

TREITSCHKE

the gift of prophecy, we may say confidently that for the next two generations the house of Coburg will sustain all the features of the house of Guelph. This is part of the essence of the English State, but we Germans will not abandon common-sense, and will not propose to our people to cut off a sound limb in order to replace it by a skilfully-made artificial limb. We have had experience, and we have found that our constitutional monarchy is of such a nature, that it works best under great monarchs. It is not the work of a constitutional polity to rob royalty of all significance; on the contrary, it must keep royalty fresh and living even among the peoples that have reached political maturity. With us royalty is almost the sole power of political tradition which links our present with the past. Do we want English Georges instead of our far-famed Hohenzollerns? The history of our

VILIFICATION OF ENGLAND

monarchy is so magnificent that a Prussian may very well say, 'The best monarch is good enough for us.' According to our constitution all power is vested in the monarch. Any one who denies this will have to prove his charges against our constitution, on the basis of certain foreign elements which have become historical. Thus the first element of the English constitution is an illegitimate and powerless monarchy" (*Politik*, II, 132-136).

It would be waste of time to discuss this passage in detail. Treitschke seized upon peculiar elements of the English constitution and entirely misrepresented them.

His main error is, of course, his obstinate refusal to grant any real right of self-government to a people. I need not, however, deal at such length with his further descriptions of English institutions. He passes on to our aristocracy, in which he finds "a great political

TREITSCHKE

capacity and enormous power." He fancies that in England the aristocracy has completely swallowed up the independent peasantry, "which is the strength of Germany," and that it dominates the Houses of Parliament. He seems to be strangely confused as to the state of England before the Reform Bill and in recent times, although he observes that many changes occurred in 1832. His description of the actual state of things really refers to the older days. The Lords, he says, nominate the members of the Lower House. The House of Commons does not in any sense represent the people. It is ruled by the nobles through their younger sons, and cousins, and other dependents. Thus the monarchy is "a shadow," and democracy does not exist. England is ruled by "a well-ordered and powerful aristocracy."

He further finds that the rival parties are

VILIFICATION OF ENGLAND

kept together by "colossal bribery," and he ends: "To live in such circumstances may be very pleasant, but it is ridiculous to hold up such a system as a model to the German State, with its strict sense of justice." He closes the whole comparison of English and German political institutions with this remarkable passage: "We have, it is true, borrowed a few knick-knacks from England. With us also the King's name is not to be mentioned in Parliament. The English—who have always been expert in flattery of this kind—say that it is no more lawful to take the name of the King in vain than the name of God. This Guelph royalty, the first representative of which did not know the language of his country and could not attend the council, has now no influence at all. It is of no consequence what Queen Victoria thinks about a political question. And that is supposed to

TREITSCHKE

be a model for our country, where the King speaks very good German! In Germany the will of the King still counts for something. That is especially the case in Prussia, the only place which still has a real monarch; a ruler who is entirely independent. In Prussia a cowardly minister cannot shelter himself behind the monarch when he addresses Parliament. If in a particular case he says, 'Don't decide to do that, gentlemen; I tell you confidently that we shall not be able to persuade his Majesty to assent,' there is no reason why we should not."

Treitschke betrays the same petty and unscientific spirit almost whenever he approaches any feature of English life. One or two instances will suffice to show how he inoculated the young men of the German middle class, with that disdain of England which has led to such tragic consequences.

VILIFICATION OF ENGLAND

Many of his colleagues of a less prejudiced nature, were pointing out the indisputable merits which the Reform period had introduced into English law and practice. Treitschke rarely failed to say precisely the opposite, and to pour ridicule on the claim that any feature of English life could with profit be adopted in Germany. Sometimes he is curiously inaccurate, as in the following contrast: "In England the punishment of political crimes is severe to the verge of cruelty; in Germany, under the influence of radical ideas, it is the fashion to take a sentimental view of political crimes." Those who recollect the treatment, let us say, of Colonel Lynch at the time of the South African war, will read with surprise this observation of the learned professor. One would imagine that it was in England, not in Germany, that a brilliant historical writer can be committed

TREITSCHKE

to a fortress for three years for making very natural comments on the words of the monarch.

In another place he deals with the contrast in the authority of the police. He says: "Germany proceeds on the principle that it is not good to restrict too much the discretionary power of the authorities; England gives the police no discretionary power at all. The result is that a state of war is constantly announced in England; not a year passes without the reading of the Riot Act in some part of the United Kingdom." Finally, I may quote his reflection on a liberty which so many Germans envy us in England:

"In the conception of personal freedom there is included some security against arbitrary arrest. England has been exceptionally zealous on this point. The famous clause of Magna Charta, that no one shall be arrested without a warrant, is undoubtedly

VILIFICATION OF ENGLAND

a great achievement; but it is equally true that in large modern cities this right is antiquated. In a well-ordered State, where the police are punished for exceeding their powers, and one can rely on the punishment being carried out, they should be free to enter the houses of citizens in the larger towns. To regard as secret the resorts of thieves and other evil houses is absurd. You see the consequences in London, where the most terrible crimes escape detection" (*Politik*, I, 169).

After this defence of the Prussian system of autocracy, and the despotism of the Prussian police, Treitschke passes on to examine what are believed to be some of the most important reforms of English political life as regards the representation of the people. To most sociologists of any country the ballot-box, or the secrecy of the vote, is one of the most impor-

TREITSCHKE

tant of these reforms. Treitschke is so unwilling to admit any superiority in any field of English life, that he actually delivers an eloquent and highly moral attack upon the ballot-box. He, of course, opposes any effective system of popular representation. Men with lungs, he says, obtain the greater power under institutions of that character; and he bitterly opposes any extension of the miserable franchise that is allowed in Prussia. One would have thought at least that he could recognise the propriety, if not the civic excellence, of the ballot-box, and the long passage which he has on that subject is worth quoting, as an example of the way in which German students were initiated at Berlin to the features of English life. He says:

“In connection with the spread of this irrational claim for a wider franchise, there has been introduced the equally irrational,

VILIFICATION OF ENGLAND

and at the same time immoral, secret vote. By the secrecy of the vote people are supposed to enjoy an independence which they really do not possess. We are fools to talk about our educated and free age when we have lost the simplest natural feeling of honour. It is precisely these free political institutions, which have brought on men certain moral mischiefs, of which our fathers in less free times never dreamed. If the parliamentary vote is to be regarded as the highest duty of a citizen, let it at least be exercised in a form which does not seem repugnant to a man of honour and some sense of freedom; that is to say, let it be exercised in public and with full responsibility. A man who feels no disgust when he goes to the ballot-box and stealthily puts his vote into it, has no sentiment of political honour. There is nothing whatever in the arguments for the ballot-box.

TREITSCHKE

It is not the business of the State to weaken its citizens morally. It is a real conflict of duties when father and son hold different political views, but the son must openly declare which he holds to be highest, his political conviction or his sentiment of gratitude to his father. It is not the business of the State to prevent such conflicts. They did not have that kind of thing in older England. Until the nineteenth century a secret vote was regarded as a sign of thorough corruption. Now our press has got the idea that it is freedom to hide behind a bush, or a ballot-box. This is the result of extending the vote to classes which ought not to vote because they are not independent enough.

“Moreover, people who talk like this show a remarkable ignorance of real life. In the country, especially among the poor, it is quite impossible to keep secret the way that any

VILIFICATION OF ENGLAND

person has voted. Even in the towns there are all sorts of ways of discovering how a man has voted. So we come down in the end to the basest device to which 'the sense of liberty' has brought us: the voter must go into a sort of smoking-room, and there fill up a form provided by the Government. That is a pretty state of things for men with any sense of decency! Such secret proceedings completely destroy the feeling of manliness, and the State dangles the lie before millions of workers, who know quite well that they are really dependent. There can be no question whatever but that such a system is thoroughly immoral. What a man personally feels as a disgrace must have a demoralising effect on the community. But our enlightened age is so stubborn in this respect that we have no hope of reform. We are rearing a race that will be incapable

TREITSCHKE

of thinking candidly and rightly. The results will be seen soon enough, and they will be lamentable. It is a question rather of a moral than of a political nature" (*Politik*, II, 182).

These will serve as interesting illustrations of that *Kultur* which Treitschke would have liked to see imposed upon other nations. I reserve, however, for a later chapter the conception of a well-ordered State, as it is presented in Treitschke's writings. I would conclude with one other extract which shows how Treitschke can hardly ever approach the subject of England, without a prejudice which makes his lectures almost ridiculous. One aspect of statecraft which he has to consider is, naturally, the influence of physical conditions upon the people. This gives him the opportunity once more to make a contrast between England and Germany :

VILIFICATION OF ENGLAND

“In estimating the climate and other natural features of a country, we are chiefly keeping in mind their influence on its material life. The moral and æsthetic points of view are of secondary importance, and must not be exaggerated. The moist and foggy climate of England has had anything but a good influence on the inhabitants. There are times in London when the fog is so dense that the spleen fills the atmosphere. Moreover, England has no wine, and wine is unquestionably an important factor of a genial and free civilisation. . . . The climate and the absence of wine and the lack of beautiful scenery [!] have undeniably had a bad effect on English civilisation. The English can boast of great literature, but they have never attained any distinction in music or the plastic arts” (*Politik*, I, 224). Again it would be waste of time to discuss these extraordinary views of

TREITSCHKE

English life and character. We must, however, seriously consider how this persistent habit of belittling the English people has had a share in creating the anti-British temper in Germany. I would not over-estimate Treitschke's influence in this regard. There have been so many incentives to anti-British feeling in recent years in Germany, that one need not go back to lectures delivered in a university forty years ago. The passages are, perhaps, more important for showing the kind of civilisation which Germany would, if it had the power, impose upon other countries. With this I will deal at a later stage, and will for the present consider those sentiments which have a more direct connection with the present war.

