Russian liberals quote Rousseau!

The Russian ballet is stolen from Gordon Craig and Isadora Duncan, since it ceased to thieve the old conventional French and Italian ideas. Russian music is equally derivative and second-hand.

There is no genuine art in Russia but Tartar art. That I like, because I like savage waste and savage splendor. I gloat over a cave man's reindeer bone, or a wooden idol from Dahomey. I find something true, passionate, elemental in such things. But I do not confuse

them with the master works of Beethoven and Velasquez, and Shakespeare, and Michael Angelo.

The Russian is a brutal, imitative beast. It is not necessary to insist on the feelings of his German neighbor. That neighbor is sober, thrifty, industrious, educated, organized. He feels as every man on outpost duty feels. Behind him is the Fatherland; in front of him is murder.

The Russian is notoriously sly and treacherous. He has a secret loathing and contempt for civilization. There is a superstition that most Russians speak either German or French. Go to Moscow armed with these languages, and see by whom you will be understood except by the head waiters in the best and newest hotels. Only by doctors and lawyers, who are all German Jews.

The Russians have a reputation for hospitality and courtesy to strangers. Ask your way of a Russian in the street and clean your mind of that beautiful dream!

There was never a country less international, never a religion so barren.

There has not been one single Russian thinker of the first class in history. If you say Mendelieff, I say he stole his one idea from Priestly. If you say anything else, I only laugh at you till you begin to feel your own stupidity. Russia is the headquarters of plagiarism.

The Germans feel this, being neighbors. The English feel this, being rivals for world-hegemony. The French will feel this, being unpaid creditors, before the world is ten years older.

What is to be done?

XI.

Looking always steadily at the map of Europe, never at the political roulette wheel, we can easily fix our main principle. Our aim will be duplex; we must reduce two excesses — Russia on land, England on water. If this be

done no dog will be able to bark "German militarism." There will no longer be any need for so vast and so efficient an army. Europe will be able to resume its social progress. Germany's natural love of industry, agriculture, science and all forms of art will be able to develop unhampered by the eternal fear of war.

I see no great harm in Russia's expansion in Manchuria. The distances are so great, the mountains and the deserts so difficult to pass, and the claimants so severe, that it is unlikely that such territory can serve as a storm-centre. But Russia is no more an European power than Turkey; she has no business on a civilized continent. However, while she is passive she does no harm. But Europe must be free of her menace or the history of the last hundred years is mainly the history of Russian aggression. Every war within the last century has been waged on account of Russian aggression, with the exception of the wars started by Napoleon III. under the impression that he was his own grandfather.

Whose purpose then, is briefly this — that Western Europe should unite against the East. As a matter of fact, Germany could whip Russia in a single summer if she were free to withdraw her troops from the western frontier. The aim should be to drive Russia behind the Duna and the Dnieper, the conquered territory being handed to the Poles to govern. Germany and Austria might, if they wished, straighten the frontier by the annexation of Warsaw.

I am aware that this is a giant proposal; but we live in Titan times. And lesser measures will assuredly result in a continuance of war. If Western Europe will not unite to drive Russia back, Russia will force them to do so one day when they are weaker.

The practical measure which I advocate is this: Germany should be magnanimous where she is victorious. She should issue a proclamation citing the facts which I have here cursorily set down, and withdraw her western armies to the line of the Rhine. She should say

to Belgium, "I was wrong to be swayed by military emergency," even though she was not wrong, in view of the Anglo-Franco-Belgian conspiracy. She should say to France: "I was wrong in 1870 to annex Alsace-Lorraine. Let us arrange this affair on the basis of the popular vote of the various communes in the disputed ground. And let us be true friends forever." She should say to Italy: "Your duplicity and your pusillanimity entitle you to no consideration, Shut up!" She should say to Servia: "The days of your gangs of murderers are over. You are now about to receive the benefits of good government." She should say to Austria:⁶ "Let us unite your Teuton districts with our own; the rest of the empire, including Servia, under the hegemony of Hungary, will be more compact and stronger than before."

And what is to be said to England?

XII.

It seems on the surface that it need more than Germany to speak to England. The active alliance of France is surely to be sought. More, it is necessary to awake the public opinion of the world. For this is the substance of the speech — that the arrogant nonsense about the Mistress of the Seas, "Brittania rules the waves," must end.

England has a perfect right to a strong navy to defend her coasts and to keep open her trade routes. But her claim to stop all trade at will, without your leave or by your leave, is unmeasured insolence. It is to annex four-fifths of the planet. The amphibian race of whom we spoke in the beginning of this article was not created by God, and it is a defiance of His will to take that place and terrorize humanity. It is monstrous and infamous that any one nation should maintain so colossal and so unnatural an advantage.

