

I dare say that the belief in the sole guilt of Germany is not possible even to M. Poincaré. But if one can construct a policy based upon the theory of Germany's sole guilt, it is clear that one should grimly stick to this theory, or at least give oneself the appearance of conviction.

General Sukhomlinoff (Russian Minister of War). Quoted by M. Vaillant Conturier in the Chamber of Deputies ("Journal Officiel," July 5, 1922).

The Press and publicists also changed their tone.

To saddle Germany with the sole responsibility for the war is from what we already know—and more will come—an absurdity. To frame a treaty on an absurdity is an injustice. Humanly, morally, and historically the Treaty of Versailles stands condemned, quite apart from its economic monstrosities.

Austin Harrison, Editor "English Review."

Did vindictive nations ever do anything meaner, falser, or more cruel than when the Allies, by means of the Versailles Treaty, forced Germany to be the scapegoat to bear the guilt which belonged to all? What nation carries clean hands and a pure heart?

Charles F. Dole.

In 1923 the representatives of the nations assembled on a Temporary Mixed Commission to draft a Treaty of Mutual Assistance under the auspices of the League of Nations. Fully aware of what had been declared to be by their Governments a flagrant and indisputable instance of unprovoked aggression on the part of Germany, they found themselves quite unable to define "unprovoked aggression." The Belgian, Brazilian, French, and Swedish delegations said, in the course of a memorandum:

It is not enough merely to repeat the formula "unprovoked aggression," for under the conditions of modern

warfare it would seem impossible to decide even in theory what constitutes a case of aggression.

This view was practically adopted and the Committee of Jurists, when consulted, suggested that the term "aggression" should be dropped. The future case under the Covenant of the League of Nations of a nation which refused the recommendation of the Council or the verdict of the Court and resorted to arms was substituted as constituting a war of aggression.

In 1925, in the preamble of the Locarno Pact drawn up between Germany, France, and Great Britain, there is not the faintest echo of the accusation; on the contrary, a phrase is actually inserted as follows :

Anxious to satisfy the desire for security and protection which animates the peoples upon whom fell the scourge of the war 1914-1918 (*les nations qui ont eu à subir le fléau de la guerre*).

This is no place to enter into the question of responsibility, to shift the blame from one nation to another, or to show the degree in which Germany was indeed responsible. Sole responsibility is a very different thing from some responsibility. The Germans and Austrians were busy, not without good evidence, in accusing Russia. But the disputes and entanglements and the deplorable ineptitude of diplomacy on all sides in the last few weeks were not, any more than the murder of the Archduke, the cause of the war, although special documents are always produced to give the false impression.

The causes were precedent and far-reaching, and it is doubtful if even the historians of the future will be able to apportion the blame between the Powers concerned with any degree of accuracy.

Lord Cecil of Chelwood recently put his finger on the most undoubted of all the contributory and immediate causes. Speaking in the City in 1927, he referred to "the gigantic competition in armaments before the war," and said :

No one could deny that the state of mind produced by armament competitions prepared the soil on which grew up the terrible plant which ultimately fruited in the Great War.

The above series of quotations will suffice to show how the sole culpability of the enemy is, as always, a war-time myth. The great success of the propaganda, however, leaves the impression fixed for a long time on the minds of those who want to justify to themselves their action in supporting the war and of those who have not taken the trouble to follow the subsequent withdrawals and denials. Moreover, the myth is allowed to remain, so far as possible, in the public mind in the shape of fear of "unprovoked aggression," and becomes the chief, and indeed the sole, justification for preparations for another war.

V

PASSAGE OF RUSSIAN TROOPS THROUGH GREAT BRITAIN

No obsession was more widespread through the war than the belief in the last months of 1914 that Russian troops were passing through Great Britain to the Western Front. Nothing illustrates better the credulity of the public mind in war-time and what favourable soil it becomes for the cultivation of falsehood.

How the rumour actually originated it is difficult to say. There were subsequently several more or less humorous suggestions made: of a telegram announcing the arrival of a large number of Russian eggs, referred to as "Russians"; of the tall, bearded individual who declared from the window of a train that he came from "Ross-shire"; and of the excited French officer with imperfect English pronunciation who went about near the front, exclaiming, "Where are de rations." But General Sukhomlinoff, in his memoirs, states that Sir George Buchanan, the British Ambassador in Russia, actually requested the dispatch of "a complete Russian army corps" to England, and English ships were to be brought to Archangel for the transport of these troops. The Russian General Staff, he adds, came to the conclusion that "Buchanan had lost his reason."

Whatever the origin may have been, the rumour spread like wild-fire, and testimony came from every part of the country from people who had seen the

Russians. They were in trains with the blinds down, on platforms stamping the snow off their boots ; they called hoarsely for "vodka" at Carlisle and Berwick-on-Tweed, and they jammed the penny-in-the-slot machine with a rouble at Durham. The number of troops varied according to the imaginative powers of the witness.

As the rumour had undoubted military value, the authorities took no steps to deny it. A telegram from Rome appeared giving "the official news of the concentration of 250,000 Russian troops in France." With regard to this telegram the official Press Bureau stated : "That there was no confirmation of the statements contained in it, but that there was no objection to them being published." As there was a strict censorship of news, the release of this telegram served to confirm the rumour and kept the false witnesses busy.

On September 9, 1914, the following appeared in the *Daily News* :

The official sanction to the publication of the above (the telegram from Rome) removes the newspaper reserve with regard to the rumours which for the last fortnight have coursed with such astonishing persistency through the length and breadth of England. Whatever be the unvarnished truth about the Russian forces in the West, so extraordinary has been the ubiquity of the rumours in question, that they are almost more amazing if they are false than if they are true. Either a baseless rumour has obtained a currency and a credence perhaps unprecedented in history, or, incredible as it may appear, it is a fact that Russian troops, whatever the number may be, have been disembarked and passed through this country, while not one man in ten thousand was able to say with certainty whether their very existence was not a myth.

The Press on the whole, was reserved, fearing a

trap, and the *Daily Mail* suggested that the Russian Consul-General's statement that "about 5,000 Russian reservists have permission to serve the Allies" might be at the bottom of the rumour. Like a popular book, the rumour spread more from verbal personal communications than on account of Press notices.

On September 14, 1914, the *Daily News* again returned to the subject :

As will be seen from the long dispatch of Mr. P. J. Philip, our special correspondent, Russian troops are now co-operating with the Belgians. This information proves the correctness of the general impression that Russian troops have been moved through England.

"*Daily News*," September 14, 1914.

(*Dispatch.*)

To-night, in an evening paper, I find the statement "de bonne source" that the German Army in Belgium has been cut . . . by the Belgian *Army reinforced by Russian* troops. The last phrase unseals my pen. For two days I have been on a long trek looking for the Russians, and now I have found them—where and how it would not be discreet to tell, but the published statement that they are here is sufficient, and of my own knowledge I can answer for their presence.

An official War Office denial of the rumour was noted by the *Daily News* on September 16, 1914.

The *Daily Mail*, September 9, 1914, contained a facetious article on the Russian rumour, concluding :

But now we are told from Rome that the Russians are in France. How are we all going to apologize to the Bernets, Brocklers, and Pendles—if they were right, after all?

MR. KING asked the Under-Secretary of State for War whether he can state, without injury to the military interests

of the Allies, whether any Russian troops have been conveyed through Great Britain to the Western area of the European War?

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. Tennant): I am uncertain whether it will gratify or displease my hon. friend to learn that no Russian troops have been conveyed through Great Britain to the Western area of the European War.

House of Commons, November 18, 1918.

VI

THE MUTILATED NURSE

MANY atrocity stories were circulated which were impossible to prove or disprove, but in the early months of the war the public was shocked by a horrible story of barbarous cruelty, of which a complete record can be given. It is a curious instance of the ingenuity of the deliberate individual liar.

A NURSE'S TRAGEDY.

DUMFRIES GIRL THE VICTIM OF SHOCKING BARBARITY.

News has reached Dumfries of the shocking death of a Dumfries young woman, Nurse Grace Hume, who went out to Belgium at the outbreak of war. Nurse Hume was engaged at the camp hospital at Vilvorde, and she was the victim of horrible cruelty at the hands of German soldiers. Her breasts were cut off and she died in great agony. Nurse Hume's family received a note written shortly before she died. It was dated September 6th, and ran: "Dear Kate, this is to say good-bye. Have not long to live. Hospital has been set on fire. Germans cruel. A man here had his head cut off. My right breast has been taken away. Give my love to ——— Good-bye. GRACE."

Nurse Hume's left breast was cut away after she had written the note. She was a young woman of twenty-three and was formerly a nurse in Huddersfield Hospital.

Nurse Mullard, of Inverness, delivered the note personally to Nurse Hume's sister at Dumfries. She was also at Vilvorde, and she states that Nurse Hume acted the part of a heroine. A German attacked a wounded soldier whom

Nurse Hume was taken to hospital. The nurse took his gun and shot the German dead.

