

Alsace-Lorraine P

1870 & 1914

THE ANNEXATION
OF
ALSACE-LORRAINE
and its Recovery

WITH AN
ADDRESS BY MARSHAL JOFFRE



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PARIS

IMPRIMERIE JEAN CUSSAC

40 — RUE DE REUILLY — 40

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1918



ADDRESS

BY

MARSHAL JOFFRE

AT THANN



« WE HAVE COME BACK FOR GOOD AND ALL : HENCEFORWARD YOU ARE AND EVER WILL BE FRENCH. TOGETHER WITH THOSE LIBERTIES FOR WHICH HER NAME HAS STOOD THROUGHOUT THE AGES, FRANCE BRINGS YOU THE ASSURANCE THAT YOUR OWN LIBERTIES WILL BE RESPECTED : YOUR ALSATIAN LIBERTIES, TRADITIONS AND WAYS OF LIVING. AS HER REPRESENTATIVE I BRING YOU FRANCE'S MATERNAL EMBRACE. »

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "J. Joffre". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.



INTRODUCTION

The expression Alsace-Lorraine was devised by the Germans to denote that part of our national territory, the annexation of which Germany imposed upon us by the treaty of Frankfort, in 1871. Alsace and Lorraine were the names of two provinces under our monarchy, but *provinces* — as such — have ceased to exist in France since 1790 ; the country is divided into departments — mere administrative subdivisions under the same national laws and ordinances — nor has the most prejudiced historian ever been able to point to the slightest dissatisfaction with this arrangement on the part of any district in France, from Dunkirk to Perpignan, or from Brest to

Strasbourg. France affords a perfect example of the communion of one and all in deep love and reverence for the mother-country ; and the history of the unfortunate departments subjected to the yoke of Prussian militarism since 1871 is the most eloquent and striking confirmation of the justice of France's demand for reparation of the crime then committed by Germany.

The territories annexed in 1871 were made up of all or part of four French departments ;

In the Moselle department, they constituted the " arrondissements " of Metz, Thionville and Sarreguemines ;

In the Meurthe department, those of Sarrebourg and Château-Salins ;

They comprised the whole of the Bas-Rhin department (with Strasbourg as its *chef-lieu*) and all the Haut-Rhin department (*chef-lieu* Colmar) with the exception of the Belfort district, which remained French.

Under the old regime, the Moselle and the Meurthe departments were part of

Lorraine : the Haut-Rhin and the Bas-Rhin went to make up Alsace.

Our purpose, in the present survey, is to give a summary of the documents whereby is demonstrated — incontrovertibly, in our opinion — the injustice of the German annexation in 1870, and the necessity for the rescindment of that measure and the restitution of the French departments to the mother-country ; it is our intention, while so doing, to quote liberally from the writings of neutrals, and likewise from a number of German publications that have appeared since the declaration of war on August 4th 1914.



FIRST PART
THE WAR OF 1870
AND THE GERMAN ANNEXATION

CHAPTER I

ALSACE AND LORRAINE DOWN TO THE WAR OF 1870

It was about the middle of the Sixteenth Century that the land of Lorraine became part and parcel of France. In 1551, at the time of the conflicts brought about in Europe by the pretensions of the house of Austria, Maurice de Saxe, in his own name and in the name of the German Princes, recognised the sovereignty of Henry II, King of France, over the city of Metz, and the following year, April 10th 1552, the gates of that fortress were thrown open to the French. Thereupon, the Emperor Charles V, at the head of an army of 80,000 men, provided with a force of artillery such as was almost unheard of at the time, laid siege to Metz. The resistance opposed by François de Guise, of the house of Lorraine,

successfully withstood the attack. After sixty-five days of investment, during forty-five of which open trench operations were in progress, and 15 000 shells were fired at the defenders, Charles V raised the siege, at the end of the year 1552, having had one-third of his troops slain on the field of battle. Metz became French territory from that time forward.

In the following century, the treaty of Westphalia, while putting an end to the Thirty Years' War by a general settlement of European affairs, ceded Alsace to France, as a reward for the protection afforded by Richelieu and Mazarin to the Protestant Princes of Germany. The cession, made in 1648, was extended in 1681 to Strasbourg, which was then joined to France.

Under the old regime, such transmissions of suzerainty were by no means contrary to the Law of Nations. The so-called Holy German Empire was not a modern State ; still less did it constitute a nation. Under a common name, it was just a conglomeration of principalities, bishoprics, electorates and free cities, severally possessed of their own laws, customs and individual existence. The inhabitants did not belong to themselves. They were made over from one master by another by contract, by inheritance, or by marriage. As a matter of fact, *neither under Louis XIV, nor under Louis XV, did any demonstration take place against the authority of the French Kings.*

On the occasion of a solemnity held at Strasbourg University, Jean-Daniel Schoepflin voiced the sentiments of the Alsatians in the following words : « Nature has been bountiful to Alsace ; but of all the benefits showered upon her, the most precious in my opinion is that Alsace, *Gallic by her origins*, should have reverted to France. »