CHAPTER IV

THE PRAISES OF THE WAR-GOD

CHAPTER IV

THE PRAISES OF THE WAR-GOD

WE have already seen the central idea of Treitschke's system of thought. The State is power. This means at once that he will exaggerate, more than any other civilian writer has ever done, the importance of war in a State. And here we come to the third and almost the most important aspect of Treitschke's influence. He and other German writers recognise, even boast, that they have imposed the present exacting burden of militarism on Europe. To Treitschke, though a civilian, it is easy to defend this development. His view of history is, as I pointed out, really superficial. He does not believe

TREITSCHKE

in "cold-blooded objectivity" in writing history. Every line of his studies and his writings has an application to the problems of the State to-day. We may say, without hesitation, that, apart from the soldiers of Germany, he has done more than any other writer to encourage the abnormal and dangerous zeal for military greatness which has now proved so disastrous.

"History," he says, "has wholly masculine features; it is not a thing for sentimental natures and women. Brave peoples alone are secure of existence, of a future, of development; weak and lazy peoples go under. The beauty of history lies in this eternal for and against of the various States. It is simply madness to desire to put an end to this rivalry. So humanity has found in all ages." Or, as he expresses it on another page of his great work: "It is only in war that a people really

PRAISES OF THE WAR-GOD

becomes a people; and in the majority of cases the expansion of existing States proceeds by way of acquisition by conquest, though the results of the struggle may afterwards be recognized by treaty."

According to Treitschke the State has two chief functions: to administer justice within its frontiers and assert its power without. Most people to-day regard the second as an accidental and, we trust, temporary function of the State, but Treitschke would not hear of such a view. In his theory the military function is essential to the State, and it would be a positive disaster to humanity if a condition of peace arose which would enable us to dispense with armies. This is one of the results of his new science of statecraft. He says:

"As long as the State was regarded as an economic institution, the view prevailed in

TREITSCHKE

Germany that the economic principle of division of labour should apply to the army. Professional and well-drilled soldiers were needed to shield the life of the citizens from the confusion of war. But hard and bitter experience has changed all this, and to-day even the ordinary man feels that the military system is of more importance than economic interests—is, in fact, of incalculable importance; that there is question here of moral forces, and that these are best aroused and applied under a system of compulsory military service" (*Politik I*, 143).

The claim that war engenders moral forces is not entirely novel in the literature of this subject, but in Treitschke's writings it is carried to a remarkable length. Many writers have claimed that physical degeneration would follow the abandonment of warfare, and some few have declared that there are features of

PRAISES OF THE WAR-GOD

character which warfare does favourably develop. Very few, however, have written in this vein in regard to war :

“Gibbon calls patriotism ‘the vivid feeling of my interest in society,’ but, if you conceive the State as merely designed to ensure for the individual his life and property, how comes it that the individual will sacrifice his life and property for the State? It is a fallacy to suppose that wars are now waged in the interest of material life. Modern wars do not aim at the seizure of property. They are inspired by the lofty moral possession of national honour, which is handed down from generation to generation; which has something absolutely sacred about it and forces the individual to sacrifice himself to it. It is a possession above price, and cannot be measured in dollars and pence” (*Politik I.*, 24).

TREITSCHKE

curious () He finds a quaint illustration of this in the German war of 1866; and in other places he makes the same comment on the Franco-Prussian war. His claim takes the singular form that war between two States enables the nations to appreciate each other's qualities more justly, and links them in a stronger friendship than peace would ever have produced. One wonders how such a theory will apply to the respective relations of England and France, and Belgium and Germany, after the present trouble is over. He says:

“ We Germans cannot appreciate too highly the fact that our Revolution of 1866 did not take the form of a popular movement and popular settlement, as in Italy, but the form of a war. The result was that the Prussian Crown, which marshalled its physical forces, was in a position to restore order. We may add that a transformation of a milder

PRAISES OF THE WAR-GOD

character was not at that time possible. If we suppose that the feeling of the masses for German unity was so strong that it would have led to revolution, the conquered and the conquerors would even now live in a state of enmity; whereas the war and the generous conclusion of peace filled the opponents with mutual appreciation, and so far united them that four years later they, like true comrades, joined their arms against France" (I., 136).

It is, however, in surveying the general stream of history, that Treitschke makes his most formidable mistake. The historian is naturally apt to enlarge upon a nation in the prime of its life, and the full glory of its achievements. It occurs to him that, if it could only have sustained the military power which for a time protected its artists and its merchants, there would never have been the

TREITSCHKE

ultimate decay which he has to record. Unfortunately, many historians, and Treitschke above all others, fail to analyse the facts justly. It seems, on an impartial consideration, that, with all the will in the world, it was quite impossible for those ancient Empires or States to sustain their military strength. Treitschke forgets that war destroys all the good qualities which militarism creates.

We may admit not only the physical robustness, but, to some extent, the moral qualities which are brought out in a war conducted on lines of chivalry and humanity. The historian must equally recognise that those soldiers in whom these qualities are most richly developed are the first to fall on the field. It is those who are less distinguished by courage and manliness, and it is the inferior types which have not been selected for military

PRAISES OF THE WAR-GOD

purposes, that remain at home and are the fathers of the next generation. Throughout nearly the whole of his historical glorification of war, Treitschke is guilty of this oversight. His knowledge in detail is very largely confined to the story of Germany within the last two hundred years. A century or two show us plainly the beginnings of the development of military influence. The nation continues vigorous in spite of its losses, because, by the enlargement of its territory, new groups of peoples have come under the selective action of the military commander. Had Treitschke lived but twenty years longer, he might have seen the culmination of this development in the history of his own country. Against his religious neighbours he used to quote texts of the Bible in support of warfare. He seems to have overlooked one text: "They who take the sword shall perish by

TREITSCHKE

the sword." If there is one lesson arising plainly from the study of history, it is contained in those simple words.

From the days of Goethe men were perceiving the truth of this real lesson of history. Around him on every side Treitschke found men clamouring for the abandonment of warfare and the substitution of arbitration. It is well known how, openly and secretly, Germany has frustrated this work of progress at the Hague Conferences. Treitschke had a very great share in the obstinate militarism which has prolonged the danger which threatened Europe, until at last it has fallen like an avalanche upon five or six whole nations. The disastrous results he clearly foresaw. It was part of his doctrine—part of his idealism, as he called it—that the State should be able to claim and to receive the utmost sacrifices from its subjects. When, recently, the Ger-

PRAISES OF THE WAR-GOD

man Emperor assured his Prussian subjects that he was sure that they would gladly sacrifice their lives and their homes to the needs of the Empire, he was, as in his religious utterances, doing little more than repeating the words of Treitschke. Using every motive at his command, Treitschke, throughout his whole life, tried to impress on the German people, not merely the need, but, as he said, "the sacredness of war." His influence on the German people in regard to war is as great as we have found his influence in regard to the inflated ideal of the German position and future.

The deification of war runs through the whole of Treitschke's theory of a State. Two long extracts will suffice to show how he uses every argument, to impress the eternal need of war and militarism on his university students. In the first section, where he is

TREITSCHKE

explaining the nature of a State, he says as follows :

“ Without war there would be no State. All the States we know have their origin in war : the armed protection of its citizens is the first and the central duty of the State. Hence war will last as long as history does : as long as there is a plurality of States. That it should ever be otherwise can be deduced neither from the laws of thought nor from the laws of human nature ; nor is it in the least desirable. The blind worshippers of eternal peace make the mistake of isolating the State, or of dreaming of a world-State, which we have already recognised to be irrational.

“ Since it is equally impossible, as we have already seen, even to conceive of a higher judge over States, which are in their nature sovereign, we cannot imagine that the state

PRAISES OF THE WAR-GOD

of war will ever cease. It is the fashion of our time to speak of England as a lover of peace. Yet England is always at war; there is hardly a moment in modern history when she has not been fighting somewhere. The great progress of civilised men, as opposed to barbarism and unreason, can only be realised by the sword. Even among civilised peoples war remains the form of the process by means of which States assert their claims. The evidence that is produced in this frightful process is as convincing as the evidence in a civil-law case. How often have we endeavoured to convince small States that Prussia alone can take the lead in Germany; we had to furnish a decisive proof on the battle-fields of Bohemia and the Main. War binds peoples together, it does not merely separate them. It brings people to face each other, not merely in enmity: they learn to understand and

TREITSCHKE

appreciate each other's qualities. We must also recognise that war is not always the verdict of God ; there are even here temporary successes, but the life of a nation must be counted in centuries. Our final judgment must be based on a survey of great epochs. A State like Prussia, which was, in accordance with the spirit of its people, always freer and more rational than France, might at times seem to be on the verge of extinction, owing to some temporary enervation, but might then recollect its true inner nature and assert its superiority. We must unhesitatingly affirm that war is the only remedy for sick nations. Whenever the State calls, ' My existence is in danger,' social selfishness must disappear and party hatred must be silent. The individual must forget his own personality and realise that he is a member of the whole ; he must feel how little his life is in comparison

PRAISES OF THE WAR-GOD

with the good of the whole. Therein consists the nobleness of war, that the smallness of men vanishes before the greater interest of the State. Self-sacrifice for one's fellows is nowhere so splendid as in war. At such times the chaff is separated from the grain. Every man who lived through the year 1870 feels the truth of what Niebuhr said of the year 1813 [the war of 1813 was a war of liberation, not of aggression] that in those days he felt 'the happiness of sharing a sentiment with all his fellow-citizens, learned and simple, and every man who enjoyed it will remember all his life how kindly and strong his soul was at that time.'