“*The Star*,” September 16, 1914.

LETTER DELIVERED BY NURSE MULLARD TO MISS HUME.

I have been asked by your sister, Nurse Grace Hume, to hand the enclosed letter to you. My name is Nurse Mullard, and I was with your sister when she died. Our camp hospital at Vilvorde was burned to the ground, and out of 1,517 men and 23 nurses, only 19 nurses were saved, but 149 men managed to get away. Grace requested me to tell you that her last thoughts were of —— and you, and that you were not to worry over her, as she would be going to meet her Jack. These were her last words. She endured great agony in her last hours. One of the soldiers (our men) caught two German soldiers in the act of cutting off her left breast, her right one having been already cut off. They were killed instantly by our soldiers. Grace managed to scrawl the enclosed note before I found her, but we all say that your sister was a heroine. She was out on the fields looking for wounded soldiers, and on one occasion, when bringing in a wounded soldier, a German attacked her. She threw the soldier's gun at him and shot him with her rifle. Of course, all nurses here are armed. I have just received word this moment to pack to Scotland. Will try and get this handed to you, as there is no post from here, and we are making the best of a broken-down wagon truck for a shelter. Will give you fuller details when I see you. We are all quite safe now, as there have been reinforcements.

A condensed account appeared in the *Evening Standard* with the note: “This message has been submitted to the Press Bureau, which does not object to the publication and takes no responsibility for the correctness of the statement.”

A story which attracted particular attention both because of its peculiar atrocity and because of the circumstantial

details which accompanied it, was told in several of the evening papers on Wednesday. It was first published, we believe, in the *Dumfries Standard* on Wednesday morning and related to an English nurse, who was said to have been killed by Germans in Belgium with the most revolting cruelty. This nurse came from Dumfries and, according to the *Dumfries Standard*, the story was told to the nurse's sister in Dumfries by another nurse from Belgium, who also gave an account of it in a letter. Further, the *Dumfries Standard* published a facsimile of a letter said to have been written by the murdered nurse when dying to her sister in Dumfries. The story therefore appeared to be particularly well authenticated and, as we say, it was published by a number of London evening papers of repute, including the *Pall Mall* and *Westminster Gazette*, the *Globe*, the *Star*, and the *Evening Standard*. But late on Wednesday night it was discovered to be entirely untrue, since the nurse in question was actually in Huddersfield and had never been to Belgium, though she volunteered for the front. The remaining fact is that her sister in Dumfries states, according to the *Yorkshire Post*, that she was visited by a "Nurse Mullard," professing to be a nurse from Belgium, who told her the story and gave her the letter from her sister in a handwriting that resembled her sister's.

"*Times*" *Leader*, September 18, 1914.

The Times goes on to call for an inquiry and to suggest that the story may have been invented by German agents in order to discredit all atrocity stories.

Kate Hume, seventeen, was charged at Dumfries yesterday, before Sheriff Substitute Primrose, with having uttered a forged letter purporting to have been written by her sister, Nurse Grace Hume, in Huddersfield. She declined to make any statement, on the advice of her agent, and was committed to prison to await trial.

"*The Times*," September 30, 1914.

The case came before the High Court at Dumfries, and

it was proved that Kate Hume (the sister) had fabricated the whole story and forged both the letter from her sister and that from "Nurse Mullard" and had communicated them to the Press.

"The Times," December 29 and 30, 1914.

VII

THE CRIMINAL KAISER

HAVING declared the enemy the sole culprit and originator of the war, the next step is to personify the enemy. As a nation consists of millions of people and the absurd analogy of an individual criminal and a nation may become apparent even to moderately intelligent people, it is necessary to detach an individual on whom may be concentrated all the vials of the wrath of an innocent people who are only defending themselves from "unprovoked aggression." The sovereign is the obvious person to choose. While the Kaiser on many occasions, by his bluster and boasting, had been a subject of ridicule and offence, nevertheless, not many years before, his portrait had appeared in the *Daily Mail* with "A friend in need is a friend indeed" under it. And as late as October 17, 1913, the *Evening News* wrote:

We all acknowledge the Kaiser as a very gallant gentleman whose word is better than many another's bond, a guest whom we are always glad to welcome and sorry to lose, a ruler whose ambitions for his own people are founded on as good right as our own.

When the signal was given, however, all this could be forgotten and the direct contrary line taken. The Kaiser turned out to be a most promising target for concentrated abuse. So successfully was it done that exaggeration soon became impossible; every crime in the calendar was laid at his door authoritatively, publicly and privately; and this was kept up all through the

war. His past was reviewed, greatly to his discredit. Over his desire to fight Great Britain while we were engaged in the Boer War, however, there was an unfortunate contradiction in point of fact, as the following two extracts show :

Delcassé, with the help of the Czar, thrust aside German proposals for a Continental combination against us during the Boer War.

"The Times," October 14, 1915 (editorial on Delcassé's resignation).

At the time of the South African War, other nations were prepared to assist the Boers, but they stipulated that Germany should do likewise. The Kaiser refused.

General Botha, reported in the "Daily News," September 3, 1915.

But over his criminality in the Great War there was no difference of opinion.

He had called a secret Council of the Central Powers at Potsdam early in July 1914, at which it was decided to enforce war on Europe. This secret plot was first divulged by a Dutch newspaper in September 1914. The story was revived by *The Times* on July 28, 1917, and again in November 1919. It was believed even in Germany, until reports were received from various officers in touch with the Kaiser showing how he spent these days, and it was finally disposed of and proved to be a myth by the testimony of all those supposed to have taken part in it. This was in 1919, after the story had served its purpose.

Only a few of the thousand references to the Kaiser's personal criminality need be given.

He (the enemy) is beginning to realize the desperate character of the adventure on which the Kaiser embarked when he made this wanton war.

"Daily Mail," October 1, 1914.

The following letter from the late Sir W. B. Richmond, in the *Daily Mail* of September 22, 1914, is a forcibly expressed example of the accepted opinion :

Neither England nor civilized Europe and Asia is going to be set trembling by lunatic William, even though by his order Rheims Cathedral has been destroyed.

This last act of the barbarian chief will only draw us all closer together to be rid of a scourge the like of which the civilized world has never seen before.

The madman is piling up the logs of his own pyre. We can have no terror of the monster ; we shall clench our teeth in determination that if we die to the last man the modern Judas and his hell-begotten brood shall be wiped out.

To achieve this righteous purpose we must be patient and plodding as well as energetic.

Our great England will shed its blood willingly to help rid civilization of a criminal monarch and a criminal court which have succeeded in creating out of a docile people a herd of savages.

Sir James Crichton Browne has said, in Dumfries : " A halter for the Kaiser " ; shooting him would be to give him the honourable death of a soldier. The halter is the shrift for this criminal.

Lord Robert Cecil said that for the terrible outrages, the wholesale breaches of every law and custom of civilized warfare which the Germans had committed, the people who were responsible were the German rulers, the Emperor and those who were closely advising him, and it was upon them, if possible, that our punishment and wrath should fall.

" *The Times*," May 15, 1915.

Cities have been burned, old men and children have been murdered, women and young girls have been outraged, harmless fishermen have been drowned, at this crowned criminal's orders. He will have to answer " at that great day when all the world is judged " for the victims of the *Falaba* and the *Lusitania*.

Leader on depriving the Kaiser of the Order of the Garter,
" *Daily Express*," May 14, 1915.

A *Punch* cartoon in 1918 depicted the Kaiser as Cain. Under it was put :

More than 14,000 non-combatants have been murdered by the Kaiser's orders.

There was a poster portrait of the Kaiser, his face composed of corpses, his mouth streaming with blood, which could be seen on the hoardings. The equivalent of this in France was "Guillaume le Boucher," the Kaiser in an apron with a huge knife dripping with blood. Throughout he was a good subject for the caricaturist, as he was so easy to draw.

The fiction having become popular and being universally accepted in the Allied countries, it became imperative for the Allied statesmen to insert a special clause in the Peace Treaty beginning :

The Allied and Associated Powers publicly arraign William II, of Hohenzollern, formerly German Emperor, for a supreme offence against international morality and the sanctity of treaties,

and going on to describe the constitution of "the special tribunal" before which he was to be tried.

Having committed themselves to the trial of the Kaiser by a clause in the Peace Treaty, the Allies were obliged to go through the formality of addressing a note to the Netherlands Government on January 16, 1920, dwelling on the Kaiser's "immense responsibility" and asking for him to be handed over "in order that he may be sent for trial." The refusal of the Netherlands Government on January 23rd was at once accepted and saved the Allied Governments from making hopeless fools of themselves. But before the

decision was publicly known, and after it had been privately ascertained that the Government of Holland, whither the Kaiser had fled, would *not* give him up, the "Hang the Kaiser" campaign was launched, and in the General Election of 1917 candidates lost votes who would not commit themselves to this policy.