And in confirmation of these words, uttered by the historian of Alsace, we have the most unimpeachable testimony, that of the Prussian Ambassador Schmettau, who wrote in 1701 (27 years after the French marched into Strasbourg) :

« We cannot take back Alsace, because it is a well-established fact that the Alsatians are even more French than the Parisians. We must needs, therefore, leave the Alsatians to their beloved France, or at most deprive her of the land and the revenues, for the only means of capturing their hearts would be a chain two hundred years in length. Even if taken by force, the land of Alsace will remain a smouldering furnace of love for France. »

In 1744, when the « Pandours » from beyond the Rhine invaded Alsace ; King Louis XV himself took command of his troops, declaring that he would not « have his kingdom nibbled away ». The threatened provinces gave him a triumphal reception ; the sickness by which the monarch was struck down at Metz created as great a

stir as any national calamity might have caused.

In 1781, the city of Strasbourg celebrated the centenary of her union with France by great solemnities, in the course of which the chief magistrate gave expression to the grateful attachment of all ranks, and of the private citizens, who for one hundred years had enjoyed a tranquillity and happiness such as their ancestors had never known.

A few years later the influence of the principles of liberty and equality set forth by the French philosophers of the Eighteenth Century, Montesquieu, Voltaire, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and others, led in France to the Revolution, which proclaimed the rights of individuals and nations in Europe ; Alsace and Lorraine were among the first to take part in that patriotic movement, nor was their loyalty shaken at any moment during the upheaval caused by internal conflicts and the coalition of Europe against France. *The young Republic was never confronted by any separatist tendencies on the part of the Eastern provinces.*

As early, indeed, as the constitution in 1787, of the Provincial Assemblies — the forerunners of the States-General of 1789 — the Alsatian Commission had recorded in an official document the very charter of modern times : « Everything that belongs to the feudal system is characterised by a spirit of thralldom that cannot be tolerated in a properly constituted society. *And no later than July 7th 1789, the citizens of Stras-*

bourg declared that « in the most distant part of the country they shared in the general rejoicing caused by the binding together of the representatives of the French nation in one body full of power and light. »

On July 14th, in Paris, the first man to lead the *Gardes Françaises* into the Bastille, that symbolic stronghold of the arbitrary power of kings, was an Alsatian officer, Elie, of the Queen's Regiment ; though he had set out in civilian garb, he presently donned his glittering uniform, boldly proclaiming his quality to the foe as well as to his own party. A week later the population of Strasbourg rose in their turn ; the old aristocracy left the municipal power in the hands of an administrative body chosen from among every degree of the *bourgeoisie*. The life of the old regime in Strasbourg was at an end. The very next year the National Assembly abolished that regime in Alsace ; the question of the feudal Princes' rights was settled in accordance with the declaration of Merlin de Douai, proclaiming the statute of the French populations :

« The time is no longer when kings could dispose as they listed of what they called their flocks; the Alsatian people, last year, clearly expressed their desire to be united with France, their will alone consummated or legitimised that union, and they became French because « such was their good pleasure ».

That same year, 1790, the National Guards,

at Metz, in an address sent by them to the National Assembly, declared that the new Constitution left them nothing to regret, but that on the contrary their fathers would no doubt have envied them, had they been able to witness their felicity. On June 11th, Strasbourg called together, for the purpose of holding a great festival, the National Guards of Alsace, Lorraine and Franche-Comté. Frédéric de Diétrich, the Town Mayor, received in front of the Cathedral, and there and then ordered be hoisted, the first tricolor flags unfurled in Strasbourg, *in order*, runs the official report, *that the sight, witnessed from the opposite bank of the Rhine, may bring home to Germany, that the Empire of liberty has been founded in France.*

On April 25th, 1792, when Prussia's declaration of war against France was made known, Diétrich rode through the town under military escort, reading out the Prussian declaration to the crowd. The selfsame evening, he requested Captain Rouget de l'Isle, who was known as a poet and composer, to write a patriotic song, suitable to the occasion. And the next day, the *Chant de guerre pour l'Armée du Rhin* was sung in the Mayor of Strasbourg's parlour, to the general satisfaction of all present. Having soon become popular by the name of the *Marseillaise*, that noble composition has remained the official anthem of the French Republic.

In the month of September 1792, an Alsatian

General, Kellermann, saved France at Valmy, in the Argonne passes, by arresting the progress of the enemy, who had captured Longwy and Verdun.

The victory at Valmy was followed by a long succession of campaigns, in which the sons of Alsace and Lorraine bore their full share of danger and glory. And to this day, in the regions occupied by Germany, two statues still serve to teach the younger generations of Alsace-Lorraine the lesson of their real country's greatness. In the main square at Strasbourg, stands the effigy of General Kléber, the son of a mason of that city, who acquired fame in the Vendée, on the Rhine, in Egypt, and of whom Bonaparte once said : « There is no finer sight than Kléber on a battle morning » ; on the Esplanade at Metz, is to be seen the statue of Marshal Ney, great by reason of his victories, greater yet by his heroic bearing in adversity, during the retreat from Russia and the battle of Waterloo.