"It is precisely political idealism that demands war, while materialism shrinks from it. What a moral perversity it is to wish to strike militarism out of the heart of man! It is a nation's heroes who gladden and inspire

TREITSCHKE

the hearts of the young; and the writer we admired most, when we were young men, is the man whose words have the sound of a trumpet. The man who does not leap at such a sound is too great a coward to bear arms for his country. It is no use referring to Christianity. The Bible expressly says that authority shall wear the sword, and it declares: 'Greater love than this no man hath, that he should lay down his life for his friends.' They who repeat nonsense about eternal peace do not understand the life of the Aryan peoples: the Aryans are first and foremost brave. They have always been men enough to protect with the sword what they had won by the spirit. Goethe once said: 'The North Germans were always more civilised than the South Germans.' [Goethe had the most profound contempt for Prussia, and loved the South German State of Gotha.]

PRAISES OF THE WAR-GOD

Heroism—the maintenance of bodily strength and moral courage—is essential to a noble people.

“ We must not look at these things only in the light of the study lamp. The historian who lives in the world of will is convinced that the dream of eternal peace is thoroughly reactionary. He knows that with the cessation of war all movement and all progress will disappear from history. It has always been the exhausted, spiritless, enervated ages that have played with the dream of eternal peace. . . . The third such period is that in which we now live; it is, once more, a period of peace following a great war, which seems to have destroyed all idealism in Germany. Loud and shameless is the laughter of the crowd when something that has contributed to the greatness of Germany is destroyed. The foundations of our noble

TREITSCHKE

old education are ruined ; all that made us an aristocracy among the nations of the earth is now despised and trodden under foot. It is a fit time for dreaming once more the vision of eternal peace. But it is not worth while lingering over the subject. The living God will take care that the terrible physic of war shall be administered to humanity again and again " (*Politik*, I., 72-76).

Treitschke makes some concession to the dreamers of peace. Inconsistently with his praise of the virtues of war, he contends that it is a benefit of the new military system that wars will become shorter and less frequent. Even in such practical matters as this, where one so intensely interested in militarism might seem to have authority, the events have shown the utter fallacy and hollowness of his position. We are now entering upon the fourth big war in twenty

PRAISES OF THE WAR-GOD

years, and this war bids fair to prove more expensive and disastrous than all the wars of the nineteenth century put together. Even in its length it may rival the Napoleonic war.

But we need not linger to examine the hotch-potch of arguments which make up Treitschke's panegyric of war. The last sentence of the passage I have quoted will be sufficient to convince any impartial person of the utterly diseased nature of this great influence on Germany. I would pass on at once to consider the section of Treitschke's work which deals expressly with the military functions of the State. He begins (§23):

“It was a defect of the older politics to regard the army merely as an instrument at the disposal of diplomacy, and to give it a subordinate place in its system, in the chapter on foreign politics. It was regarded only

TREITSCHKE

as a means of foreign policy. There is no question of such a thing in our age of universal military service. Everybody feels to-day that the army is not merely an instrument for the purposes of diplomacy, but that the constitution of a State rests precisely on the distribution of arms among the people. The State is supported by the ordered physical strength of the nation, and that is the army. If the essence of the State is power, directed both inwards and outwards, the organisation of the army must be one of the first constitutional questions in any State."

Treitschke goes on to argue, plausibly enough, that the army performs a great civil function. Nearly every other institution or element of national life divides the people, or confuses them with the people of other States. Art and science, or all culture in the English sense of the word,

PRAISES OF THE WAR-GOD

are cosmopolitan: and cosmopolitanism is to Treitschke, who hates all Jews and all idealists, one of the gravest dangers of modern times. What is ordinarily called politics, on the other hand, splits the nation into hostile parties; and this element in turn was regarded with bitter contempt by Treitschke. He would have the whole nation listening in silence to the dictates of the monarch and his soldiers and historians. The great instrument for bringing about this docile unity is the army. "In the army alone do the citizens feel that they are sons of their country," and "the King is its natural commander." He goes on: "An adequate equipment of the army is also the foundation of political freedom, so that we need not waste pity on States that have a powerful and well-drilled army. In this province academical theories have suffered the most amusing defeats

TREITSCHKE

at the hand of facts. Everybody who calls himself liberal speaks of the ideal of disarmament toward which modern States are hastening. But what does the history of the nineteenth century really teach us? Precisely the contrary. Armament grows heavier each year, and, as it is the same in all States, this cannot be due to accident. There is some radical defect in the whole theory of the Liberals. The State is not an academy of arts, or an Exchange: it is power, and it belies its own nature when it neglects the army" (*Politik*, II., 357).

Treitschke turns once more upon reformers in Germany who are pleading the economy of the English system. He points out, quite naturally, that the position of England is exceptional. England relies mainly upon her fleet, and her example cannot apply to

PRAISES OF THE WAR-GOD

Germany. But, with his constant disposition to seek those ingenious arguments which German writers are apt to regard as profound, he gives us a remarkable passage on the English army. He observes that the position of the army in England has been entirely irregular since the days of the Puritans. Parliament then disbanded the army and "since that time English people have regarded the army as a tool of the State, which might be used even against the will of the nation; and when a second revolution set up a shadow of royalty by the grace of Parliament, the Mutiny Act was passed." This is, he says, a ridiculous contrast to the position of the army in Germany. "With us the institution of the army is precisely a result of the law. The military law of 1814, one of the greatest debts we owe to Prussia, is the basis of a comprehensive legislation. Hence our army

TREITSCHKE

is on a legal footing and not, as in England, an anomaly." He continues:

"Could there be any greater humiliation than to sympathise with our country because it has the advantage over England of a large army? For it is an advantage to have a large and well-equipped army, because the army is not only intended to be of use in supporting a nation's foreign policy, but a high-minded nation with a glorious history can employ the army for a long period as a dormant weapon; and, in addition, it provides for the people a school of the really manly virtues which are so easily lost sight of, in an age of commerce and pleasure. We must acknowledge that there are men of a fine artistic nature who cannot tolerate the military discipline. We often hear these people speaking in a very perverse way about military service. But in such things we

PRAISES OF THE WAR-GOD

cannot make laws for exceptional natures: we must, according to the old rule, deal with the *mens sana in corpore sano*. Bodily strength is especially important in times like ours. It is a defect of the English civilisation that it does not include compulsory military service. . . .

[Here follows the humorous passage relating to the coarseness of English character on account of the prevalence of sport instead of military drill which I have quoted above.]

“The normal and rational course for a great nation is to embody the essence of its State, which is power, in a well-drilled army. And as we have lived through a period of war, the over-sensitive, philanthropic way of looking at these things has rather gone out of fashion, so that, with Clausewitz, we again regard war as a great extension of politics. All the peace-pipe-smokers in the world will not

TREITSCHKE

succeed in bringing harmony into the views of the political Powers, and until that is done the sword alone can decide between them. We have learned to appreciate the moral majesty of war precisely in those features which seem to superficial observers brutal and inhuman. It seems, at first, the most terrible feature of war that a man must, for his country's sake, crush his natural feelings of humanity; that men who have never done any harm to each other, and have perhaps even respected each other as chivalrous enemies, shall now proceed to murder each other; yet this is at the same time one of the glories of war. A man shall sacrifice not only his life, but also the natural and deep-rooted feelings of the human soul—he shall give his whole personality—for a great patriotic idea: that is the moral grandeur of war. If we consider the matter further, we see that war, with

PRAISES OF THE WAR-GOD

all its hardness and crudeness, weaves a bond of love between man and man; since in war all social distinctions disappear, and the threat of death links man with man. Any man who knows history knows that it would be a stultification of human nature to wish to eliminate warfare from the world. There is no liberty without war-like action, which is ready to make sacrifices for liberty. We cannot repeat too often that scholars, in discussing these matters, start with the assumption that the State is destined to be an academy of arts and sciences. It ought, of course, to do the work of such an academy, but that is not its first task. When a State neglects its physical strength in favour of intellectual culture it is lost.

“ We see everywhere that the greatness of historical life acts on character more than on culture: the driving forces of history must

TREITSCHKE

be sought in fields where character is formed. None but brave peoples have a real history. In the great crises of a nation's life we see that the warlike virtues are decisive. In war nations show of what they are capable: not only in the way of physical strength, but also in moral, and, to some extent, intellectual strength" (*Politik*, II., 361-364).

"Since the army is the orderly political strength of the State, it must be Power, and not have a will of its own; it must yield absolute obedience to the will of the head of the State. It cannot be denied that this absolute subjection to the will of the head of the State is a hard experience. But it is important to notice that the political liberty of a people is based precisely on this requirement, which Radical talkers are always decrying as reactionary. All political security

PRAISES OF THE WAR-GOD

would be at an end if the army had a will of its own (p. 365).

“ From this duty of absolute obedience it follows that there must be one single oath of fidelity, and this must direct the soldier with perfect clearness whom he must obey. You cannot promise to sacrifice your life under certain conditions. To compel young men, for the most part of the poorer class, to promise to obey the King *and also* the constitution; in other words, to place before them the alternative of obeying either one or the other in case of conflict is sheer nonsense. There is an end of discipline if you make the soldier the judge whether the constitution has or has not been infringed in a certain case ” (Ref. 366).