But the campaign had been launched before the decision of the Netherlands Government was made public.

The ruler (the Kaiser), who spoke for her pride and her majesty and her might for thirty years, is now a fugitive, soon to be placed on his trial (loud cheers) before the tribunals of lands which, on behalf of his country, he sought to intimidate.

Mr. Lloyd George, House of Commons, July 3, 1919.

As a matter of fact, there was not the smallest intention of doing anything so absurd as try the Kaiser. Nor did anyone with knowledge of the facts believe him to be in any way personally responsible for starting the war. He was, and always had been, a tinsel figure-head of no account, with neither the courage to make a war nor the power to stop it.

His biographer, Emil Ludwig,¹ has written the most slashing indictment of William II that has appeared in any language, showing up his vanity, his megalomania, and his incompetence. But so far from accusing him of wanting or engineering the war, the author insists, time after time, on the Emperor's pacific attitude. "In all the European developments between 1908 and 1914, the Emperor was more pacific, was even more far-sighted, than his advisers." At the time of the Morocco crisis "the Emperor was peacefully inclined,"

¹ *Kaiser William II*, by Emil Ludwig.

and in the last days of July 1914, speaking of Germany, Austria, and Russia, Ludwig says :

Three Emperors avowedly opposed to war were driven by the ambition, vindictiveness, and incompetence of their Ministers into a conflict whose danger for their thrones they all three recognized from the first and, if only for that reason, tried to avoid.

Even Lord Grey says, now that it is all over :

If matters had rested with him (the Kaiser) there would have been no European War arising out of the Austro-Serbian dispute.

"Twenty-Five Years," vol. ii, p. 25.

Nevertheless, up to 1919 the Kaiser, as the villain of the piece, was set up in the Allied countries as the incarnation of all iniquity.

This very simple form of propaganda had a great influence on the people's feelings. There can be no question that thousands who joined up were under the impression that the primary object of the war was to catch this monster, little knowing that war is like chess : you cannot take the King while the game is going on ; it is against the rules. It would spoil the game. In the same way G.H.Q. on both sides was never bombed because, as a soldier bluntly put it, "Don't you see, it would put an end to the whole bloody business."

Finding he had unfortunately not been caught or killed during the war, the people put their faith in his being tried and hanged when the war was over. If he was all that had been described to them, this was the least that could be expected.

When, as months and years passed, it was discovered that no responsible person really believed, or had ever believed, in his personal guilt, that the cry, "Hang the

Kaiser," was a piece of deliberate bluff, and that when all was over and millions of innocent people had been killed, he, the criminal, the monster, the plotter and initiator of the whole catastrophe, was allowed to live comfortably and peacefully in Holland, the disillusionment to simple, uninformed people was far greater than was ever realized. It was the exposure of this crude falsehood that first led many humble individuals to inquire whether, in other connections, they had not also been duped.

VIII

THE BELGIAN BABY WITHOUT HANDS

Not only did the Belgian baby whose hands had been cut off by the Germans travel through the towns and villages of Great Britain, but it went through Western Europe and America, even into the Far West. No one paused to ask how long a baby would live were its hands cut off unless expert surgical aid were at hand to tie up the arteries (the answer being, a very few minutes). Everyone wanted to believe the story, and many went so far as to say they had seen the baby. The lie was as universally accepted as the passage of the Russian troops through Britain.

One man whom I did not see told an official of the Catholic Society that he had seen with his own eyes German soldiery chop off the arms of a baby which clung to its mother's skirts.

"The Times" Correspondent in Paris, August 27, 1914.

On September 2, 1914, *The Times* Correspondent quotes French refugees declaring: "They cut the hands off the little boys so that there shall be no more soldiers for France."

Pictures of the baby without hands were very popular on the Continent, both in France and in Italy. *Le Rive Rouge* had a picture on September 18, 1915, and on July 26, 1916, made it still more lurid by depicting German soldiers eating the hands. *Le Journal* gave, on April 30, 1915, a photograph of a statue of a child without hands. But the most savage of all, which

contained in it no elements of caricature, was issued by the Allies for propaganda purposes and published in *Critica*, in Buenos Ayres (reproduced in the *Sphere*, January 30, 1925). The heading of the picture was, "The Bible before All," and under it was written: "Suffer little children to come unto Me." The Kaiser is depicted standing behind a huge block with an axe, his hands darkly stained with blood. Round the block are piles of hands. He is beckoning to a woman to bring a number of children, who are clinging to her, some having had their hands cut off already.

Babies not only had their hands cut off, but they were impaled on bayonets, and in one case nailed to a door. But everyone will remember the handless Belgian baby. It was loudly spoken of in buses and other public places, had been seen in a hospital, was now in the next parish, etc., and it was paraded, not as an isolated instance of an atrocity, but as a typical instance of a common practice.

In Parliament there was the usual evasion, which suggested the story was true, although the only evidence given was "seen by witnesses."

MR. A. K. LLOYD asked the First Lord of the Treasury whether materials are available for identifying and tracing the survivors of those children whose hands were cut off by the Germans, and whose cases are referred to by letter and number in the Report of the Bryce Committee; and, if so, whether he will consider the possibility of making the information accessible, confidentially or otherwise, to persons interested in the future of these survivors?

SIR G. CAVE: My Right Hon. Friend has asked me to reply to this question. In all but two of the individual cases in which children were seen by witnesses mutilated in this manner, the child was either dead or dying from the treatment it had received. In view of the fact that these

children were in Belgium, which is still in German occupation, it is unlikely that they could now be traced, and any attempt to do so at this time might lead to the further persecution of the victims or their relatives.

MR. LLOYD: Were there not other cases brought over here to hospital?

SIR G. CAVE: Not the cases to which the Hon. Member's question refers.

House of Commons, December 19, 1916.

Sometimes the handless person was grown up. A Mr. Tyler, at a Brotherhood meeting in Glasgow on April 17, 1915, said he had a friend in Harrogate who had seen a nurse with both her hands cut off by Germans. He gave the address of his informant. A letter was at once addressed to the friend at Harrogate, asking if the statement was correct, but no reply was ever received.

But the most harrowing and artistically dressed version of the handless child story appeared in the *Sunday Chronicle* on May 2, 1915.

Some days ago a charitable great lady was visiting a building in Paris where have been housed for several months a number of Belgian refugees. During her visit she noticed a child, a girl of ten, who, though the room was hot rather than otherwise, kept her hands in a pitiful little worn muff. Suddenly the child said to the mother: "Mamma, please blow my nose for me." "Shocking," said the charitable lady, half-laughing, half-severe, "a big girl like you, who can't use her own handkerchief." The child said nothing, and the mother spoke in a dull, matter-of-fact tone. "She has not any hands now, ma'am," she said.

The grand dame looked, shuddered, understood. "Can it be," she said, "that the Germans——?" The mother burst into tears. That was her answer.

Signor Nitti, who was Italian Prime Minister during the war, states in his memoirs:

To bring the truth of the present European crisis home to the world it is necessary to destroy again and again the vicious legends created by war propaganda. During the war France, in common with other Allies, including our own Government in Italy, circulated the most absurd inventions to arouse the fighting spirit of our people. The cruelties attributed to the Germans were such as to curdle our blood. We heard the story of poor little Belgian children whose hands were cut off by the Huns. After the war a rich American, who was deeply touched by the French propaganda, sent an emissary to Belgium with the intention of providing a livelihood for the children whose poor little hands had been cut off. He was unable to discover one. Mr. Lloyd George and myself, when at the head of the Italian Government, carried on extensive investigations as to the truth of these horrible accusations, some of which, at least, were told specifically as to names and places. Every case investigated proved to be a myth.

Colonel Repington, in his *Diary of the World War*, vol. ii, p. 447, says :

I was told by Cardinal Gasquet that the Pope promised to make a great protest to the world if a single case could be proved of the violation of Belgian nuns or cutting off of children's hands. An inquiry was instituted and many cases examined with the help of the Belgian Cardinal Mercier. Not one case could be proved.

The former French Minister of Finance, Klotz, to whom at the beginning of the war the censorship of the Press was entrusted, says, in his memoirs (*De la Guerre à la Paix*, Paris, Payot, 1924) :

One evening I was shown a proof of the *Figaro*, in which two scientists of repute asserted and endorsed by their signatures that they had seen with their own eyes about a hundred children whose hands had been chopped off by the Germans.

In spite of the evidence of these scientists I entertained doubts as to the accuracy of the report and forbade the publication of it. When the editor of the *Figaro* expressed his indignation, I declared myself ready to investigate, in the presence of the American Ambassador, the matter that would stir the world. I required, however, that the name of the place where these investigations had to take place should be given by the two scientists. I insisted on having these details supplied immediately. I am still without their reply or visit.