Obviously, therefore, down to the disastrous war of 1870, France had never been confronted by an Alsatian question, or a question of Lorraine. Not only had those two provinces no need to disclaim or to expunge any past deeds of their own, when asserting their will to be French, but from the time of the Revolution onwards, that will and determination assumed the character of an inborn sentiment, as deeply rooted in their souls as any family affection, and to which, for

that very reason, it was hardly considered necessary to give formal expression. In 1848, while announcing the festivities to be held in commemoration of the bicentenary of the treaty of Westphalia, by which Alsace was made over to France, the Mayor of Strasbourg recorded the prevailing state of mind in this respect : « *It is no longer necessary, I should think, for us to make a solemn and public declaration of our undying attachment to France. France does not doubt our loyalty; she has faith in Alsace. Alsace is as French as Brittany, Flanders or the Basque Country, and intends to remain so.*

By proclaiming the rights of nations, Revolutionary France had not only built up her own national unity on the immovable foundation of a unanimous consent, unimpaired by the slightest rift or discordance ; she had enabled all Europe to benefit by her experience and by her conceptions ; she had laid down the principle of nationalities, based upon the right of nations to shape their own destinies. By virtue of her initiative, that principle found its application in the period just before the war of 1870. From 1859 onwards, in every one of the Italian regions bound together by Victor-Emmanuel to form the new kingdom of Italy — Lombardy (1859), Tuscany, Naples and Sicily (1860), Venice (1866), nay Rome itself (1870) — the populations concerned were duly consulted. Similarly, in 1860, Nice and Savoy only reverted to France after

a vote to that effect given by their inhabitants. Furthermore, in 1866, when Prussia, after her victory over Denmark, insisted upon the annexation of Schleswig-Holstein, French diplomacy prevailed upon Bismark to insert in the treaty of Prague a special clause, by virtue of which the Danish inhabitants of Northern Schleswig were to be given back to Denmark, if by free suffrage they expressed a desire to revert to their original country. That undertaking Prussia did not fulfil but the mere fact that she appended her signature to that « scrap of paper » bears witness to the moral force of a right, with the notion of which France had managed to impregnate the conscience of Europe, the right of nationalities to choose their own mode of life and rulership.



CHAPTER II

ALSACE-LORRAINE DURING THE WAR OF 1870-1871

In 1866, Prussia defeated Austria at Sadowa, the House of Hohenzollern assumed political control in Germany, to the exclusion of the House of Hapsburg. Setting up the worship of material force as a sort of State religion, Prussia considered herself sufficiently powerful to indulge in cynicism instead of hypocrisy. Then was created the Prussian theory concerning the « principle of nationalities », a theory forged as a weapon of war to further the aggressive designs of the military party. According to this theory the principle of nationalities has nothing whatever to do with modern law, based upon the dictates of conscience and the free expression of the popular will. It consists in imposing upon the different peoples, in defiance of their conscience or express desire, some definite nationality, depending upon

the arbitrary decrees of a certain number of *Herr Professoren*, who have measured skulls, apportioned the areas belonging to the several idioms, and ransacked the archives of History in support of their claims. To bear out their annexationist proclivities, the German scholars have flooded the universe with so-called « scientific » lucubrations — as if there were any possible comparison, for men of good faith, between the ascertained and ever verifiable results of mathematical calculations or physical experiments, and the doubtful, generally disputed conclusions arrived at after much retrospective groping in the obscure recesses of distant, nay, prehistoric ages.

All such productions are in truth, nothing but moves in the game of war, intended to confuse the issues and to bring about a state of indecision while the guns are doing their work ; nor is there a solitary one of these precious theories that will bear examination by an unbiased mind. There is a first point to be noted, that throws no little doubt upon the sincerity of these German scholars.

The territory wrested from France by Bismarck comprised portions of Lorraine as well as practically the whole of Alsace. Now all the arguments adduced by German « Science » refer to Alsace, which is claimed to be German land, and not to Lorraine, a region none would dare to call anything but French. No shadow of a legal pretext has been put forward to justify the an-

nexation of districts belonging formerly to the French departments of the Moselle and the Meurthe ; that measure was accounted for by so-called military necessities, no attempt being made even to save appearances. And any one refusing to be deceived by mere words will realise that the case was no different as regards the French departments of the Haut-Rhin and the Bas-Rhin. True enough, the German idiom spread across the Rhine as far as the Vosges mountains ; the Alsatians make use of a dialect derived from the German. *But the language spoken is by no means a proof of national inclinations or popular will;* otherwise it were not Alsace alone that Germany should claim, but the whole of German-speaking Switzerland. In point of fact the *Strasbourg*ois is at heart, by reason of his deep attachment to France, the fellow-countryman of the *Lillois*, or the *Marseillais*, just as much as the inhabitant of Bâle, Berne, or Zurich is the countryman of the inhabitant of Geneva, or Bellinzona. Has not Treitschke, moreover, *the Herr Professor* of whom the Germans have made a sort of idol because he was the friend of Bismarck, and the propounder of the theories of Pan-German materialism, himself warned his countrymen to be chary of abusing a formula that might be turned against certain Prussian claims, reminding them that « nowhere in Europe is the political frontier of a country precisely the same as its linguistic boundaries ».