Treitschke seems to shudder a little at his own doctrine. He goes on to admit that conscience has its rights, and he declares—

TREITSCHKE

entirely contradicting what he has already said—that absolute obedience can be promised to no human being. One wonders how far the Prussian military authorities would grant such a concession, but Treitschke goes on at once to show that he is by no means differing from the military authorities. He gives instances in which a man would be justified in refusing to obey orders. The first case is, if he were ordered to kill his father and mother! One cannot see a very large concession to conscience in an extreme supposition of that kind. The second case is if the German soldiers were ordered to “become child-slayers like Herod’s soldiers.” After Belgium we need make no comment on the second of Treitschke’s supposed cases of the soldier’s right to disobey. He continues with his analysis of the State’s military function:

“A soldier’s honour consists in the energy

PRAISES OF THE WAR-GOD

and promptness with which he obeys. Hence the unconditional obedience, which, amongst us is pushed with such severity, is a glory and a sign of the splendid spirit of our army. The disdain with which Radicals often speak of this 'dog-like submission' is sheer nonsense. The army training is of very great value in the formation of character. Elderly and able officers are above all things men of fine character [like Major Manteuffel], and are in this respect on a higher level than the average scholar; since learned men have far less opportunity to form their characters. Goethe's immortal words in his 'Tasso' have hit the mark. Silent obedience to superiors and strict orders to inferiors imply an independence of character which must be very highly esteemed. Our Prussian generals have always been liberal-minded men. These facts are so well established that one can

TREITSCHKE

never cease to wonder at the stupidity of the idea, that an army bound to unconditional obedience is an instrument of slavery: it is rather an instrument of freedom. Anyone who thinks that such an army, pledged by its oath, can be used for a reactionary purpose does not know history (p. 367).

“A brave man who has taken on himself the obligation of unconditional obedience would have no sense of dignity if he were not conscious that, since he was ready to sacrifice his life at any time, he must keep the shield of his honour bright. Anybody who doubts this ascribes his own inferior feelings to the soldier. Hence the military sense of honour is often peculiarly sensitive. There may be abuses, but the fact is in itself wholesome. Even among civilians the duel still survives. In a democratic society the duel is the last protection against the complete barbarism

PRAISES OF THE WAR-GOD

of social manners. Men are more or less restrained by the thought that a transgression may cost them their lives; and it is better for a man in the prime of life to die now and again than for the ways of the whole people to run wild. And with this soldierly feeling of honour is connected the great moral force that is found in the army, and constitutes its strength to a great extent. Officers would lose the respect of their men if they had not a keen sense of honour and refined manners. Moral coarseness has increased in the English army since the duel was abolished; there have been cases of officers thrashing each other in railway carriages in the presence of their wives. We need not consider how such conduct is bound to lower them in the eyes of their men. The democratic idea that a soldier will obey one of his own class rather than a social superior is the reverse of the truth (370).

TREITSCHKE

“It is not technical but moral superiority which finally decides the issue of a war. The English soldiers are very good at physical exercises; they are trained to box, and are fed with extraordinary generosity. But people are beginning even in England to see that there is something wanting, and that the English cannot be compared with a national army because the moral energies of the people are shut out from the army. The world is not as materialistic as Wellington supposed. He said that mental development was of no use in the army; it led only to disorder and confusion (371).

“In considering these matters we must keep to the purely moral estimate of institution, as opposed to the purely economic. . . . We must never lose sight of the fact that there are things which are beyond all price. Moral goods have no price, and it is therefore stupid

PRAISES OF THE WAR-GOD

to attempt to appraise such things as the honour and power of a State in terms of money. What we lost when the flower of our youth fell on the fields of France cannot be estimated in gold. It is unworthy to put moral things on the same level as material” (372).

One need not make any comment on these bewildering claims for the virtues of war. The well-known qualities of the German soldiers and officers are in themselves a crushing reply to the claims of their apologists. Treitschke goes on, since he has discovered the supreme moral value of the modern military system, to claim the merit of it for Prussia ; and we will not refuse to admit that, whether it be an advantage to Europe or otherwise, Germany has the lion's share in imposing the military burden on Europe. I will not, therefore quote the long historical

TREITSCHKE

proof which he gives that Prussia has, as he says, "the glory of leading modern Europe back to a natural and more moral conception." That is Treitschke's idea of the substitution of vast national armies for the small standing armies which preceded Frederick the Great. He is not blind to the appalling economic burden which this change has imposed on Europe, but, as we have seen, he finds that the moral qualities engendered entirely outweigh the material cost. He goes on:

"The example of the German national army has had a great influence on the rest of Europe. All the raillery that was once directed against it has proved foolish. It was common in foreign countries to shrug one's shoulders in talking of the Prussian *Landwehren*; the Prussian army of children, they called it. Things have turned out very differently. It has been clearly shown that

PRAISES OF THE WAR-GOD

in war the moral factors are more important than technical training; and it has also been shown that the increased technical experience of the barracks is accompanied by some moral degeneration (404).

“ On the whole the tendency of the modern system is for peace. A whole people in arms cannot so easily be drawn from its peaceful occupations into an unjustifiable war as a conscription army. Wars are now less common and shorter, though they are bloodier. The desire to get home again gives the men a strong incentive to push on. The normal feeling of a brave, yet peace-loving, national army is that which the Prussian soldiers gave expression to in the summer of 1866: ‘ Let us get to the Danube as quickly as possible, so that we shall get home all the sooner.’ We may say that nothing is impossible to such a national army when it has a glorious history

TREITSCHKE

to look back upon ; our experience in the last two wars, especially in the Battles of Königgrätz and Mars la Tour, proves this.”

This passage again shows what one must almost call the insincerity of Treitschke's argument. If war has all the virtues which he so ingeniously discovers in it, it is hardly a merit of the present system that war should become less frequent and that the soldiers should hasten home again. But the whole argumentation is so flimsy that it would be waste of time to linger over it. We are apt to forget in reading Treitschke that we are listening to words which come, with the full authority of the State, from one of the most learned chairs in Germany. The tragic feature which almost prevents us from enjoying the humour of many of these passages is that this doctrine has been one of the great influences in bringing about the horrors of the

PRAISES OF THE WAR-GOD

present war. In a few more years men will perceive in Germany how terribly shortsighted these views were. The enthusiasm of a man who was cut off from his fellows and lived in a world of books and of his own fiery impulses, has led a whole nation to destruction.

It was not only in his university lectures that Treitschke made this glorification of war. In his *Historische und Politische Aufsätze* (I., 782) he makes a violent tirade against the increasing demand in Germany for an International Court of Arbitration. He says :

“ Among the workers there is spreading a theory of the absolute blessedness of peace, which is a scandal to the intelligence and moral energy of our age ; a hotch-potch of phrases, so clear that everybody repeats them, and so miserable that every man who is a man throws them overboard at once when the majesty of war arises in bodily form before

TREITSCHKE

the people. Theological perversity has not had much to do with these ideas. More dangerous is the thoughtless sympathy of feminine natures, which cannot reconcile themselves to the misery which war causes."

Throughout his whole life he met the great dream of our age with this brutality, but the events of the year 1915 will give a decisive answer to all these miserable pages. It would be more interesting to examine how far Treitschke approved in advance the more unscrupulous and repulsive methods of the military authorities. He rarely, however, enters into details on this subject. I have already quoted the passage in which he not only admits that the soldier must crush every feeling of humanity, but actually boasts that this is one of the moral victories of war. It was reserved for the military pupils and followers of Treitschke to translate these

PRAISES OF THE WAR-GOD

general principles into the particular directions which we have seen carried out in the last few months. We shall further see, in the next chapter, that in spite of his high standard of honour. Treitschke makes extraordinary concessions to the spirit of casuistry whenever the supreme interest of the State requires it; and the supreme interest of the State, we must always remember, is, in his opinion, the military interest. We shall find him praising and approving the doctrine of Machiavelli as no other writer in the last one hundred years has dared to do. We shall find him, somewhat shyly it is true, approving lying in the interests of the State. We shall, in fact, find that he imagines his God-directed monarch to be also the monarch of the moral law, and we shall conclude that he has had a share in inspiring even the worst features of this campaign.

TREITSCHKE

I will conclude this chapter with one or two extracts, which show his attitude towards the growing demand for an international tribunal for the settlement of the disputes of nations. This proposal cuts deeply into the roots of his theory of a State ; what is worse, it cuts even more deeply into the roots of Prussian ambition. Treitschke therefore used his whole influence to cast ridicule on the advancing reform. We need not notice the way in which he argues against it, because of the sacredness and moral efficacy of warfare. I need only reproduce one or two passages in which he makes a display of academic learning against the proposal. He says :

“ We have described the State as an independent Power. This pregnant idea of independence involves a legal autonomy, in such wise that no State can rightly tolerate any

PRAISES OF THE WAR-GOD

power over itself; it implies also a political independence, an abundance of means for securing itself against foreign influences. . . A human society which has abdicated its sovereignty is not a State" (135).

It will be clearly seen that this principle justifies the German State in signing the documents of the Hague Convention, and cancelling its obligations the moment it finds it convenient to do so. But we will see this more clearly in the next chapter. In a later passage of his work Treitschke returns to the question of arbitration. He says:

"From which it follows clearly that the establishment of an International Court of Arbitration as a permanent institution, is not consistent with the nature of a State. It is only in questions of a second or third rank of importance that the State could make use of such a tribunal. When we find people

true

true

TREITSCHKE

putting forward the stupid proposal to treat the question of Alsace as an open question, and submit it to arbitration, we cannot seriously regard this as a non-party proposal. It is a matter of honour for a State to settle such a question itself. There cannot therefore be such a thing as a supreme international tribunal. All that can happen will be that international treaties will become more and more common. But arms will maintain their right to the end of history; and in that precisely consists the sacredness of war” (37-39).