But this lie obtained such a hold on people's imagination that it is by no means dead yet. Quite recently a Liverpool poet, in a volume called *A Medley of Song*, has written the following lines in a "patriotic" poem :

They stemmed the first mad onrush
Of the cultured German Hun,
Who'd outraged every female Belgian
And maimed every mother's son.

IX

THE LOUVAIN ALTAR-PIECE

At the Peace Conference the Belgian representatives claimed the wings of Dietrick Bouts's altar-piece in compensation for the famous altar-piece from Louvain, a valuable work of art which they declared had been wantonly thrown into the flames of the burning library by a German officer. The story was accepted and the two pictures transferred. But it was not true.

The *New Statesman* of April 12, 1924, gives the facts :

The Dietrick Bouts altar-piece was not thrown into the flames by the Germans or by anyone else. The picture is still in existence at Louvain, perfectly intact, and the Germans were not its destroyers but its preservers. A German officer saved it from the flames and gave it to the burgo-master, who had it taken for safe custody to the vaults of the Town Hall and walled in there. It has been duly unwalled. . . .

X

THE CONTEMPTIBLE LITTLE ARMY

THERE can be no question that the most successful slogan for recruiting purposes issued during the whole course of the war was the phrase "the contemptible little army," said to have been used by the Kaiser in reference to the British Expeditionary Force. It very naturally created a passionate feeling of resentment throughout the country. The history of this lie and of its exposure is extremely interesting.

In an annexe to B.E.F. Routine Orders of September 24, 1914, the following was issued :

The following is a copy of Orders issued by the German Emperor on August 19th :

"It is my Royal and Imperial command that you concentrate your energies for the immediate present upon one single purpose, and that is that you address all your skill and all the valour of my soldiers to exterminate first, the treacherous English, walk over General French's contemptible little army. . . .

"HEADQUARTERS, AIX LA CHAPELLE, *August 19th.*"

The results of the order were the operations commencing with Mons, and the advance of the seemingly overwhelming masses against us. The answer of the British Army on the subject of extermination has already been given.

Printing Co., R.E.69.

The authenticity of this official military declaration was naturally never questioned, although one attempt was made to pretend that it was an incorrect translation.

The indignation roused throughout the country was heartfelt and widespread.

The Times Military Correspondent referred to the Kaiser as being in "a high state of agitation and excitability," and the leader-writer in *The Times* (October 1, 1914), referring to the statement, said :

In spite of the ferocious order of the Kaiser . . . to-day. "French's contemptible little army" is not yet exterminated.

On the same day *The Times* printed a poem entitled "French's Contemptible Little Army."

The Kaiser scoffed at the British Army and labelled it "contemptible" because it was small. He felt grossly insulted that any army that did not count its men in millions should dare to assail the might of the Hohenzollerns, and against this small British David, in a pronouncement which will certainly be historic, he directed his Goliath legions to "concentrate their energies."

"Daily Express," October 2, 1914.

Mr. Churchill made great play with it in a recruiting speech at the London Opera House on September 11, 1914.

In March 1915 *Punch* had a cartoon of the German Eagle in conversation with the Kaiser: "It's like this, then; you told me the British Lion was contemptible—well—he wasn't."

And again, in 1917 (after the entry of America into the war), a cartoon depicted the Crown Prince saying to the Kaiser (who is drafting his next speech): "For Gott's sake, father, be careful and don't call the American Army 'contemptible'!"

There was not a village in the land where the expression was not known and not a provincial newspaper in which it was not quoted, until at last the word was

used as the designation of the officers and men who were in the original Expeditionary Force. They became known as "the old Contemptibles."

A thorough investigation of the authenticity of this order, "issued by the Kaiser," was undertaken in 1925 with the assistance of a German General, who had the archives in Berlin carefully searched, and of a British General, Sir F. Maurice, who was able to throw a good deal of light on the subject.

While the Kaiser's proverbially foolish indiscretion might account for any preposterous utterance, it was known that he did not issue orders of his own volition; they were prepared for him by his Staff, which was certainly not so ignorant of its business as to tell the German Generals to concentrate their energies upon the extermination of an army when they could not tell them where that army was. Their ignorance of the whereabouts of the British Army was proved by a telegram sent by the German Chief of the Staff to Von Kluck on August 20th (the day after the issue of the supposed order): "Disembarkation of English at Boulogne must be reckoned with. The opinion here, however, is that large disembarkations have not yet taken place."

It was further discovered that German Headquarters were never at Aix la Chapelle. Headquarters moved from Berlin about August 15th and went to Coblenz, later to Luxemburg, from whence they moved to Charleville on September 27th.

A careful search in the archives proved fruitless. No such order or anything like it could be discovered. Not content with this, however, the German General had inquiries made of the ex-Kaiser himself at Doorn. In a marginal note the ex-Kaiser declared he had never

used such an expression, adding: "On the contrary, I continually emphasized the high value of the British Army, and often, indeed, in peace-time gave warning against underestimating it."

General Sir F. Maurice had the German newspaper files searched for the alleged speech or order of the Kaiser, but without success. In an article exposing the fabrication (*Daily News*, November 6, 1925), he remarks that G.H.Q. hit on the idea of using routine orders to issue statements which it was believed would encourage and inspire our men. "Most of these took the form of casting ridicule on the German Army. . . . These efforts were seen to be absurd by the men in the trenches, and were soon dropped."

We may laugh now at this lie and some may be inclined to give some credit to the officer who concocted it, although he made a careless mistake about the whereabouts of the German G.H.Q. There can be no doubt as to its immense success, nevertheless there are many who will share the opinion of a gentleman who wrote to the Press (*Nation and Athenæum*, August 8, 1925), who, having heard that doubt was cast on the authenticity of the well-known and almost hackneyed phrase, remarked on "its extreme seriousness to our national honour or to that of the British officer originally responsible," were it proved to be an invention.

XI

DEUTSCHLAND ÜBER ALLES

A GREAT deal of play was made throughout the war with the opening lines of a German patriotic song.

“Deutschland über Alles auf der ganzen Welt.”

(“Germany above all things in the whole world.”)

There must have been many people who knew sufficient German to understand the meaning of the phrase, but no protest was made at the mistranslation, which was habitually used to illustrate Germany's aggressive imperialist ambitions. It was popularly accepted as meaning, “(Let) Germany (rule) over everywhere in the whole world,” i.e. the German domination of the world.

Mr. Lloyd George used it on September 20, 1914, at Queen's Hall :

Treaties are gone, the honour of nations gone, liberty gone. What is left? Germany, Germany is left.
Deutschland über Alles.

Punch kept it to the front in various cartoons.

The Kaiser, playing on a flute, having abandoned a broken big drum labelled “Deutschland über Alles.”

The Kaiser trying to blow up a pricked balloon labelled “Deutschland über Alles.”

The Kaiser as the High Priest of Moloch. Moloch labelled “Deutschland über Alles.”

It was constantly quoted in numberless articles in the Press. When a prominent Member of Parliament used

the expression in a letter to *The Times*, the incorrect meaning he attributed to it was pointed out to him. He admitted the error, but seemed to consider that the accepted meaning of it justified his using it as he did.

The false meaning spread through the country and the Empire, and the Department of Education in Ontario went so far as to order the song to be eliminated from German school books throughout the province (*The Times*, March 19, 1915).

Even after the war, in November 1921, a leader-writer in a prominent newspaper declared that as long as the Germans stuck to their national anthem, "Deutschland über Alles auf der ganzen Welt," there would be no peace in Europe.

XII

THE BABY OF COURBECK LOO

It is not often that we have a confession of falsehood, but the story of the baby of Courbeck Loo is an illuminating example of an invention related by its author.

Captain F. W. Wilson, formerly editor of the *Sunday Times*, related the story in America in 1922. The following account appeared in the *New York Times* (reproduced in the *Crusader*, February 24, 1922):

A correspondent of the London *Daily Mail*, Captain Wilson, found himself in Brussels at the time the war broke out. They telegraphed out that they wanted stories of atrocities. Well, there weren't any atrocities at that time. So then they telegraphed out that they wanted stories of refugees. So I said to myself, "That's fine, I won't have to move." There was a little town outside Brussels where one went to get dinner—a very good dinner, too. I heard the Hun had been there. I supposed there must have been a baby there. So I wrote a heart-rending story about the baby of Courbeck Loo being rescued from the Hun in the light of the burning homesteads.

The next day they telegraphed out to me to send the baby along, as they had about five thousand letters offering to adopt it. The day after that baby clothes began to pour into the office. Even Queen Alexandra wired her sympathy and sent some clothes. Well, I couldn't wire back to them that there wasn't a baby. So I finally arranged with the doctor that took care of the refugees that the blessed baby died of some very contagious disease, so it couldn't even have a public burial.

And we got Lady Northcliffe to start a crèche with all the baby-clothes.

XIII

THE CRUCIFIED CANADIAN

LIKE so many other stories, this one underwent considerable changes and variations. The crucified person was at one time a girl, at another an American, but most often a Canadian.