Granted likewise, that from the treaty of Verdun, dividing Charles the Great's Empire among the sons of Louis le Débonnaire, down to the redistribution of Central Europe enacted by the treaty of Westphalia, or in other words for a period of just over eight centuries (843-1648) the destinies of Alsace were bound up with those of the Holy German Empire. *But only by ignoring of a set purpose all the History of the Middle Ages, can a conglomeration of feudal lands subject to the nominal suzerainty of the German Emperor be likened to a nationality, in the true sense of the word.* And here again we have the gruff voice of the Prussian Treitschke preaching moderation to the Pan-German theorists in their unbridled frenzy : « It would be no less absurd for us to lay claim to Lyons, or to Arles, under the pretext that the Imperial eagle once topped their battlements, than to attempt to revive our ancient suzerain rights over Italy. » In point of fact, *as regards the division of Europe into large natural regions, the Rhine is the frontier that has ever separated Gaul and Germany. Alsace on the western bank of the Rhine would appear, as far back as archeological explorations in the bowels of the earth enable us to judge, to have been peopled by the Celtic race; when Caesar came, it was Gallic territory (the Druids from the sanctuaries in the Vosges attended the assemblies of the Loire), and after the conquest, it became Gallo-Roman territory.* The structural remains that are yet to be found,

extending for several kilometres in various parts of Alsace and constituting what the inhabitants call the heathen walls — those for instance, near Ribeauvillé and near Sainte-Odile — are systems of fortifications erected as a rampart against the ever-present danger of German barbarity. That danger the mighty Frankish Emperor, Charles the Great, warded off successfully when he carried the war beyond the Rhine, into the country of the Saxons, the Thuringians and the Bavarians, whose perfidious and cruel disposition made them unworthy, in his opinion, of any pity whatever. *The annexation of Alsace outrages both historical truth and the modern law of nationalities, for Alsace belongs to the Gaul of Julius Caesar's time, to the France of Charles the Great, just as it was part and parcel of the Republic « one and indivisible » founded in 1792 upon the freedom of citizens and nations.*

That the Germans have attempted to deceive foreign opinion with their theories of a German Alsace, without being able to deceive themselves, is demonstrated by unimpeachable evidence. When our defeats, in the early days of August 1870, laid open Alsace to invasion, the behaviour of the Germans towards the Alsatians was that of enemies, not of fellow-countrymen. In the month of October 1870, a great French historian who had been a lecturer at Strasbourg University, Fustel de Coulanges, was justified, when answering the German Mommsen, in calling attention to the fact that the resistance

of the besieged city was due, less to the small number of French soldiers that were garrisoned in it, than to the efforts of the native population : « *An Alsatian General was in command. The Bishop who was repelled so brutally from the German camp was an Alsatian. Those who fought so bravely, whose sallies dealt such shrewd blows to the besiegers, were Alsations. Though speaking your language, these men regarded you as no fellow-countrymen of theirs.* Again, can it be seriously contended that they were looked upon as fellow-countrymen by the German soldiers who bombarded Strasbourg, aiming at the Cathedral, setting fire to the new Protestant Temple, to the Library, the private houses, the hospital and while sparing the ramparts and the garrison, showed no pity for the civilian population? »

The ruthless brutality with which the German Army Staff treated the ancient capital of Alsace should have served as a warning to all, within Germany itself, lest the barbarous cruelties practised by their soldiery should one day recoil upon their own heads : for it is a law of history that civilisation and liberty may, indeed, cross the Rhine from West to East, but never in the opposite direction. As far back as the close of the year 1846, when Germany was not yet weighed down by the yoke of Prussian feudalism, but could hope for the evolution of a liberal policy, Ch. Bidermann declared *that Alsace derived from*

her French connection the benefit of a higher culture. « Is it to be supposed, he wrote — to the great scandal of the German Government's organs — that Alsace would consent of her own free will to be detached from France, a country by which she is already endowed with every advantage progressive minds are striving to obtain elsewhere? » With all the more reason, therefore, might clear-sighted Germans in 1870 view with no little concern the choice to be made between two alternatives : either Germany would respect in the moral entity of Alsace-Lorraine the sacred right of nations to shape their own destinies, or she would be swept by so resistless a tide of reaction, that Central Europe must thenceforth give up all hope of peace and liberty. Now while the rulers of the German States, nay Bismarck himself, had no such clear perception of what the future had in store, an ominous note was sounded in a manifesto published in Germany as soon as the news came to hand of the fall of the French Emperor and the proclamation of the Republic in Paris (September 4th 1870) :

« The German working classes hereby declare that they will brook no insult to the French nation, now that it has got rid of the man who alone disturbed the harmony of our two peoples.