Such is the doctrine that learned professors have joined with statesmen and soldiers in impressing on the mind of Germany during the last fifty years. There is no need to refute it at the present hour. Within another year the ambition of Germany will be shattered, and, in the interest of humanity, the

PRAISES OF THE WAR-GOD

vast Empire will be shorn of several large provinces. That will be the answer of the human race to this swollen and diseased military ambition. It is possible that Treitschke's gospel will have an influence in directions which he did not foresee. One can hardly believe that when Europe has lost its great teacher of military ambition, it will continue to shoulder the burden that it has borne so long. The issue of the war may be the supreme triumph of that ideal which Treitschke combated. It will be at least the death of Prussian ambition.

CHAPTER V
IMPERIAL EXPANSION AND
MORAL LAW

CHAPTER V

IMPERIAL EXPANSION AND MORAL LAW

WE have already seen how Treitschke has made three great and disastrous contributions to the mood of the German people. His fourth contribution is perhaps more extraordinary and even more disastrous. Treitschke was a man, in every personal relation of life, of the strictest honour and integrity. We must recognise something like insincerity at times in his strained apologies for war and for Prussian ambition. On the whole, however, he was a man of high standards and rigorous fidelity, and one turns with interest to inquire how a man of such a character is related to those features of

TREITSCHKE

recent German conduct which have proved so repulsive.

ex. We find that Treitschke laid down in advance almost all the immoral principles on which Germany has proceeded. The name of Machiavelli is not in good odour in the modern world. We understand Machiavelli to-day. The fifteenth century was one of the profoundest corruption in Italy, and this corruption was applied in the most licentious way to the international relations of princes and nations. Machiavelli simply made a code of the practices which he found prevalent in his time; a code which was then followed even by Popes like Leo XIII. With the Humanitarianism of the nineteenth century this code has been rightly disdained, and the principle that honesty is the best policy is gradually being established in the conduct of international life. To our amazement Treitschke makes an eloquent

?
9!

IMPERIAL EXPANSION

defence of Machiavelli, and wishes to restore to honour some of his immoral principles. I related in the first chapter how, as a quite young man, he studied the Florentine politician and was taken with admiration of his principles. In mature age, from the chair of Berlin University, he renews the admiration of his youth. The passage is worth quoting in its entirety, since it involves so many sentiments or principles with a direct application to the present trouble :

“ A great change began when the Reformation issued from the Christian world, and the older authorities collapsed. It is in the midst of this dissolution of all traditional authorities that we must understand the great thinker who co-operated with Martin Luther in emancipating the State. It was Machiavelli who put forward the theory that, when the safety of the State is in danger, there must be

TREITSCHKE

no scrutiny into the cleanness of the means adopted. Let the State be preserved and everybody will approve the means. Machiavelli must be taken historically to be understood. He belongs to a race which was just passing from the bonds of the Middle Ages into the subjective freedom of modern thought. All around him in Italy he saw the mighty forms of the tyrants in whom the rich endowment of that wonderful people had displayed itself. These Italian tyrants were all born *Mæcænæ*. They said, like the great artistes: 'I am myself alone.' Machiavelli delighted in these men of power. It will always be his glory to have put the State on its own feet and freed it in its ethic from the Church; and especially that he was the first to announce clearly, 'The State is Power.'

"Yet Machiavelli has still one foot on the threshold of the Middle Ages. Although he

IMPERIAL EXPANSION

tries to emancipate the State from the Church and says, with the courage of the modern Italian patriot, that the Roman See has brought misery on Italy, he is still dominated by the idea that morality is a thing of the Church; and in freeing the State from the Church he cuts it away from moral law altogether. He says that the State has only to look to the purpose of its own power: all that contributes to attain this is good and right. Machiavelli tries to think on the lines of antiquity and does not succeed, because he has eaten the fruit of the tree of knowledge: because, without knowing or wishing it, he is a Christian. Hence his view of the freedom of political morals is confused and obscured by his position in an age of transition. exc^t

“That need not prevent us from admitting gladly that the great Florentine was the first, if we regard all the far-reaching consequences if we regard all the far-reaching consequences.” exc^t

TREITSCHKE

of his ideas, to introduce into politics the theory that the State is Power. For that is true; and any man who is not manly enough to look the truth in the face must keep his hands off politics. We must never forget this great merit of Machiavelli, even if we clearly recognise the profound immorality, in some respects, of his political theory. What repels us is not that he is entirely indifferent to the nature of the means which power uses, but that he pays so little attention to the question how the supreme power is attained and used, and that this power has no inner meaning for him. He has not the least idea that this power must justify itself by securing the highest moral good of humanity.

“Machiavelli did not see that this sheer theory of power is contradictory even from his own point of view. Whom does he put before us as the ideal of a shrewd and brave

IMPERIAL EXPANSION

prince? Cæsar Borgia. But can we regard this monster as, even in Machiavelli's sense, a model statesman? Did any of his work last? His State fell to pieces as soon as he died. [Cæsar's State fell to pieces many years before he died; the moment his father, Alexander VI., left the Papal throne, Cæsar's dominion toppled over like a house of cards. This fact does not greatly confirm Treitschke's theory of power.] After ruining vast numbers of other people he was himself ruined. A power that trampled on all rights must necessarily come to grief, because in the moral world there is no support in anything that cannot resist.

“In consequence of its frightfully candid and harsh expression of Machiavelli's views, his book, *The Prince*, is for most men a repulsive thing; but it has had an enormous influence down to our own time. . . . This

TREITSCHKE

'Reason of State'—a policy which asks only if a thing is advantageous to the State—was followed toward the end of the seventeenth century with an unscrupulousness which it is now difficult for us to imagine. From that time dates the evil reputation which the word 'politician' so long retained in the mind of the people. Machiavelli's book was called *The Devil's Catechism*, or *The Ten Commandments Reversed*. His name became a thing of contempt, and a vast number of books, each improving on the morality of its predecessor, were written against him. It is an unfortunate fact that public opinion is always more moral than men's own actions. The average man is ashamed to acknowledge openly a thousand things which he does in practice. What he can himself do in the way of Cossack-morality is incredible.

“The whole anti-Machiavellian literature

IMPERIAL EXPANSION

is, with one brilliant exception, absolutely worthless. Who were the chief writers to assail the great Florentine? The Jesuits; and one can be fairly confident that any man who is attacked by the Jesuits, is a great and noble-minded man. The chief ground of their hatred is Machiavelli's large Italian patriotism, and the candour with which he preached what the Jesuits practised daily. Their whole polemic against Machiavelli is insincere, and is morally and scientifically worthless. Yet the great Florentine was, in the eighteenth century, which had so great a regard theoretically for the brotherhood of man, decried by all who smoked the pipe of peace, and traded in humanitarianism" (I., 89-93).

It is unfortunate that Treitschke does not specify the points which he finds repulsive in Machiavelli. One asks, for instance, whether Treitschke would approve the lying and decep-

TREITSCHKE

tion which Machiavelli favoured in diplomacy and politics. After a time Treitschke comes to deal expressly with this question. One would hardly expect him to say in so many words that lying was permissible in modern diplomacy, but a short passage will sufficiently indicate that he really approved it. He says:

“ Journalistic makers of phrases speak of statesmen as a corrupt class, as if lying were inseparable from diplomacy. The truth is precisely the opposite. Really great statesmen have always been distinguished for candour. . . . Think of the massive candour of Bismarck in important matters, in spite of his cunning in small details! It was his most powerful weapon, for smaller diplomatists always believed the opposite when he told them what he really wanted. In which of the professions do we find most lying? Clearly in the commercial world; that has always

IMPERIAL EXPANSION

been the case. In trade lying has been systematised. In comparison with it, diplomacy shines with the innocence of a dove. Yet notice the immeasurable difference between the two: when an unscrupulous speculator lies on 'Change, he is merely thinking of his own purse, but the diplomatist is thinking of his country when, in a political transaction, he indulges in some obscuring of the facts. As historians, whose business it is to survey the whole life of man, we must admit that the profession of the diplomatists is far more moral than that of the merchant. The moral danger to which a diplomatist is exposed is not lying; it is the intellectual dissipation of the drawing-room" (I., 96).

In spite of the diplomatic language of these passages, it is plain that Treitschke approves of what he calls "the obscuring of facts," whenever the interest of his Divine State

TREITSCHKE

requires it. We may particularly notice his statement that what shocks us in Machiavelli is, not his indifference to the means used, but to the end for which the power of a State ought to be used. This means clearly that such a State as Prussia, which has such highly moral aims, need not be too scrupulous about the means which it employs to strengthen and extend its power.

