

**ORIGINS OF THE  
TRIPLE ALLIANCE:  
THREE LECTURES**

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Origins of the Triple Alliance: three lectures by Archibald Cary Coolidge

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*University of Virginia  
Barbour-Page Foundation*

# ORIGINS OF THE TRIPLE ALLIANCE

THREE LECTURES

BY

ARCHIBALD CARY COOLIDGE

PROFESSOR OF HISTORY IN HARVARD UNIVERSITY

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## PREFACE

In January, 1916, I had the honor and the pleasure of giving the Barbour-Page lectures for that year at the University of Virginia. The substance of those lectures is reproduced in this little volume, though there have been many changes in the form besides the addition of footnotes. Any one who wishes to understand even in a superficial way the causes that have brought about the present world conflict should familiarize himself with the history of Europe since the Franco-Prussian War, and should try to grasp the interplay of political forces, the aims of statesmen, and the aspirations of peoples during that period. For the greater part of the time the so-called Triple Alliance was the strongest political and military element in the international situation. Its friends declared that it was an element for peace; its enemies regarded



it as a conservative league to protect ill-gotten gains. Although it dissolved when brought to the touchstone of actual war, its importance as an international factor for many years makes it well worth our study. In the following three chapters I have tried to point out the causes, personal as well as international, that led to its formation. I have not made any startling discoveries, nor have I new theories to put forth, but I believe I have made use of the best accessible information. Instead of St. Petersburg I ought perhaps to have used the name Petrograd, and I should have done so in speaking of current affairs, but for those of the past it still seems permissible to keep to the older form. For the sake of brevity and smoothness I have often used the word Austria where Austria-Hungary or the Dual Empire would have been more correct; but this, also, is, I think, condoned by current usage.

June, 1917.

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