« A policy of annexation could have no other effect than to perpetuate military despotism in reconstituted Germany and lead to a future life-and-death struggle between Germany and France.

« Such as are not dazed by the tumultuous course of events or who have no personal interest in deceiving the German people, must see for themselves that the war of 1870 cannot but bring about a war with Russia, just as the present conflict is the direct outcome of the struggle with Austria in 1866. On her attitude in the hour of victory will depend the gravity of the danger resulting for Germany from this war : if she insists upon keeping Alsace-Lorraine, she will find France and Russia in alliance against her...

« We therefore protest against the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine; and we raise this protest in the name of the German Democratic Committee, certain as we are that every German workman thinks as we do. »

This manifesto was issued by the leading Committee of German Socialism, still imbued at that time with some part of the idealistic tendencies awakened in it by the France of 1789 and 1848. It roused the anger of the Prussian military authorities. General Vogel von Falckestein ordered those who had signed their names to the manifesto addressed to German workmen to be arrested and imprisoned in a Prussian fortress. Next came the turn of the representatives in Parliament of the North-German Confederation, Bebel and Liebknecht. For having censured publicly the Prussian policy of annexation, they were subjected to the full rigor of imprisonment

before trial ; set free after three months' detention, they were indicted, a twelvemonth later, before the Assize Court and sentenced to two years' imprisonment in the fortresses of Hubertusburg and Königstein. The crime for which they were thus made to suffer was that of publishing forth to the whole world the fact that *the Prussian victory had been gained not only over the French Army, but within Germany itself, over all that was left in that country in the way of civic courage and moral uprightness.* Bebel and Liebknecht were sent to prison because there was to be no place henceforward for such a thing as a free conscience in the Germany of the Hohenzollerns.

And if the very Germans themselves, the delegates of the working classes, the duly elected representatives of the people were not allowed to express their sentiments freely, when they voiced the protest of outraged right and sounded a warning full of deep political wisdom, what chance was there that the conquered should be able to obtain a hearing? How could the people of Alsace-Lorraine hope to have justice done to them by conquerors who resorted to such iniquities and brutal methods towards their own countrymen? But the Alsatians and Lorrainers would not have approved themselves the true Frenchmen they were, had they not — when threatened with being wrested by brute force from the country to which they were bound by

every fibre of their inmost being, — proclaimed in the most solemn and unequivocal terms the French thesis of the intangible right of nations to shape their own destinies.

As soon as the National Assembly, elected by universal suffrage by the French departments met at Bordeaux, February 17th 1871, the deputies of Alsace and Lorraine made their voice heard :

« We, the undersigned, being French citizens, appointed and deputed by the Bas-Rhin, Haut-Rhin, Meurthe and Moselle departments, to bring to the National Assembly of France the expression of the unanimous will of the population of Alsace and Lorraine, have resolved, after mature deliberation and discussion, to embody in a solemn declaration their sacred and imprescriptible rights, so that the National Assembly, France and all Europe, having before their eyes the express desires of our mandatories, may consummate, or allow to be consummated, no act or deed of such a nature as to infringe the rights we are sent hither to protect and defend.

« DECLARATION :

« Alsace and Lorraine do not consent to be made over to alien masters.

« Associated with France for more than two centuries in good as well as in evil fortune, these two provinces unceasingly exposed to the blows of the enemy, have ever sacrificed themselves for

the cause of her national greatness ; they have sealed with blood the indissoluble bond connecting them with French unity. The object to-day of alien pretensions, they proclaim, in spite of every obstacle and every danger, under the very heel of the invader, their unswerving loyalty to France.

« All of one mind, both the citizens who have remained at home and the soldiers who have rallied to the colours, the former by their votes, the latter by actual fighting, signify to Germany and to the world the immutable will and determination of Alsace and Lorraine to remain French. »

On March 1st 1871, at the final sitting before the peace preliminaries were ratified, the declaration read out was in the nature of a sorrowful but no less determined protest :

« Before any peace negotiations have been entered upon, the representatives of Alsace and Lorraine have laid upon the table of the National Assembly a declaration setting forth in the most explicit terms, on behalf of those provinces, their will and their right to remain French.

« Yielded up, in despite of all justice, and by a hateful abuse of force, to alien domination, we have a last duty to fulfil.

« We declare once again to be null and void a compact giving us away without our consent.

« The vindication of our rights remains open for ever, to each and all of us, in the shape and to the utmost limits prescribed by our conscience.

« As we are about to leave this House, in which our dignity forbids us to tarry any longer, and notwithstanding the bitterness of our sorrow, the last thought that wells up from the depths of our hearts is one of gratitude towards those who for six months have not ceased to defend us, and of undying attachment to the country from which we are being wrested by violence.