But he presently approaches the question directly, and we have as plain a statement of the Machiavellian principle as one could desire. He raises the question of the relation of politics to moral law. Politics, he says gravely, is most assuredly subject to moral law, and there can be no collision whatever between the two. "Most of the supposed conflicts of politics and moral law are, if you examine them carefully, conflicts between politics and positive law. But positive

IMPERIAL EXPANSION

law is of human origin and may be unreasonable. . . . When the social needs change, the law may become absurd, and so there are collisions. Hence politics is often obliged to act in violation of positive law, and a serious conflict may arise. In other cases there may be a collision of different duties." He is plainly arguing for a moral law which will prove sufficiently elastic to accommodate itself to the needs of the politician. He goes on to refer to the moral code of the Christian religion, which a greater German, Humboldt, described as equally binding upon a State and upon the individual. Treitschke says: "The chief precept of Christianity is that of love and of the freedom of the moral nature. It has no moral code and in that consists the very essence of its morality. Luther did a thing of immortal merit when he restored the doctrine that good works are of no avail without a good

TREITSCHKE

spirit. Neither can Kant's *Categorical Imperative* replace the doctrine of Christianity: it fails to lay stress on personal freedom." It follows that the man or the State is the moral judge of his or its own conduct, and must interpret the moral law in this sense of freedom. Then Treitschke goes into closer details about his subject:

“Now if we apply this standard of a deeper and genuinely Christian morality to the State, and if we remember that the essence of this social personality is Power, we see that the highest moral duty of the State is to maintain its power. The individual must sacrifice himself for the good of the community of which he is a member; but the State is the supreme thing in the external community of men, and therefore it cannot in any circumstances have a duty of self-destruction. The Christian duty to sacrifice oneself for something higher

IMPERIAL EXPANSION

does not apply to the State, because there is nothing in the world superior to it; hence it cannot sacrifice itself for something higher. If a State finds itself in danger of destruction, we praise it if it dies sword in hand. Self-sacrifice for another people is not only not moral: it contradicts the idea of self-assertion which is to the State the supreme thing.

“Hence also we must distinguish between public and private morals. The scale of duties must be quite different for the State, since it is Power, than for the individual. Quite a number of duties which are incumbent on the individual do not exist for the State. Its highest duty always is to assert itself; for the State that is absolutely moral. Hence we must recognise that the worst and most contemptible of all political sins is weakness: it is in politics the sin against the Holy Ghost. In private life there are pardonable weaknesses

TREITSCHKE

of sentiment. There can be no question of such a thing on the part of the State: it is Power, and if it belies its own nature, it cannot be too severely condemned. Take, for instance, the reign of Frederick William IV. Generosity and gratitude are, as we saw, political virtues also, but only when they do not interfere with the State's main purpose—the maintenance of its power. Now in the year 1849 the thrones of all the smaller German princes were in danger. Frederick William IV. took a step which in itself was admirable; he sent Prussian troops into Saxony and Bavaria, and restored order. But what followed was a mortal sin. Were the Prussians there to shed their blood for the Kings of Saxony or Bavaria? Certainly there ought to have been some permanent gain to Prussia. It had the small States in its hand; it needed only to keep its troops

IMPERIAL EXPANSION

there until these princes entered the new German Empire. Yet the King withdrew his troops, and the small States, which they had liberated, smiled on their retreat. That was a piece of thoughtless weakness; the blood of the Prussian people was shed for nothing" (I., 99-101).

One might apply these "idealistic" sentiments to the relations of France and England and Belgium at the present moment. The ordinary moralist or historian would describe those relations as chivalrous. Chivalry, it seems, means something entirely different in Germany. Treitschke would describe the sentiment which has united France and England as materialism. They have sinned against one of the exalted laws of his State in venturing to shed the blood of their soldiers without any confident prospect of territorial gain. Lest, however, the vagueness of his language should

TREITSCHKE

leave us in any doubt about the reality of his sentiments, he goes on to apply his principles expressly to one of those moral issues which are of actual interest. We all remember the German Chancellor's famous phrase, "A mere scrap of paper." How far did this, which seems to us a repulsive and mediæval sentiment, derive any inspiration from the supreme moralist of the Prussian State? Fortunately, in the course of this chapter, Treitschke has to face candidly the question of the State's obligation to observe the Treaties that it has signed, and in solving the question he is brutally candid. He starts from the principle that the State is Power: a principle from which he can at once justify the most unjust despotism within, and the most unjust aggression without. He says:

"It follows further from the fact that the essence of the State is Power, that it cannot

IMPERIAL EXPANSION

recognise any arbitrating judge above itself [The Hague Tribunal], and that its legal obligation must in the last resort be determined by itself. We must bear this in mind, and not be such Philistines as to judge things, during great crises, from a lawyer's point of view. When Prussia broke the Treaty of Tilsit, it did wrong from the point of view of civil law. But who will be brazen enough to say that to-day? Even the French no longer say it. This applies also to international treaties which are not quite so immoral as that between Prussia and France was. Every State retains its right to decide its treaty-obligations, and the historian cannot use any rigid standard in this respect. He must ask himself the deeper question, whether the absolute duty of self-preservation does not justify the State?

“So it was in Italy in 1859. On the face

TREITSCHKE

of it Piedmont was the aggressor ; and Austria and its servile admirers in Germany did not forget to complain of the disturbance of their eternal peace. In reality Italy had been in a state of siege for years. No high-minded nation can tolerate such a state of things, and it was really Austria that attacked, because for years it had deeply injured Italy ” (I., 102).

It is hardly necessary to point out the vital relation of these principles to the present situation. Very frequently in Treitschke we find the principle introduced that a nation is in a state of latent warfare when it is, in its own opinion, unjustly treated by another nation, or heavily pressed by the commercial rivalry of another nation. And since, according to his further principles, a State can in time of war annul all its treaties, this condition of latent warfare will equally justify it in ignoring a treaty-obligation. The way from

IMPERIAL EXPANSION

these principles to the cynical violation of the treaty which guaranteed the neutrality of Belgium is perfectly clear.

But Treitschke goes even beyond this flagrant principle. Since the State is Power, and there can be no higher power in this world to direct its action, and since Christianity has no moral code to limit its own decisions, it follows that it can withdraw its assent to a treaty at any moment when its influence requires the violation of the treaty. In this respect there is a remarkable passage in the first chapter of his *Politik* :

“ The idea of Sovereignty must not be rigid : it must be elastic and relative, like all political conceptions. Every State will, in its own interest, restrict its Sovereignty in some respects by treaties. When a State concludes treaties with another State, its completeness as a Power is more or less curtailed. But that does

TREITSCHKE

not alter the rule; for every treaty is a voluntary restriction of a State's own power, and all treaties under international law embody the clause: *rebus sic stantibus*. A State cannot bind its will for the future in relation to another State. The State has no higher judge above it, and will therefore conclude all treaties with that mental reservation. This is confirmed by the fact that, wherever there is an international law, all treaties between two States which go to war cease the moment war is declared; yet every State, being sovereign, has assuredly the right to declare war when it wills, hence every State is in a position to cancel the treaties which it has concluded. The progress of history is based on this constant alteration of treaties; and each State must take care that its treaties are alive, and not antiquated, so that another Power may not undo them by a declaration of

IMPERIAL EXPANSION

war. Treaties which have outlived their uses must be denounced and replaced by new treaties corresponding to the new conditions. Hence it is clear that treaties under international law which restrict the will of a State are not absolute restrictions, but limits voluntarily imposed upon itself" (I., 37).

Here we have the complete "scrap-of-paper" theory, clothed in the most dignified academic language. It may seem singular that the diplomatists of Europe have not earlier taken into account, the fact, that this immoral principle was being taught, with a kind of official authority, from the political chair of Berlin. In point of fact, the diplomatists of Europe were perfectly aware that this doctrine was current in Prussia, and were fully prepared for the violation of the neutrality of Belgium. This does not alter the thoroughly corrupt nature of the principles

TREITSCHKE

laid down by Treitschke, and, after the present war, it will have to be seen whether the international conduct of Europe cannot be cleansed from these devices, taken from the lowest and most contemptible branches of commerce.

Treitschke, who has a great scorn for the supposed Jesuit principle that the end justifies the means—a principle, I may remark, which no Jesuit ever did formulate—is really always acting upon that principle. After laying down some of these astonishing rules about the violation of treaties, he insists that they are entirely justified if the State has “moral aims.” He takes the case of Napoleon I., who, one would think, was an admirable instance of the carrying-out of his principles. On the contrary, he totally disapproves of the imperialist campaign of Napoleon I., not on the grounds on which most historians to-day condemn Napoleon—that is to say,

IMPERIAL EXPANSION

not on the ground that it is monstrous to immolate the lives of millions of men on the altar of one man's ambition—but on the ground that “France was unable to assimilate what it had conquered.” Here we have at once an ingenious way of condemning Napoleon and thoroughly justifying the imperialist [dream] of [Germany]. When Treitschke goes on to say that Napoleon is also to be condemned because he turned the rich diversity of peoples in Europe into “the dreary monotony of a world Empire,” he seems to forget that this is precisely the aim of his Pan-German politics. In the other chapters of his book where he sketches the internal ideal of a State, we shall see that dreary monotony, to be rigidly enforced, is its first characteristic. However, in the end he has recourse to the remarkable principle that “morality must be political, if politics

TREITSCHKE

is to be moral: that is to say, moralists must recognise that a moral judgment on the State must be based on the nature and aims of the State, not on the nature and aims of the individual" (I., 105). He makes his meaning still more clear by directly approaching the supposed Jesuit maxim. After what he has already said, we read with astonishment the following words: "Up to this point there will hardly be any serious difference of opinion among thoughtful people." He continues:

"We now come to a series of very different questions, when we ask how far it is permissible in politics to use means which are reprehensible in civil life to attain ends which are in themselves moral. The famous Jesuit maxim is crude and radical in its outspokenness, but no one can deny that it contains a certain truth. There are countless instances, both in political and private life, where it is

IMPERIAL EXPANSION

impossible to use entirely proper means. If it is possible, of course, to realise a moral aim by moral means, they are to be preferred, even if they are slower and less convenient.

“ We have already seen that the power of truth and candour in politics is much greater than is generally supposed. . . . On the whole, however, it is clear that political matters must be adapted to the sentiments and ideas of peoples at a lower grade of culture, when we have to deal with them. An historian who would judge European politics in Africa or the East on the same principles as in Europe would be a fool. The nation is lost which cannot terrify such peoples. We cannot blame the English for tying the Hindoos to cannon during the Mutiny and scattering their ‘bodies on the winds, since death was instantaneous.’ It is clear that in such a case it is necessary to terrify; and if we assume that, as the

TREITSCHKE

English assert, the English government in India is moral and necessary, we cannot refuse to employ these means.