Last week a large number of Canadian soldiers, wounded in the fighting round Ypres, arrived at the base hospital at Versculles. They all told a story of how one of their officers had been crucified by the Germans. He had been pinned to a wall by bayonets thrust through his hands and feet, another bayonet had then been driven through his throat, and, finally, he was riddled with bullets. The wounded Canadians said that the Dublin Fusiliers had seen this done with their own eyes, and they had heard the officers of the Dublin Fusiliers talking about it.

"The Times," May 10, 1915. Paris Correspondent.

There is, unhappily, good reason to believe that the story related by your Paris Correspondent of the crucifixion of a Canadian officer during the fighting at Ypres on April 22, 1915, is in substance true. The story was current here at the time, but, in the absence of direct evidence and absolute proof, men were unwilling to believe that a civilized foe could be guilty of an act so cruel and savage.

Now, I have reason to believe, written depositions testifying to the fact of the discovery of the body are in possession of British Headquarters Staff.

The unfortunate victim was a sergeant. As the story was told to me, he was found transfixed to the wooden fence of a farm building. Bayonets were thrust through the palms of his hands and his feet, pinning him to the fence. He had been repeatedly stabbed with bayonets, and there were many punctured wounds in his body.

I have not heard that any of our men actually saw the crime committed. There is room for the supposition that the man was dead before he was pinned to the fence and that the enemy, in his insensate rage and hate of the English, wreaked his vengeance on the lifeless body of his foe.

That is the most charitable complexion that can be put on the deed, ghastly as it is.

There is not a man in the ranks of the Canadians who fought at Ypres who is not firmly convinced that this vile thing has been done. They know, too, that the enemy bayoneted their wounded and helpless comrades in the trenches.

"The Times," May 15, 1915. Correspondent, North France.

MR. HOUSTON asked the Under-Secretary of State for War whether he has any information regarding the crucifixion of three Canadian soldiers recently captured by the Germans, who nailed them with bayonets to the side of a wooden structure.

MR. TENNANT: No, sir; no information of such an atrocity having been perpetrated has yet reached the War Office.

MR. HOUSTON: Is the Right Hon. Gentleman aware that Canadian officers and Canadian soldiers who were eye-witnesses of these fiendish outrages have made affidavits? Has the officer in command at the base at Boulogne not called the attention of the War Office to them?

MR. HARCOURT: No, sir; we have no record of it.

House of Commons, May 12, 1915.

Mr. HOUSTON asked the Under-Secretary of State for War whether he has any official information showing that during the recent fighting, when the Canadians were temporarily driven back, they were compelled to leave about forty of their wounded comrades in a barn, and that on recapturing the position they found the Germans had bayoneted all the wounded with the exception of a sergeant, and that the Germans had removed the figure of Christ from the large village crucifix and fastened the sergeant, while alive, to the cross; and whether he is aware that the crucifixion of our soldiers is becoming a practice of Germans.

MR. TENNANT: The military authorities in France have

standing instructions to send particulars of any authenticated cases of atrocities committed against our troops by the Germans. No official information in the sense of the Hon. Member's question has been received, but, owing to the information conveyed by the Hon. Member's previous question, inquiry is being made and is not yet complete.

House of Commons, May 19, 1915.

The story went the round of the Press here and in Canada, and was used by Members of Parliament on the platform. Its authenticity, however, was eventually denied by General March at Washington.

It cropped up again in 1919, when a letter was published by the *Nation* (April 12th) from Private E. Loader, 2nd Royal West Kent Regiment, who declared he had seen the crucified Canadian. The *Nation* was informed in a subsequent letter from Captain E. N. Bennett that there was no such private on the rolls of the Royal West Kents, and that the 2nd Battalion was in India during the whole war.¹

¹ For the American version see p. 184.

XIV

THE SHOOTING OF THE FRANZÖSLING

THIS is one of the lies which arose from a mistranslation. On September 30, 1914, a communication was issued by the Press Bureau, which was published by *The Times* the following day. It was said to be a copy of the *Kriegschronik* "seized by the Custom House authorities at ports of landing." The extract given was as follows :

A traitor has just been shot (in the Vosges), a little French lad (*ein Französling*) belonging to one of those gymnastic societies which wear tricolour ribbons (i.e. the Éclaireurs, or Boy Scouts), a poor young fellow who, in his infatuation, wanted to be a hero. The German column was passing along a wooded defile, and he was caught and asked whether the French were about. He refused to give information. Fifty yards further on there was fire from the cover of a wood. The prisoner was asked in French if he had known that the enemy was in the forest, and did not deny it. He went with a firm step to a telegraph post and stood up against it, with the green vineyard at his back, and received the volley of the firing party with a proud smile on his face. Infatuated wretch ! It was a pity to see such wasted courage.

Mr. J. A. Hobson wrote, in *The Times* of October 5, 1914, to point out an inaccuracy in the account of German atrocities issued by the Press Bureau and published by *The Times*.

The passage describes how "a little French lad (*ein Französling*)" was shot for refusing to disclose the proximity of some French soldiers. The word "Französling," Mr. Hobson wrote, "does not mean a little

French boy," but is "used exclusively to describe German subjects with French proclivities. In Alsace and Lorraine there exist societies of these Französlings, who wear the French colours. They are not boys but grown men."

"Constant Reader" wrote to *The Times* on October 6, 1914:

You publish on page 6 of your issue of this morning a note communicated by a Mr. J. A. Hobson, which insinuates that the young victim of a German firing party in the Vosges, whose fate was described in a German soldier's letter printed last week, may have been a "grown man" and not a "lad." At least, Mr. Hobson says that "The societies of these Französlings who wear the French colours are not boys but grown men." But he has evidently not seen the original letter, which calls the victim an *armer iunger Kerl*—a poor lad; and a *junger Verräter*—a young traitor. Moreover, it is clear that if this had been a grown man of military age, he would have been doing military service and not have been at large upon the roads.

This letter must have been from the Press Bureau, as *The Times* original note made no reference to its being from a German soldier's letter, nor quoted the German text. "Constant Reader" had evidently been reading elsewhere.

Mr. J. A. Hobson wrote to *The Times* on October 8, 1914:

In reply to "Constant Reader," may I point out that the object of my note upon the "Französling" incident was to state that the word meant a "pro-French German" and not, as translated by the Press Bureau, "a little French lad"? That he was "a young fellow" is not in dispute, but that affords no justification for calling him a "Boy Scout."

It does not seem to have been pointed out that no

body of Boy Scouts called Éclaireurs, and wearing tricolour ribbons, could have existed in *German* Alsace.

The Press Bureau tells us that an official paper circulated among the German troops chuckled with satisfaction at the killing of a French boy who refused to divulge to the enemy the whereabouts of French forces.

“*Daily Express*,” October, 1914.

The Press Bureau story headed “Little French Hero” was printed in the same issue. The whole object of the Press Bureau was to incense public opinion against the Germans for shooting *a boy*. The shooting of spies was not condemned, as *The Times* itself reported also from the Vosges that

Germans caught red-handed in acts of espionage were court-marshalled. Among others were the mayor and postmaster of Thann, who were shot.

People may be further mystified in looking up this case by finding it in *The Times* index under the heading “Shooting of Franz Ösling.”

XV

LITTLE ALF'S STAMP COLLECTION

A CLERGYMAN, while lunching in a restaurant in 1918, was informed by a stranger that the son of a friend of his was interned in a camp in Germany. A recent letter, he said, had contained the passage, "The stamp on this letter is a rare one; soak it off for little Alf's collection." Though there was no one in the family called Alf, and no one who collected stamps, they did as they were told. Underneath the stamp were the words, "They have torn out my tongue; I could not put it in the letter" (the news presumably, not the tongue). The clergyman told the man the story was absurd, and that he ought to be ashamed of himself for repeating it, as everyone knew that prisoners' letters did not bear stamps. If his friend had managed to put a stamp on his letter, it was the best possible way of attracting attention to what he was trying to hide. But the stranger, no doubt from patriotic motives, indignantly refused to have his story spoiled, and it was widely circulated in Manchester.¹

The interesting point about this lie is that it was also used in Germany with variations. A lady in Munich received a letter from her son, who was a prisoner in Russia. He told her to take the stamp off his letter "as it was a rare one." She did so, and discovered written underneath, "They have cut off both my feet, so that I cannot escape." The story was eventually killed

¹ "Artifex," in the *Manchester Guardian*.

by ridicule, but not before it had travelled to Augsburg and other towns.

It was probably one of the stories which are used in every war.

XVI

THE TATTOOED MAN

TOWARDS the end of 1918 a statement was circulated, supported by photographs, that English prisoners had been tattooed with the German Eagle, a cobra, or other devices on their faces. The interesting feature in this lie is that it seems to have emanated from quite a number of different individuals, each one eager to embroider some entirely unsubstantiated rumour which had spread.

TATTOOING CHARGES NOT CONFIRMED.