« Our best wishes will follow you, and we will wait, with perfect trust in the future, for the time when a regenerate France takes up once more the threads of her mighty destiny.

« Your brothers of Alsace and Lorraine, now separated from our common family, will preserve for France, while absent from their homes, their filial affection, until the day comes when she shall return to fill her accustomed place by our firesides. »

CHAPTER III

ALSACE-LORRAINE

AFTER THE TREATY OF FRANKFORT

On May 10th 1871, the Treaty of Frankfort was signed. Germany took over the greater portion of the Moselle department, one third of the Meurthe, the whole of the Bas-Rhin and practically the whole of the Haut-Rhin, numbering altogether a million and a half of inhabitants. Then were made manifest the true sentiments and the real design of the German Government. *Alsace-Lorraine did not become a State within the Confederation, but a « Reichsland », a district to be colonised by Germans, while the lawful owners were to be dispossessed.* In order to carry out this plan, the conquerors enforced upon the natives a system of *option*. Nor should the word *option*, implying a possibility of choice, be allowed to cover over the brutal harshness or the iniquity of this measure. The Alsatians and Lor-

rainers were not given the choice, as would have appeared natural, between two nationalities, the old or the new ; they were confronted with the cruel alternative of either remaining in their own land — *in which case German nationality must be accepted as a matter of course* — or of being exiled permanently from the land of their birth.

There was no room for half measures : option in favour of French nationality would be valid only if followed up, before October 1st 1872, by actual emigration — the removal of the voter's person, abode and place of business. Furthermore, Germany took a delight in rendering the conditions of the measure yet more stringent by her arbitrary interpretation of the clauses relating to them : she decided to expel all inhabitants of the annexed provinces born in other French departments. Nor was this all, for she broke her own pledges by denying the validity of any such option made by minors, even if sanctioned by their legal representatives, unless the latter themselves voted in favour of French nationality — an exhibition of cruelty and bad faith at which England stood aghast, — as witness an article published at the time by the *Morning Post* : « Even if parents too poor or too friendless to be able to leave their homes should wish, nevertheless, to preserve the French nationality of their children, the Prussian Government absolutely refuses to accept the option of those children, though validated by the authority of their

natural guardians, unless the entire family departs into exile. »

It was a time of heart-rending anguish for every Alsatian and Lorrainer. On which side lay the path of duty, of duty to France? Should they leave the country to be flooded by the tide of German immigrants?... Or should they remain where they were?... Nay, was it possible for them to remain, in all conscience? Could a magistrate of Alsace, or Lorraine, carry out the behests of a German attorney-general — of the notorious Popp, for instance, who had no sooner set foot in Strasbourg then he saw fit to remind the judges that they had at their disposal, for the furtherance of the task in hand, « the fullest severity of the law », that to show clemency would be a mistake, moderation a danger? Was it possible for a schoolmaster, for a professor to teach history after the German fashion, to poison the minds of his young charges with hatred and contempt of the Rights of Man, while glorifying triumphant militarism? Last but not least, there was the dread prospect of what the London *Spectator* called « the torture of conscription »; no delay was granted by Bismarck for the discharge of military service in the Prussian barracks. It was necessary to leave the country, lest one should have some day to fight against one's kith and kin. And leave the country, they did. « Eye-witnesses, wrote the *Times* of October 1st 1872, tell us of hundreds and thousands of people of

every age and every condition, who for several weeks, more particularly on Sundays, have thronged the railway stations, from the Rhine and from the Sarre, right up to the new frontier. And the exodus went on uninterruptedly, even after 1872, comprising at least 200,000 Alsatians and Lorrainers. Bischwiller had a population of 11,500 in 1869; in 1874 it held but 7,700 inhabitants. Out of 96 cloth manufacturers, 21 only remained behind; there were 650 looms running, instead of 2,000. Of the 5,000 hands employed in these factories, more than 3,000 had emigrated to France, notably to Elbeuf. Those from Mulhouse settled in Belfort. *The citizens of Metz, who had declared, by the mouth of the Municipal Council that « everything binds us to France, just as everything separates us invincibly from Germany », betook themselves to Nancy. « There are more Messins in Nancy than at Metz », declared one of these emigrants from Lorraine; while a high German official, upon whom it devolved to receive those who came to fill their places, observed ruefully : « We know what we are losing and still better do we know what we shall get instead. »*

In 1874, the wicked process appeared to have been completed. German hypocrisy was proved to the hilt; and it rested with a newspaper of the Austrian capital, the Viennese *Tages Presse* to point out at the time the flagrant contradic-

tion existing between this wholesale banishment of a population and the humanitarian principles expounded by German writers, in reference to war and its consequences. The Imperial Government believed itself justified in considering as German, from this time onwards, that part of the population which, for lack of means or opportunity, had been compelled to put up with the presence of the German immigrants, and the harsh rule of officials from beyond the Rhine (*as far back as 1874, one quarter only of those in State employment of high and low degree were natives of the country*). Alsace and Lorraine were empowered, therefore, to send representatives to the Reichstag. Fifteen deputies were to be elected on February 1st; *the fifteen that were returned stood for a protest against annexation*, and it was in their name, when the Reichstag met, that Edouard Teutsch, who had been a member of the French National Assembly at Bordeaux, addressed the House, February 18th 1874 :

« Gentlemen,

« The populations of Alsace-Lorraine, whose representatives we are in the Reichstag, have entrusted us with a special and momentous task, which it behoves us to fulfil without delay. They have instructed us to apprise you of their feeling with regard the change of nationality enforced upon them as a result of your war against France.