“ We must apply a standard varying with the place as well as with the age. If we further admit that great States are very often in a condition of concealed warfare [in commerce] for decades, it is quite clear that many diplomatic deceptions are justified by this condition of latent war. Take, for instance, the negotiations between Bismarck and Benedetti. Bismarck had, perhaps, still some hope of avoiding a great war. Then Benedetti came with his preposterous demand. Was not Bismarck fully justified in deluding him with a sort of assent, and inducing him to think that Germany would agree? It is the same, in the same circumstances of latent warfare, with the use of bribery against other States. It is ridiculous to pose as moralists

IMPERIAL EXPANSION

in this matter, and tell a State in such circumstances to read its catechism. Before the outbreak of the Seven Years' War, Frederick the Great suspected that a storm was about to break on his little State. He therefore bribed two Saxon-Polish secretaries at Dresden and Warsaw. . . . There is no State in the world which, at such a time, would not have recourse to bribery and spying" (I., 105-107).

Once again we are reading the texts of the gospel on which the brutal campaign of the year 1914 is based. Treitschke at last finds something in English history of which he can approve. He goes back a hundred years, to a time when modern humanitarianism was unknown, and when the circumstances were such that no other European nation is ever likely to find itself in them. On this highly exceptional and ancient precedent he lays

TREITSCHKE

down the general principle that the soldiers of an invading army must terrify the population. That is as we know the principle embodied in the German military manuals and carried out with such appalling results in the invasion of Belgium and France. Hardly a single outrage has been done under official direction, or is recommended in the pages of Treitschke's pupil, Bernhardi, which does not find a justification in such passages as these.

Indeed the broader principle that you must use moral means if they are possible, but otherwise choose any which will serve your purpose, will cover the whole of the worst proceedings which we have already witnessed. They cover also that repulsive network of spies which Germany spread over the world, deeply corrupting the character of individuals and making permanently bitter the relations

IMPERIAL EXPANSION

of foreigners to each other. They justify, if indeed they do not command, the network of mendacity which was spread over the world once the war was declared. They approve the enlisting of savage tribes in the German service in South Africa. I may remark in passing that Treitschke fully approved the use of coloured troops by European nations. He refers expressly to the use of the Turcos by the French in 1870, and says that the French had a perfect right to employ them. He is, of course, thinking of the coming days when Germany will have her colonies beyond the seas, and will be able to draw from them contingents of coloured troops, for the further expansion of her territory. But we need not draw out in detail all the consequences of these principles; they cover the brutal action of the Germans from Belgium to Constantinople and Cairo, from their intrigues in America

TREITSCHKE

to their intrigues in our South African Colony.

All this is, of course, only a preparation for that future expansion of Germany which Treitschke regards as a sacred duty. We have already seen on different pages how he advocates this expansion. We have seen that he quite plainly directs the ambition of Germany toward the occupation of Belgium and Holland, if not of Denmark. Germany must possess the whole course of her rivers and a coast line in proportion to her size and population: this is for him a sacred and a moral duty. It is equally incumbent on Germany to obtain colonies. He speaks of the moral duty of sharing what has been called, with some hypocrisy, "the white man's burden": Germany is compelled by her civilisation to join with the other peoples in raising the lower races to a higher level. We

IMPERIAL EXPANSION

need not examine how much sincerity there is in this plea, because Treitschke makes it quite clear that he has far different grounds for demanding colonies. A few passages taken here and there in his works give perhaps a more sincere idea of his colonial ambitions :

“The command of the sea is particularly useful in this respect. ‘The freedom of the sea makes the mind free,’ as the ancient Greeks truly said. The time may come when States which are without oversea possessions will no longer count as great States ” (43-48).

“It may be said that no State can be largely and permanently developed without an approach to the sea. Every great State which aspires to stand on its own feet must have a coast line. Then it is really free. This is so true that we can explain whole periods of history on this ground alone. The key to the contrast which we find in the

TREITSCHKE

history of Germany and Poland lies in this truth. The German colonisation of the coast went so far eastward, while the territory inland remained Slav, that a deadly enmity arose which no one could prevent. Poland was bound to aspire to win the mouths of her rivers, and this the Germans could not allow. Thus, there arose a territorial conflict which could not be remedied. Every young and aspiring people presses pitilessly towards the coast" (p. 215).

"The conquest of lands beyond the Atlantic is now the first aim of European fleets. For, as the aim of human civilisation is the aristocracy of the white race over the whole globe, the importance of any nation will in the end be determined by the share it has in the domination of the transatlantic world. Hence the Fleet becomes more and more important in our time" (II., 412).

IMPERIAL EXPANSION

“ A nation that seeks to acquire new territory to exploit, in order to feed its growing population, shows the measure of its trust in God. It is scandalous to see the frivolity with which these grave matters are discussed to-day. People sing the old song in a new form : ‘ My Fatherland must become smaller.’ That is sheer perversity. We must and will have our share in the control of the globe by the white race. In this we have a great deal to learn from England. A Press that dismisses these grave matters with a few jokes shows that it has no appreciation of the sacredness of the aims of our civilisation. It is a healthy and normal thing for a civilised people to forestall by colonisation on a large scale the dangers of over-population. . . . The material and moral advantages of this aggrandisement of the nation cannot be exaggerated ” (I., 233 and 234).

TREITSCHKE

“ All the great peoples of history have felt, when they became strong, the impulse to impress their civilisation on barbaric lands. To-day we see the various peoples of Europe roaming over the whole world, trying to create an aristocracy of the white race. The nation that does not take its part in this enterprise will play a lamentable rôle later on. It is, therefore, a question of life and death for a great nation to seek Colonial expansion. . . . We [Germans] see now what we have lost. One of the appalling consequences of the last half-century is that England has appropriated the globe. The Continent, being in a state of constant trouble, had no time to look over the seas, and England took everything. The Germans had to look on helplessly ; they had enough to do in fighting their neighbours and in their internal troubles. Beyond question a great Colonial development is an advantage

IMPERIAL EXPANSION

to a nation. Those amongst us who oppose the acquisition of Colonies are short-sighted. The whole question of Germany depends on how many million men will speak German in the future.

“It is nonsense to say that emigration to America is any advantage to Germany. What has Germany gained by the fact that thousands of her best sons, who could not support themselves at home, have turned their backs upon her? They are lost to her for ever. Although the emigrant himself is perhaps still linked with his native land by certain natural bonds, his children, and certainly his grand-children, are no longer Germans; the German only too easily learns to deny his country. They are assuredly not in a position to keep up their nationality in America. Just as the Huguenots, when they migrated to the Mark of Brandenburg, were, on the average, more highly

TREITSCHKE

cultivated than the Brandenburgers, yet most of them lost their nationality, so we find with the Germans in America. Nearly a third of the population of North America is of German extraction. How much valuable strength have we not lost, and are losing daily, without the least compensation! We have lost both the labour and the capital of the emigrants. What an enormous advantage they would have brought us if they had become colonists!

“The kind of colonisation which maintains the nationality of the country of origin is a matter of immense importance for the future of the world. On it depends the extent to which each people will take its share in the domination of the world by the white race. It is quite conceivable that a country without colonies will cease to be one of the great Powers of Europe, however powerful it once

IMPERIAL EXPANSION

was. Hence we must not lapse into that state of stagnation which comes of a purely continental policy, *and the issue of our next successful war must be the acquisition of a colony.*

“ Who first awakened the Scandinavians and the Russians to civilisation? Copenhagen was German: so was Novgorod. . . . The greatest colonisations the world has ever seen since the time of the Romans were brought about by Germans. We have realised every conceivable form of colonisation. . . . The civilising a barbaric people is the best. They have to choose between merging in the superior nation or being annihilated. That is the way the Germans acted in regard to the Prussians: they were either destroyed or turned into Germans. And, however cruel this process of development must be, it is a blessing for humanity. It is a sound thing that happens

TREITSCHKE

in these cases. The nobler people conquers and assimilates the less noble. It is the normal procedure for the political conqueror to impose his own civilisation and ways upon the conquered " (I., 123-127).

On the very next page Treitschke shows that this advantage of incorporation in a nobler Empire applies just as well to the small States of Europe as to the barbaric lands beyond the seas. He now says openly :
" In the West a number of outposts of the old German Empire have developed into independent States. It is possible, and is greatly to be desired, that Holland should some day return to the Fatherland " (128).

These passages give the whole gospel of Pan-Germanism. Germany is to overspread the little States which are her neighbours to the west ; Germany is to cripple the power of England, which stands in the way of her

IMPERIAL EXPANSION

colonial ambitions. We have, further, the full justification of the methods which we have seen actually employed in our own time to realise this Pan-German ideal. It will now be fully realised how deeply the teaching of this fanatical historian has tainted the blood of Germany. When, moreover, it passes into the characters of men with less strict personal principles than Treitschke himself, we realise that it can easily become an instrument of entirely brutal conduct. There can be no question but that Treitschke has been the chief and most profound influence in the formation of the German mind of to-day.