On December 7th a statement appeared in the Press that a ship's fireman named Burton Mayberry had arrived at Newcastle bearing on his cheeks tattoo marks representing heads of cobras, which he alleged had been inflicted by two sailors by order of a German submarine commander in mid-Atlantic, on the occasion of the torpedoing of Mayberry's ship in April 1917. Pictures of Mayberry, showing the head of a cobra on each cheek, have also appeared in various illustrated papers.

The matter has been investigated, and it has been ascertained that on November 13th Mayberry applied for registration as a seaman preparatory to offering himself for employment in the British mercantile marine, and that, in making his application, he stated that he had had no previous sea service. He has now disappeared, and it seems that his disappearance took place after receiving a request to attend in order to receive his registration certificate. Former associates of Mayberry state that he never made any allusion to the alleged outrage.

Frequent statements have recently appeared in the Press with regard to the alleged branding of British soldiers by

the Germans, but the responsible authorities have been unable to obtain any confirmation of these allegations.

“*The Times*,” December 23, 1918.

The following extract from the *Manchester Guardian* and the statement of “Artifex” (the pseudonym of a well-known Manchester ecclesiastic) give other versions of the story more fully.

Our contributor “Artifex” ventured to suggest last week that the story of the prisoner who had been tattooed on the cheek by the Germans, which had gained through a section of the Press a wide currency among simple people, was not established by any credible evidence. He tells us to-day that he has since been deluged with letters enclosing accounts of just how the man was tattooed, and giving details of his former history and of his present occupation and domestic relations. Each of the correspondents who sent these letters was no doubt confirmed, by the cutting he sent, in his belief in the truth of the tale and in the wilful blindness of “Artifex.” Unfortunately for their authors, the stories vary so profoundly in essential facts as to make it clear to anyone who correlates them, as “Artifex” has done, that they are born of a myth, rapidly spread, and gathering variety as it goes. If that were not enough, there is yet more irrefutable evidence. The camera, it is said, cannot lie. Yet on December 9th two different newspapers published photographs of the victim. Each picture represents his whole right profile. The one shows his cheek marked with a full-length snake, in black, the other decorates it with a snake’s head in outline. But a tattoo is a permanent mark which years cannot alter or deface. Any jury confronted with these conflicting pictures would be forced to agree that the disfigurement was daily reapplied by the sufferer, and that he had omitted the precaution of having the same device repeated. Now this story must have added vastly to the anxieties of many families who have prisoners in enemy hands. Early in the war the authorities did not hesitate to recommend the suppression of the many reports of chivalrous treatment of our soldiers

by the Turks. That, in the light of the Turkish Government's record as a whole, may have been reasonable. But we suggest that they should be at least not less active to prevent the spread of stories about the treatment of our prisoners which are as dubious as this one.

"Manchester Guardian," December 19, 1918.

Extract from "Artifex" comments :

Not indeed that I ought to complain, in this case, of lack of corroborative evidence. I have been assured that the man, while working in a dockyard on the Tyne, has also (1) undergone skin-grafting in Salford Royal Hospital, (2) gone mad with horror in Leaf Square Hospital, (3) caused by his awful appearance the premature confinement and death of his young wife at Levenshulme, (4) thrown his delicate twelve-year-old daughter into fits at Stockport, (5) lived for nine months in a house in Weaste without ever coming out except after dark, which is why none of the neighbours have ever seen him, and (6) resided for the whole time also at Gorton, Swinton, Pendlebury and Tyldesley.

XVII

THE CORPSE FACTORY

A SERIES of extracts will give the record of one of the most revolting lies invented during the war, the dissemination of which throughout not only this country but the world was encouraged and connived at by both the Government and the Press. It started in 1917, and was not finally disposed of till 1925.

(Most of the quotations given are from *The Times*. The references in the lower strata of the Press, it will be remembered, were far more lurid.)

One of the United States consuls, on leaving Germany in February 1917, stated in Switzerland that the Germans were distilling glycerine from the bodies of their dead.

“*The Times*,” April 16, 1917.

Herr Karl Rosner, the Correspondent of the Berlin *Lokalanzeiger*, on the Western front . . . published last Tuesday the first definite German admission concerning the way in which the Germans use dead bodies.

We pass through Everingcourt. There is a dull smell in the air as if lime were being burnt. We are passing the great Corpse Exploitation Establishment (*Kadaververwertungsanstalt*) of this Army Group. The fat that is won here is turned into lubricating oils, and everything else is ground down in the bone mill into a powder which is used for mixing with pig's food and as manure—nothing can be permitted to go to waste.

“*The Times*,” April 16, 1917.

There was a report in *The Times* of April 17, 1917, from *La Belgique* (Leyden), via *l'Indépendance Belge*, for April 10, giving a very long and detailed account of a

Deutsche Abfallverwertungs-gesellschaft factory near Coblenz, where train-loads of the stripped bodies of German soldiers, wired into bundles, arrive and are simmered down in cauldrons, the products being stearine and refined oil.

In *The Times* of April 18, 1917, there was a letter from C. E. Bunbury commenting and suggesting the use of the story for propaganda purposes, in neutral countries and the East, where it would be especially calculated to horrify Buddhists, Hindus, and Moham-medans. He suggested broadcasting by the Foreign Office, India Office, and Colonial Office; there were other letters to the same effect on April 19th.

In *The Times* of April 20, 1917, there was a story told by Sergeant B——, of the Kents, that a prisoner had told him that the Germans boil down their dead for munitions and pig and poultry food. "This fellow told me that Fritz calls his margarine 'corpse fat' because they suspect that's what it comes from."

The Times stated that it had received a number of letters "questioning the translation of the German word *Kadaver*, and suggesting that it is not used of human bodies. As to this, the best authorities are agreed that it is also used of the bodies of animals." Other letters were received confirming the story from Belgian and Dutch sources (later from Roumania).

There was an article in the *Lancet* discussing the "business aspect" (or rather the technical one) of the industry. An expression of horror appeared from the Chinese Minister in London, and also from the Maharajah of Bikanir, in *The Times* of April 21, 1917.

The Times of April 23, 1917, quotes a German statement that the report is "loathsome and ridiculous," and that *Kadaver* is never used of a human body. *The*

Times produces dictionary quotations to show that it is. Also that both *Tierkörpermehl* and *Kadavermehl* appear in German official catalogues, the implication being that they must be something different.

In *The Times* of April 24, 1917, there was a letter, signed E. H. Parker, enclosing copy of the *North China Herald*, March 3, 1917, recounting an interview between the German Minister and the Chinese Premier in Pekin :

But the matter was clinched when Admiral von Hinke was dilating upon the ingenious methods by which German scientists were obtaining chemicals necessary for the manufacture of munitions. The admiral triumphantly stated that they were extracting glycerine out of their dead soldiers ! From that moment onward the horrified Premier had no more use for Germany, and the business of persuading him to turn against her became comparatively easy.

The following questions in Parliament show the Government evading the issue, although they knew there was not a particle of authentic evidence for the report—a good instance of the official method of spreading falsehood.

MR. RONALD MCNEILL asked the Prime Minister if he will take steps to make it known as widely as possible in Egypt, India, and the East generally, that the Germans use the dead bodies of their own soldiers and of their enemies when they obtain possession of them, as food for swine.

MR. DILLON asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his attention has been called to the reports widely circulated in this country that the German Government have set up factories for extracting fat from the bodies of soldiers killed in battle ; whether these reports have been endorsed by many prominent men in this country, including Lord Curzon of Kedleston ; whether the Government have any solid grounds for believing that these statements are well-founded ; and if so, whether he will communicate the

information at the disposal of the Government to the House.

LORD R. CECIL: With respect to this question and that standing in the name of the Hon. Member for East Mayo, the Government have no information at present beyond that contained in extracts from the German Press which have been published in the Press here. In view of other actions by German military authorities, there is nothing incredible in the present charge against them. His Majesty's Government have allowed the circulation of facts as they have appeared through the usual channels.

MR. MCNEILL: Can the Right Hon. Gentleman answer whether the Government will take any steps to give wide publicity in the East to this story emanating from German sources?

LORD R. CECIL: I think at present it is not desirable to take any other steps than those that have been taken.

MR. DILLON: May I ask whether we are to conclude from that answer that the Government have no solid evidence whatever in proof of the truth of this charge, and they have taken no steps to investigate it; and has their attention been turned to the fact that it is not only a gross scandal, but a very great evil to this country to allow the circulation of such statements, authorized by Ministers of the Crown, if they are, as I believe them to be, absolutely false?

LORD R. CECIL: The Hon. Member has, perhaps, information that we have not. I can only speak from statements that have been published in the Press. I have already told the House that we have no other information whatever. The information is the statement that has been published and that I have before me (quoting *Times* quotation from *Lokalanzeiger*). This statement has been published in the Press, and that is the whole of the information that I have.