It is to the interest of Germany that the statement we intend to make should receive a hearing, and we venture to rely, Gentlemen, upon your kind attention for the next few minutes.

« Your last war having terminated favourably for your nation, undoubtedly entitled the latter to some compensation. Germany, however, exceeded her right as a civilised nation, when she imposed upon vanquished France the sacrifice of a million and a half of her children. *In the name of the Alsatians and Lorrainers, sold into bondage by the treaty of Frankfort, we protest against the abuse of force of which our country has been a victim.*

« Although, in distant and comparatively barbarous ages, the right of conquest may have taken sometimes the character of virtual right, and may be condoned even to-day, when applied to ignorant and savage tribes, nothing of the sort can be alleged against Alsace-Lorraine. It is at the close of the Nineteenth Century, an age of light and progress, that Germany has conquered us; and the people she has reduced to slavery — *for annexation without our consent constitutes, in our eyes, absolute moral slavery* — is one of the foremost in Europe; the people, perhaps, imbued with the most exalted sense of right and justice.

« Would you adduce the regularity of the treaty consecrating the cession to yourselves of our territory and its inhabitants? Why both reason

and the most elementary principles of law, proclaim such a treaty to be invalid. *Citizens possessed of a soul and intelligence are not goods that can be bartered from one to another, nor can they, therefore, be dealt with by contract.* Moreover, were we even to grant — as we emphatically do not — that France had a right to cede us to you, the contract wherewith you confront us is of no value. For a contract derives its validity from the free consent of the contracting parties : *and it was at the point of the sword that France, bleeding and exhausted, was made to signus away. She was not free ; she yielded to violence, and our text-books teach us that violence is a cause of nullity for any convention tainted therewith.*

« In order to invest the cession of Alsace-Lorraine with a semblance of legality, the very least you should have done would have been to submit that cession to the ratification of the people thus ceded.

« A famous jurist, Professor Bluntschli, of Heidelberg, in his *Digest of International Law*, page 285, lays down as follows : « For a cession of territory to be valid, it must be recognised as such by the inhabitants of the ceded territory, possessed in it of political rights. Such recognition cannot be taken for granted, nor dispensed with, for a population is not a mere chattel, devoid of rights and without a will of its own, and the ownership of which can be transferred from one person to another. »

Germany has pleaded the necessity of defending herself against French aggression. [But this aim she might well have accomplished without dismembering France, by demanding of her conquered enemy the dismantling of the fortresses in Alsace-Lorraine.

« It is therefore in the intoxication of victory and in that intoxication alone, that is to be found the real cause of the exorbitant demand by virtue of which we are to-day the vassals of your Empire. *In yielding to this intoxication, Germany committed the greatest blunder, perhaps, recorded in her history.*

« It lay with her, after her triumphs, to win by generosity not only the admiration of the whole world, but the friendly feelings of her conquered enemy and more particularly ours, the inhabitants of Alsace-Lorraine. It lay with her to bring about general disarmament in Europe, to close for ever perhaps, the blood-stained era of war between nations made to love one another. For this, all she had to do — in obedience to the liberal spirit with which we should have credited so enlightened a nation — was to give up all idea of aggrandissement and to leave the French territory intact. By acting thus, Germany would have approved herself the greatest and most respected of nations and would have risen to a place of unparalleled prominence in Europe.

« For not having yielded in 1871 to counsels of moderation, what does she reap to-day? *Every*

nation in Europe is mistrustful of her encroaching power and is increasing its armaments. She herself, for the sake of upholding the vain bauble that goes by the name of military prestige, is draining herself of men, and money. And what, Gentlemen, are your prospects in relation to the future? Instead of that era of peace and fraternity among nations you had it in your power to inaugurate in 1871, you look forward, we are certain, with the same apprehension as we do ourselves, to fresh wars, which can but bring ruin and death to your homes once more.

« *Believe us, Gentlemen, lay aside this policy which is our undoing, while it jeopardises the whole future of your own nation.*

« You are strong and powerful to-day, for which reason you can grant us satisfaction without incurring, on your part, any sacrifice of proper pride. Give back to us, as we entreat of you, the free disposition of our own selves.