And it says little of the spirit of the world that it allows it. No nation with any manhood would endure the shame. Had I been President Wilson I would have said

on the day of the declaration of war: "If any nation interferes in any way with any American ship, otherwise than to ascertain her bona-fides, it is an act of war."

It is a damnable and deadly insult to arrest neutrals; every power with a seaboard has a right to be sovereign on the sea. If one country be at war with another, that country has a right to fight on sea (and under sea) as well as on land. But to claim jurisdiction over the ships of a neutral country is to assert sovereignty over that country, and no nation should tolerate that while there is a man alive to point a gun.

This position must be made clear to England if it takes the allied navies of the world to do it.

XIII.

If English statesmen were awake to the true interests of their country they would acquiesce. It is her megalomaniac claims that have forced the other Powers to build against her, that have laid such a burden upon all the peoples of the earth that this war comes almost with relief, like the bursting of an abscess.

Let her abandon these; let her realize that Russia is the only dangerous power upon the planet, and return to the old sound policy of Pitt and Palmerston. Let her remember that Germany is not only her best customer, but her cousin; that a friendly Germany is her guarantee for India and Egypt, and that tyranny and arrogance always, sooner or later, find that they have aroused the awful jealousy of God. Let her grant such autonomy to Ireland, Wales and Scotland as free Germany has always granted to the states of which she is composed; it is better policy in the long run than sending her Celtic regiments to the battle front and using her own artillery to mow them down like corn.

XIV.

It is because I have seen so clearly the ultimate necessity of a rearrangement of the European alliances that I have fought so strenuously against national hatred. I have conjured the English in their own interests to keep level heads, to look at the situation without squinting, to suppress the hysteria of the press, and to refrain from petty spite. If Germany is to be fought, for God's sake fight; but fight like men, and not like screaming charwomen when they are taken to the police station. It does no good to call the Kaiser a mad dog; on the contrary, it induces fear of hydrophobia from his bite. It is only children that fear the bogey man; adults meet an enemy with cool calculation of his relative strength and skill.

This campaign of hate is criminal. Even to the Germans, befooled and betrayed by England, I would counsel the policy of Christ. It is not the true England that has crucified them; it is only the robber gang of the Marconi swindles, madmen like Lord Northcliffe, opportunist climbers like Garvin, and their dupes.

England is on the brink of a revolution, as I propose to show in another paper; and when Satan is divided against Satan, his kingdom will fall. England is near a reconstruction on a sane basis, and the principal pillar of the building will be an alliance with France, Austria and Germany.

Let us replace hate by love, and speed the work.

XV.

One last word of master-masonry. The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof; the Lord's representative on earth is the father of the family. Let us see to it that every father of a family has a little bit of earth.

This is the best, indeed the only sure, warrant of the stability of any nation; inalienable proprietorship is the

enemy of cosmopolitan and industrialism. It is also the one cure for national degeneracy in mind, body and estate.

We shall not be able thoroughly to repair the blunder of Edward VII. unless we also repair the blunder of Queen Victoria.

NOTES:

1. Note: It is for this reason that the great man often fails to come to his own. The opportunist succeeds, in the eye of his contemporaries. Wisdom is justified only of her children. The great artist, the great poet, the great man of science, never stoops to follow the fashions of his hour. He communes with Absolute Truth, with God and with his own soul; public opinion does not reach his ears. And so, by a paradox, it appears in due time that he was the real incarnation of the Zeitgeist, the true representative of the thought of his age.

2. This is so true and so obvious that today she has to pretend to be doing it, though in reality she is betraying herself to her even worse enemy.

3. India is practically an island in this sense – that an invasion by land would present military difficulties insurmountable to modern armies if opposed even weakly. It requires the whole resources of the Gilgit road to supply the small garrison with food; and Gilgit is quite on the hither side of the mountains. Michael and all his angels could not force the Pamirs.

4. Some political economists are congenital idiots.

5. The Kaiser's telegram of August 1 did indeed express practically these ideas. But he might have stood by it in

the face of the cynical repulse. Had he done so – I admit Germany might have suffered many things but the most stupid and prejudiced could have no more doubted German magnanimity than German valor. Moreover, I doubt if the English Government would have dared to strike. A war so plainly aggressive would have meant revolution. Even now — ? ? ?

6. Since writing the article the Huns have been driven out; but Austria is once more threatened, this time by the compatriots of Borgia. The degeneration of Italy is measured by the distance from Michael Angelo and Dante to d'Annunzio and Marinetti.