MR. DILLON: Has the Noble Lord's attention been drawn to the fact that there have been published in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* and other leading German newspapers descriptions of this whole process, in which the word *Kadaver* is used, and from which it is perfectly manifest that these factories are for the purpose of boiling down the dead bodies of horses and other animals which are lying on the battlefield—(an

HON. MEMBER: "Human animals!"—and I ask the Right Hon. Gentleman whether the Government propose to take any steps to obtain authentic information whether this story that has been circulated is true or absolutely false. For the credit of human nature, he ought to.

LORD R. CECIL: It is not any part of the duties of the Government, nor is it possible for the Government, to institute inquiries as to what goes on in Germany. The Hon. Member is surely very unreasonable in making the suggestion, and as for his quotations from the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, I have not seen them, but I have seen statements made by the German Government after the publication of this, and I confess that I am not able to attach very great importance to any statements made by the German Government.

MR. DILLON: I beg to ask the Right Hon. Gentleman whether, before a Minister of the Crown, a member of the War Cabinet, gives authorization to these rumours, he ought not to have obtained accurate information as to whether they are true or not.

LORD R. CECIL: I think any Minister of the Crown is entitled to comment on and refer to something which has been published in one of the leading papers of the country. He only purported to do that, and did not make himself responsible for the statement (an HON. MEMBER: "He did!"). I am informed that he did not. He said: "As has been stated in the papers."

MR. OUTHWAITE: May I ask if the Noble Lord is aware that the circulation of these reports (interruption) has caused anxiety and misery to British people who have lost their sons on the battlefield, and who think that their bodies may be put to this purpose, and does not that give a reason why he should try to find out the truth of what is happening in Germany?

House of Commons, April 30, 1917.

In *The Times* of May 3, 1917, there were quotations from the *Frankfurter Zeitung* stating that the French Press is now treating the *Kadaver* story as a "misunderstanding."

The Times of May 17, 1917, reported that Herr Zimmermann denied in the Reichstag that human bodies were used; and stated that the story appeared first in the French Press.

In reply to a question in the House of Commons on May 23rd, Mr. A. Chamberlain stated that the report would be "available to the public in India through the usual channels."

A corpse factory cartoon appeared in *Punch*.

KAISER (to 1917 recruit): And don't forget that your Kaiser will find a use for you alive or dead. (At the enemy's establishment for the utilization of corpses the dead bodies of German soldiers are treated chemically, the chief commercial products being lubricant oils and pig food.)

View of the corpse factory out of the window.

The story had a world-wide circulation and had considerable propaganda value in the East. Not till 1925 did the truth emerge.

A painful impression has been produced here by an unfortunate speech of Brigadier-General Charteris at the dinner of the National Arts Club, in which he professed to tell the true story of the war-time report that Germany was boiling down the bodies of her dead soldiers in order to get fats for munitions and fertilizers.

According to General Charteris, the story began as propaganda for China. By transposing the caption from one of two photographs found on German prisoners to the other he gave the impression that the Germans were making a dreadful use of their own dead soldiers. This photograph he sent to a Chinese newspaper in Shanghai. He told the familiar story of its later republication in England and of the discussion it created there. He told, too, how, when a question put in the House was referred to him, he answered it by saying that from what he knew of German mentality, he was prepared for anything.

Later, said General Charteris, in order to support the story, what purported to be the diary of a German soldier was forged in his office. It was planned to have this discovered on a dead German by a war correspondent with a passion for German diaries, but the plan was never carried out. The diary was now in the war museum in London.

"The Times," October 22, 1925. From New York Correspondent.

Some opinions of politicians may be given.

LLOYD GEORGE: The story came under my notice in various ways at the time. I did not believe it then; I do not believe it now. It was never adopted as part of the armoury of the British Propaganda Department. It was, in fact, "turned down" by that department.

MR. MASTERMAN: We certainly did not accept the story as true, and I know nobody in official positions at the time who credited it. Nothing as suspect as this was made use of in our propaganda. Only such information as had been properly verified was circulated.

MR. I. MACPHERSON: I was at the War Office at the time. We had no reason to doubt the authenticity of the story when it came through. It was supported by the captured divisional orders of the German Army in France, and I have an impression it was also backed up by the Foreign Office on the strength of extracts from the German Press. We did not know that it had been invented by anybody, and had we known there was the slightest doubt about the truth of the story, it would not have been used in any way by us.

A New York correspondent describes how he rang General Charteris up, and inquired the truth of the report and suggested that, if untrue, he should take it up with the *New York Times*.

On this he protested vigorously that he could not think of challenging the report, as the mistakes were only of minor importance.

“*Daily News*,” November 5, 1925.

There was a *Times* article on the same subject quoting the *New York Times*’ assertion of the truth of their version of the speech.

This paper makes the significant observation that in the course of his denial he offered no comment on his reported admission that he avoided telling the truth when questioned about the matter in the House of Commons, or on his own description of a scheme to support the Corpse Factory story by “planting” a forged diary in the clothing of a dead German prisoner—a proposal which he only abandoned lest the deception might be discovered.

Brigadier-General Charteris, who returned from America at the week-end, visited the War Office yesterday and had an interview with the Secretary of State for War (Sir Laming Worthington-Evans) concerning the reports of his speech on war propaganda in New York. It is understood that the War Office now regard the incident as closed and that no further inquiry is likely to be held.

General Charteris left for Scotland later in the day, and on arrival in Glasgow issued the following statement :

“On arrival in Scotland I was surprised to find that, in spite of the repudiation issued by me at New York through Reuter’s agency, some public interest was still excited in the entirely incorrect report of my remarks at a private dinner in New York. I feel it necessary therefore to give again a categorical denial to the statement attributed to me. Certain suggestions and speculations as regards the origins of the *Kadaver* story, which have already been published in *These Eventful Years* (British Encyclopædia Press) and elsewhere, which I repeated, are, doubtless unintentionally, but nevertheless unfortunately, turned into definite statements of fact and attributed to me.

“Lest there should still be any doubt, let me say that I neither invented the *Kadaver* story nor did I alter the captions

in any photographs, nor did I use faked material for propaganda purposes. The allegations that I did so are not only incorrect but absurd, as propaganda was in no way under G.H.Q. France, where I had charge of the Intelligence Services. I should be as interested as the general public to know what was the true origin of the *Kadaver* story. G.H.Q. France only came in when a fictitious diary supporting the *Kadaver* story was submitted. When this diary was discovered to be fictitious, it was at once rejected.

"I have seen the Secretary of State this morning and have explained the whole circumstances to him, and have his authority to say that he is perfectly satisfied."

"*The Times*," November 4, 1925.

LIEUT.-COMMANDER KENWORTHY asked the Secretary of State for War if, in view of the feeling aroused in Germany by the recrudescence of the rumours of the so-called corpse conversion factory behind the German lines in the late war, he can give any information as to the source of the original rumour and the extent to which it was accepted by the War Office at the time.

SIR L. WORTHINGTON-EVANS: At this distance of time I do not think that the source of the rumour can be traced with any certainty. The statement that the Germans had set up a factory for the conversion of dead bodies first appeared on April 10, 1917, in the *Lokalanzeiger*, published in Berlin, and in *l'Indépendance Belge* and *La Belgique*, two Belgian newspapers published in France and Holland. The statements were reproduced in the Press here, with the comment that it was the first German admission concerning the way in which the Germans used their dead bodies.

Questions were asked in the House of Commons on April 30, 1917, and the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs replied on behalf of the Government that he had then no information beyond that contained in the extract from the German Press. But shortly afterwards a German Army Order containing instructions for the delivery of dead bodies to the establishments described in the *Lokalanzeiger* was captured in France and forwarded to the

War Office, who, after careful consideration, permitted it to be published.

The terms of this order were such that, taken in conjunction with the articles in the *Lokalanzeiger* and in the two Belgian papers and the previously existing rumours, it appeared to the War Office to afford corroborative evidence of the story. Evidence that the word *Kadaver* was used to mean human bodies, and not only carcasses of animals, was found in German dictionaries and anatomical and other works, and the German assertion that the story was disposed of by reference to the meaning of the word *Kadaver* was not accepted. On the information before them at the time, the War Office appear to have seen no reason to disbelieve the truth of the story.

LIEUT.-COMMANDER KENWORTHY: I am much obliged to the Right Hon. Gentleman for his very full answer. Does he not think it desirable now that the War Office should finally disavow the story and their present belief in it?

SIR L. WORTHINGTON-EVANS: I cannot believe any public interest is served by further questions on this story. I have given the House the fullest information in my possession in the hope that the Hon. Members will be satisfied with what I have said. (HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.)

LIEUT.-COMMANDER KENWORTHY: Does not the Right Hon. Gentleman think it desirable, even now, to finally admit the inaccuracy of the original story, in view of Locarno and other things?

SIR L. WORTHINGTON-EVANS: It is not a question of whether it was accurate or inaccurate. What I was concerned with was the information upon which the War Office acted at the time. Of course, the fact that there has been no corroboration since necessarily alters the complexion of the case, but I was dealing with the information in the possession of the authorities at the time.