CHAPTER VI
THE GERMAN "KULTUR"

CHAPTER VI

THE GERMAN "KULTUR"

ALTHOUGH it is not essential for the purpose of this work, it will nevertheless be of some interest, to consider the nature of this *Kultur* which Germany has to impose upon the world. We have seen repeatedly that her expansion is merely to be justified by this task; it becomes a sacred mission, a kind of Crusade, for the sake of which Germans must make such sacrifices as men made at the call of Peter the Hermit. I have already explained that *Kultur* does not mean culture. Even within his own department of culture Treitschke had something like a contempt for knowledge as such. He was a most in-

TREITSCHKE

dustrious historian, a writer of considerable ability, yet every part of his work has a strictly practical aim; the higher or mental culture, as a German would call it, would not seem to either Treitschke or Bernhardi, or any one of their pupils, worth the wasting of a single army corps. Treitschke, at least, has a definite structure of society in view when he talks of the elevated *Kultur* of Germany. It is that ideal of a State which the two volumes of his *Politik* describe so minutely and, one must add, so repulsively. We have already had many glimpses of this social ideal, but it will now be an advantage to sum up the scattered references, and let the English reader see what would be the result for every Germanised land, if Austria and Germany won in the present war. It is quite true that what Treitschke holds out as a sacred banner for the really devout followers of his gospel is

THE GERMAN "KULTUR"

merely a hypocritical pretence for many of his soldier followers, and is little more than a shibboleth for the vast majority of the German people, but it is none the less interesting to examine it.

Treitschke's ideal of a State is an antiquated, mediæval, and intolerable scheme which the majority of educated Germans would not tolerate for a moment. They repeat the language which they have learned from him, only because it gives some consecration, in the name of learning and of morals, to their imperialist ambitions. The nineteenth century is an age of transition. From earlier days we have received the doctrine of the divine right of Kings. Whatever views we may hold, in the various states of Europe to-day, on the subject of monarchy, the old legend of the divine right of Kings is entirely discredited. Yet Treitschke had to build

TREITSCHKE

essentially upon this legend. On no other foundation could he raise the extraordinary power which he wished to put into the hand of the head of the State. The Hohenzollern possessed this power by a mystic divine right, and therefore there was no need for Treitschke to seek to justify it. All constitutional monarchies were, as we saw, derided by him because they had not his principle of legitimacy in their royal houses. This saved him from the confusion which might ensue if there were a dozen royal houses, each claiming a divine right and a divine mission. But in his eyes France was a decrepit republic, Russia too barbarous to be taken into account, and England had forfeited her real title of monarchy. The Emperor of Germany alone, therefore, had a just title to supreme power, within and without, and, when we find in recent years that monarch

THE GERMAN "KULTUR"

speaking of the use of the mailed fist, he is only repeating, in more popular language, Treitschke's theory of monarchy. We have seen how this despotic power will work out as regards other States. It is curbed not even by moral law or religious codes. Internally, or in its relation to its own people, this power would exert the most intolerable oppression.

Against this antiquated view modern Germany was protesting with increasing disdain, and in his later years Treitschke was as sour and pessimistic as he describes Bismarck to have been. The view was spreading in Germany—the common-sense view of the vast majority of people in every civilised State to-day—that the institutions of the State exist for the welfare of the people, and it is only so long as the military system exists that the State will have this painful and exacting duty to form them into armies for the defence

alas!

TREITSCHKE

of their land and property. The essential thing in the life of a State is to promote the progress and happiness of the individual citizens to the utmost of its power ; to educate the ignorant, to mitigate the burden of poverty, to organise or at least direct the industrial world, to care for the weak and powerless, to administer justice and to lay as little restriction on its people as these purposes will allow. To Treitschke this was "materialism." He says :

and it is.

"The modern individualistic conception, which adorns itself with so many names, is leagues removed from the ancient idea of the State's duty. It starts from the principle that the State must, internally and externally, protect life and property, and the State in this restricted sense is called emphatically the Legal State. This theory is the legitimate offspring of the old idea of natural right.

THE GERMAN "KULTUR"

According to it, the State may be only a means for the life-aims of the individuals who compose it; we have already seen that this is a contradiction in terms. The more idealistic the terms in which you conceive human life, the more you are forced to conclude that the State's best policy is to confine itself to external protection alone. . . . The State is a moral community; it is summoned to positive work for the education of the race; and its final aim is to compel the people, in and through it, to form a definite character. That is the highest moral duty of a people, as well as of an individual" (I., 79).

This theory imposes the State upon the citizens without any consultation of their will. It lends itself to the most arbitrary laws at the will of an absolute monarch. Treitschke, as we saw, very grudgingly allows a certain measure of popular representation, but he has

TREITSCHKE

not the slightest sympathy with it. He left the Reichstag in disdain, and he constantly holds that the guidance of a God-inspired monarch is far better than the deliberations of a Parliament. Of popular consent, either to the laws or the forms of a State, he will not hear for a moment. He says :

“ The State is the public power of defence and offence. It is in the first degree Power, in order to assert itself : it is not the totality of the people, as Hegel supposes in his glorification of a State. The people does not wholly constitute it, but the State protects and embraces the life of the people, externally directing it on all sides. It does not ask about their good-will : it demands obedience. Its laws must be observed, willingly or unwillingly. It is an advantage when the placid obedience of the citizens is accompanied by an internal rational assent : but this

THE GERMAN "KULTUR"

assent is not absolutely necessary. Empires have lasted for centuries, as powerful and highly developed States, without any such internal allegiance on the part of their citizens.

"What the State chiefly wants is external compliance. It insists that it be obeyed: its nature is to realise what it wills. . . . Power is the principle of the State, Faith the principle of the Church, Love the principle of the Home. The State says: 'It makes no difference to me what you think—you have got to obey.' That is why sensitive natures find it so difficult to understand the life of the State. It may be said of women as a whole that they normally attain an understanding of State and Right only through their husbands: just as a normal man has no feeling for the small details of economy. That is easily understood, for the idea of Power is

TREITSCHKE

assuredly hard, yet the highest and first thing is thoroughly to submit to it. . . .

“The State is not an Academy of Art: when it abdicates its power in favour of the ideal aspirations of humanity it belies its own nature and perishes. The belying of its own power is for the State the real sin against the Holy Ghost; to attach oneself to a foreign State on sentimental grounds, as we Germans have so often done in regard to England, is really a mortal sin. Hence it is that the power of ideas has only a limited significance in the State. Certainly it is very great, but ideas alone do not advance political powers” (I., 32-34).

ex. At times Treitschke descends from these mystic heights, and offers what he would call materialist arguments for his position. He tries to prove on utilitarian grounds that the monarchy is the ideal institution. Parlia-

THE GERMAN "KULTUR"

ments, he says, "are always less scrupulous than monarchs," but as a rule he wishes to pledge his whole case on the divine right of the monarch. Dealing with various forms of constitution in his second volume, he says:

"It is a secondary consideration that the will of the State is vested in a single personality: the more important point is that this power has not been *bestowed on* the King, but rests on its own rights. It has its power from itself, and that is the chief reason why a monarch is better able to dispense social justice, and does better dispense it, than any republic. Republicans find it more difficult to be just because of their system of party-government. In history the monarchies have always been more distinguished for justice than republics" (II., 53).

Even many who share Treitschke's conclusion must have carefully avoided his

TREITSCHKE

argument. The idea that justice is better administered in the Kingdom of Prussia than in the modern United States, or that it was better administered in ancient Athens than in the ancient Roman Empire, is too preposterous to be considered. Not much better are Treitschke's other arguments for his absolute monarchy by divine right. He says again :

ex. notable. " Owing to his exalted position the monarch can see further than ordinary men. The ordinary man surveys only a small area of life, especially when we consider the involuntary class-prejudices which surround him. There are prejudices of the middle-class and the scholar, as well as prejudices of the nobility. They see only a small section, not the whole of society. Whereas it is clear that a monarch must know more than any of his subjects about the whole life of the nation :

THE GERMAN "KULTUR"

that he is in a position to appreciate the resources of society more accurately than the average man can. This is especially true in regard to foreign affairs. The King can judge much better than any of his subjects, or even than a Republican party-government, the real facts about the whole situation abroad" (II., 55).

correct.

We must take such passages in connection with the constant glorification of the Hohenzollerns in his historical writings. We certainly cannot suppose that this part of Treitschke's doctrine has been taken very seriously in educated Berlin; and the other States composing the German Empire must have deeply resented many of Treitschke's remarks. He tells us that on one occasion Bismarck wished to restrain the Emperor William I. from taking a certain step, and told him that the representatives of the Empire would not agree

TREITSCHKE

to it. William I. angrily retorted to Bismarck, "the Empire is merely an enlargement of Prussia." Treitschke's only comment on this is that it was "the brusque expression of a soldier, but true." He glorifies Bismarck and all the servants of the Prussian State in the same proportion. "The essential thing in a great statesman," he says, "is strength of will, massive ambition, and a passionate joy in success." The men whom Goethe called "the Apes and Pugs and Parrots of Frederick the Great" stand out in his pages as heroic figures in the history of Prussia. There can be little doubt that only a very restricted group among the educated people of Germany can have taken his doctrine of autocracy seriously.

Treitschke groups together all the advancing movements of Europe, which are, of course, ably represented in Germany,

THE GERMAN "KULTUR"

under the general heading of Liberalism or Radicalism. Against this theory of the State he waged an implacable war. We must, however, understand that what Treitschke calls Liberalism does not coincide with the political party of any country, which goes by that name. It is really the whole humanitarian spirit, as applied to the work of a State. Yet this is how Treitschke meets the feeling which is now accepted by both political parties in this and every other enlightened country: "There is a natural difference between the social and the political conception of the State. We may regard the State from above—from the point of view of the government—and ask: 'What secures its power?' The question of the material condition of its subjects is secondary from this political point of view of the State. The social view, on the other hand, approaches the State