

GERMANY AND ENGLAND

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649493753

Germany and England by J. A. Cramb

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Cover @ 2017

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AND ENGLAND**

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ENGLAND

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INTRODUCTION BY THE
HON. JOSEPH H. CHOATE

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NEW YORK
E. P. DUTTON & CO., PUBLISHERS

1914

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The Knickerbocker Press, New York

INTRODUCTION

THIS little book is one that every American should read, because it is not only a gem in itself, and worthy to be placed among English Classics for its clearness of thought and expression, its restrained eloquence, and its broad historical knowledge, but because it explains very lucidly, not the occasion, but the cause (the deep-seated cause) of the present war.

The occasion, so greedily seized upon by Germany, was the refusal of Servia to yield to the impossible ultimatum of Austria. Austria and Servia, and the loudly proclaimed racial conflict between Slav and Serb, have already vanished from the scene and are of little account now. The real cause, as shown by Professor Cramb, is the intense hatred of Germany for England, and her lofty ambition to establish a world empire upon the ruins of the British Empire.

Since the days of Frederick the Great, while England, largely by force of arms, has been extending her imperial power all over the world, so that, as justly described by Webster, she had become "a power which has dotted over the surface of the whole globe with her possessions and military

posts; whose morning drum-beat, following the sun and keeping company with the hours, circles the earth with one continuous and unbroken strain of the martial airs of England," Germany has remained cooped up within her narrow boundaries, with inadequate access to the sea, and without room for her rapidly increasing population. "England's mere existence as an Empire has become a continuous aggression" to Germany, and her proud claim to be mistress of the seas a perpetual affront.

Meanwhile, Prussia, under the lead of the Hohenzollerns, has become the master of all Germany, and, simultaneously with the humiliation of France in 1870, established the German Empire, which, however, still remains an inland empire. But all the while she has been building up, quietly but steadily, her naval and military power, so as to be ready when the hour should strike, and has succeeded in creating, in her army, a military machine of boundless numbers and of almost invincible power, to cope with and to crush, if possible, the combined forces of all the other nations of Europe.

Long ago Prussia had established intellectual dominion over the whole of Germany, the influence of which extended among all nations. In this intellectual progress Germany has rendered vast services and maintained a leadership "in all the phases and departments of human life and energy,

in religion, poetry, science, art, politics, and social endeavor."

Step by step with this wonderful development, Germany has cherished what Professor Cramb designates as "a dream of world dominion," not simply of a material dominion, but of a spiritual one, which shall make the German mind, the German genius, and the German character prevail over all the world. To this end her poets, her orators, her historians, her publicists and politicians have been for the last forty years perpetually drilling into the minds and hearts of the German people, of all classes from the Kaiser to the peasant, the duty and the necessity of achieving this lofty and mighty ambition for their great country. And they have been biding their time, silently, patiently, conscientiously, to accomplish it when the opportunity should come.

But there was, and is, one insuperable obstacle in the way of this magnificent dream of a future world empire for Germany, and that is the accomplished, existing, actual world empire of Great Britain, of which England is the heart; and unless this obstacle can be removed, so that it shall never stand in the way again, the grand ideal of Germany's future can never be realized.

Professor Cramb attempts to give a description in a single sentence of the general aim of British imperialism as it exists to-day, in these words: "To give all men within its bounds an English

mind; to give all who come within its sway the power to look at the things of man's life, at the past, at the future, from the standpoint of an Englishman; to diffuse within its bounds that high tolerance in religion which has marked this empire from its foundation; that reverence yet boldness before the mysteriousness of life and death characteristic of our great poets and our great thinkers; that love of free institutions, that pursuit of an ever-higher justice and a larger freedom which, rightly or wrongly, we associate with the temper and character of our race wherever it is dominant and secure." And he adds "This conception outlives the generations. Like an immortal energy it links age to age. This undying spirit is the true England, the true Britain, for which men strive and suffer in every zone and in every era, which silently controls their actions and shapes their character like an inward fate—'England.' It is this which gives hope in hopeless times, imparting its immortal vigor to the statesman in his cabinet and to the soldier in the field."

If this be a true presentation of the contest now existing, as I believe it to be, it is truly an imperial contest between the German Empire of the future, that is to be won only by war, and this British Empire, whose chief interest now and in all the future is peace throughout the world. It is a life and death struggle between two mighty powers,

each entitled to the respect and admiration of the onlooking world.

In the last twenty years there appear to have grown up in the German mind certain ideas about England, which have no foundation in truth and which are now being tested, with a startling surprise to Germany: that the British Empire is ready to fall to pieces of its own weight and of its own age; that England, having tasted the sweets of empire, is destined to give way and Germany to have its turn; that the individual Englishman is degenerate and effeminate, softened by luxury and indulgence, and is no longer a fighter.

Thus it appears that the terrible contest is maintained on both sides, not only with equal valor and with equal vigor, but with equal conscientiousness and equally lofty motives, although the object of one is to destroy and of the other to create. The world looks on with divided sympathies, and with hope or doubt as to the result, according to such sympathies. Germany has many enemies, but England is "the enemy of enemies," the only one that counts now; and so England has many enemies, but Germany to-day is all in all among them.

The actual conflict has gone far enough, one would think, to disabuse Germany of some of its ideas about England. Instead of her empire being ready to fall to pieces by the dropping off of her colonies, armies are marching to her aid from all