House of Commons, November 24, 1925.

This was a continued attempt to avoid making a complete denial, and it was left to Sir Austen Chamberlain to nail the lie finally to the counter. In reply to

Mr. Arthur Henderson on December 2, 1925, asking if he had any statement to make as to the *Kadaver* story, he said :

Yes, sir ; my Right Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for War told the House last week how the story reached His Majesty's Government in 1917. The Chancellor of the German Reich has authorized me to say, on the authority of the German Government, that there was never any foundation for it. I need scarcely add that on behalf of His Majesty's Government I accept this denial, and I trust that this false report will not again be revived.

The painful impression made by this episode and similar propaganda efforts in America is well illustrated by an editorial in *Times-Dispatch*, of Richmond, U.S.A., on December 6, 1925.

Not the least of the horrors of modern warfare is the propaganda bureau, which is an important item in the military establishment of every nation. Neither is it the least of the many encouraging signs which each year add to the probability of eventual peace on earth. The famous *Kadaver* story, which aroused hatred against the German to the boiling-point in this and other Allied nations during the war, has been denounced as a lie in the British House of Commons. Months ago the world learned the details of how this lie was planned and broadcasted by the efficient officer in the British Intelligence Service. Now we are told that, imbued with the spirit of the Locarno pact, Sir Austen Chamberlain rose in the House, said that the German Chancellor had denied the truth of the story, and that the denial had been accepted by the British Government.

A few years ago the story of how the Kaiser was reducing human corpses to fat aroused the citizens of this and other enlightened nations to a fury of hatred. Normally sane men doubled their fists and rushed off to the nearest recruiting sergeant. Now they are being told, in effect, that they were dupes and fools ; that their own officers deliberately goaded them to the desired boiling-point, using an infamous

lie to arouse them, just as a grown bully whispers to one little boy that another little boy said he could lick him.

The encouraging sign found in this revolting admission of how modern war is waged is the natural inference that the modern man is not over-eager to throw himself at his brother's throat at the simple word of command. His passions must be played upon, so the propaganda bureau has taken its place as one of the chief weapons.

In the next war, the propaganda must be more subtle and clever than the best the World War produced. These frank admissions of wholesale lying on the part of trusted Governments in the last war will not soon be forgotten.

XVIII

THE BISHOP OF ZANZIBAR'S LETTER

THERE are two things which cannot be permitted during war. Firstly, favourable comment on the enemy—instances of this have been given in the Introduction. Secondly, criticism of the country to which you belong cannot be publicly expressed. Suppression of opinion of this kind is all very well, but the deliberate distortion of it is a peculiarly malicious form of falsehood.

The late Dr. Weston, Bishop of Zanzibar, a great champion of the African natives, wrote an open letter to General Smuts, in which he said :

It is political madness at this time of day to try and subject a weaker people to serfdom, or to slavery. . . . It is moral madness. . . . Thirdly, it is so definitely an anti-Christian policy that no one who adopts it can any longer justify the Gospel of Christ to the African peoples. . . .

In a pamphlet quoted in the *Church Times*, October 8, 1920, the Bishop of Zanzibar wrote :

When I wrote my open letter to General Smuts I called it "Great Britain's Scrap of Paper: Will She Honour It?" I was alluding to her promise of justice to the weaker peoples. The Imperial Government took my letter, cut out some inconvenient passages, and published it under the title, "The Black Slaves of Prussia." I suggest that East Africans have now become the "Black Serfs of Great Britain."

In the *Life of the Bishop of Zanzibar*, published in

1926, the letter appears in its garbled form as the Bishop's opinion of the German treatment of their "black slaves."

This is a good instance of a quite deliberate perversion by the Government and also an instance of how difficult it is for the truth, even when published, to overtake a lie and to reach the people most concerned.

XIX

THE GERMAN U-BOAT OUTRAGE

A MONSTROUS story of fiendish cruelty on the part of a German U-boat commander was circulated in the Press in July 1918. It is an instance of how people in positions of semi-official authority were either ready deliberately to invent or to elaborate some vague rumour and give it the stamp of authentic information.

It appeared in more or less the same form in all the newspapers :

Staff-Paymaster Collingwood Hughes, R.N.V.R., of the Naval Intelligence Division of the Admiralty, lecturing yesterday at the Royal Club, St. James's Square, said that one of our patrol boats in the Atlantic found a derelict U-boat. After rescuing the crew our commander inquired of the Hun captain if all were safely aboard, as it was intended to blow up the U-boat.

"Yes," came the reply, "they are here. Call the roll." Every German answered. The British commander was about to push off before dropping a depth charge, when tapping was heard.

"Are you quite sure there is no one on board your boat?" he repeated.

"Yes," declared the Hun captain.

But the tapping continued, and the British officer ordered a search of the U-boat. There were found in it, tied up as prisoners, four British seamen. The rescued Germans were going to allow their prisoners to be drowned.

"Daily Mail," July 12, 1918.

The story was repeated by Commander Sir Edward Nicholl at a public meeting at Colston Hall, in Bristol,

at which the Parliamentary Secretary to the Admiralty was present.

COLONEL WEDGWOOD asked the First Lord of the Admiralty whether one of our patrol boats recently rescued the crew of a derelict U-boat, the captain of which deliberately left on board four British seamen, who would have been drowned if they had not been heard knocking and been rescued; and if this is so, what steps have been taken to deal with the captain of the U-boat.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Dr. Macnamara): The Admiralty have officially stated in the public Press that they have no knowledge of this reported incident and that the statement was made without their authority.

COLONEL WEDGWOOD: Are we to understand that this statement is absolutely without any basis of fact and is, in fact, a lie?

DR. MACNAMARA: We have stated that we have no information in confirmation of the statement which was made.

House of Commons, July 15, 1918.

In reply to subsequent questions Dr. Macnamara stated he was getting into communication with the officer responsible for the statement.

COLONEL WEDGWOOD asked the First Lord of the Admiralty whether the story about the derelict U-boat has yet been reported on, and, if so, what conclusion has been come to; and whether the story was first told by a naval officer at a meeting at the Colston Hall about five weeks ago, at which the Parliamentary Secretary himself was present.

DR. MACNAMARA: We have endeavoured to trace this story to its origin. Fleet-Paymaster Collingwood Hughes appears to have heard it from more than one source. He should certainly have taken the opportunity afforded him in his official position to verify it. In our opinion the story is without foundation. As regards the second part of the

question, Commander Sir Edward Nicholl, Royal Naval Reserve, certainly told the story in the course of a speech at a meeting at Bristol, at which I was present. I learn from him that he was present at an earlier meeting addressed by Mr. Collingwood Hughes in South Wales and heard the story recited by him on that occasion.

House of Commons, July 23, 1918.

But, of course, in this, as in other cases, for one person who noticed the denial there were a thousand who only heard the lie.

XX

CONSTANTINOPLE

THE evasions and concealments necessitated by the existence of the Secret Treaties cover too large a ground to be dealt with here. Evasion is a more insidious form of falsehood than the deliberate lie. One point, however, which was of considerable interest to the people of Great Britain may serve as an illustration. It concerned the fate of Constantinople.

Asked in the House of Commons on May 30, 1916, whether Professor Miliukoff's statement in the Duma was correct, that "our supreme aim in this war is to get possession of Constantinople, which must belong to Russia entirely and without reserve," Sir Edward Grey replied that "it is not necessary or desirable to make official comments on unofficial statements," and being further pressed, added, "The Honourable Member is asking for a statement which I do not think it desirable to make."

From the point of view of the Government, the Foreign Secretary was quite right to evade the question. In the first place we had not taken Constantinople, and in the second place it must have appeared doubtful to the Government whether the British soldiers and sailors would be enthusiastic in sacrificing their lives in order to give Constantinople to Russia, the strains of the old jingo song of 1878 not having quite died away :

We've fought the Bear before, we can fight the Bear again,
But the Russians shall not have Constantinople.

But on March 7, 1915, a year before Sir E. Grey gave this answer in Parliament, M. Sazonov had telegraphed to the Russian Ambassador in London :

Will you please express to Grey the profound gratitude of the Imperial Government for the complete and final assent of Great Britain to the solution of the question of the Straits and Constantinople in accordance with Russian desires.

On December 2, 1916, M. Trepoff declared in the Duma :

An agreement, which we concluded in 1915 with Great Britain and France and to which Italy has adhered, established in the most definite fashion the right of Russia to the Straits and Constantinople. . . . I repeat that absolute agreement on this point is firmly established among the Allies.

On January 5, 1918 (National War Aims Pamphlet No. 33), the Prime Minister declared that we were not fighting "to deprive Turkey of its capital." He could say this because the Russian Revolution had taken place.

By subterfuges and evasions the British Government were anxious to screen the truth from the country, because they knew how unpopular it would be.