« Do us this justice, Gentlemen, and we will forget our three years of suffering, to consider only your noble bearing at the eleventh hour. From that time onward, we shall be bound to you, as a friendly people, by the only feelings of brotherhood that are deep and lasting, those based upon genuine regard. »

What reception was accorded to this speech, the moral elevation of which is only equalled by its political foresight? We are informed of the facts by the *Frankfurter Gazette*; that newspaper,

German as it was, could not help uttering a protest against the unseemly tumult and scoffing laughter wherewith the overwhelming majority of the deputies greeted the dignified words of their colleague. Modern Germany did not blush to withhold that tribute of respect paid to misfortune by all mankind ; Modern Germany possessed a soul no longer.

SECOND PART
THE WAR OF 1914
AND THE RECOVERY OF ALSACE-LORRAINE

CHAPTER IV

ALSACE-LORRAINE
ON THE EVE OF THE PRESENT WAR

I

To impart the veneer of a semblance of legality to the annexation of territories belonging to four French departments, Germany has contended that those departments were, for the greater part, peopled by individuals of German stock ; having been detached from the Holy German Empire in the changeful course of History, they should revert lawfully to the German Empire as reconstituted, January 18th 1871, under the hegemony of the Hohenzollerns. The fact that the history of Alsace and Lorraine was artificially coloured by the German scholars to meet the

case, or that the populations of Alsace and Lorraine protested solemnly at Bordeaux, as they did later on in the Reichstag, against the pretensions of the conqueror, was not sufficient proof that the Germans were not sincere when they claimed Alsace-Lorraine to be German land.

It was left for subsequent events to put their apparent sincerity to the proof.

Let us assume for a moment that the Germans were actuated by a genuine conviction. Famine has delivered Paris into their hands, France has submitted to Bismarck's terms : the Alsatians and Lorrainers have become German once more. Surely these « long-lost brethers » are not going to be likened to the aliens, who are crushed within the Empire by an iron yoke — to those Poles, for instance, whose trust was betrayed by Prussia in the Eighteenth Century and whom the Junkers of the eastern marches persecute with untiring ferocity in their religious faith, in their national idiom, nay in their very right to own the land ; or to those dwellers in Schleswig, whom Prussia, by the Treaty of Prague, solemnly pledged her word not to separate from Denmark without first obtaining their consent, a promise inserted in yet another of those scraps of paper to which a Hohenzollern has affixed his worthless signature. The Alsatians and Lorrainers, on the contrary, will be treated as the equals of the Badenens, the Wurttembergers or the Prussians ; they will be privileged to enjoy all the civil and political safeguards

compatible with the somewhat inferior level hitherto attained by German civilisation.

Such were the obligations implied by the German thesis, in the eyes of the witnesses and of the victims themselves of the suit to recover Alsace-Lorraine. Those obligations Germany failed to carry out. Once again she was unfaithful to her promises, as if faithlessness were the only constant quantity in her mind and in her history.

In the confederation of States making up the German Empire, no place was found for a new State. Alsace-Lorraine was not even made part of a State, like the free city of Frankfort, for instance, which in 1866 became part and parcel of the Prussian Kingdom. Alsace-Lorraine was given the appellation of *Reichsland*, and administered, as though it were a colony, by the Berlin Government. The Prussian Prime Minister, who is at the same time the Imperial Chancellor, possesses full executive power. He is represented in Strasbourg by a high German official, who since 1879 bears the title of *Statthalter* (Imperial locum tenens) and is assisted by a small ministry, comprising 4 Under-Secretaries of State under the leadership of the Crown Council.

By a refinement of hypocrisy bearing the true Bismarckian stamp, the semblance, but the semblance only, of legislative power was bestowed upon Alsace-Lorraine. In 1874, an Imperial ordinance instituted a *Landesausschuss*, a « Delegation » emanating from the General Councils

and possessing no other right but that of tendering its advice. The powers of this body were extended later on. Finally, since 1911, a *Landtag*, or Lower Chamber, made up of deputies elected by universal suffrage, has sat in Strasbourg.

The representatives of Alsace-Lorraine were never given any real power : not only have they nothing to do with the appointment, or the retention in office, of the *Statthalter* and the Secretaries of State, who are mere creatures of the Kaiser, but the Berlin Government has always taken good care that any decisions taken by the Delegation or by the Lower Chamber should be subject to the veto of some superior power, unconcerned with Alsace-Lorraine's particular interests, but which the Imperial Chancellor could play off when he listed. Down to 1911, this power was either the Imperial Parliament itself, or the *Bundesrath*, that is to say the Council of the Confederate German States. From 1911 onwards, it was an Upper Chamber, one half of which was to be appointed by the Kaiser on the proposal of the *Bundesrath*; the other half comprising, besides the representatives of the Municipal Councils and of the Professional Guilds, dignitaries of the Church or the Universities, the President of the Court of Appeal at Colmar, or in other words men who by virtue of their office were at the mercy of the Berlin Government and whose votes, whatever the point at issue, went to make up that Government's majority.

Neither before, nor after 1911, was there the smallest atom of virtual power in Alsace that did not come under the German Emperor's autocratic control.

It is a fact of peculiar significance that whereas Alsace was not represented before 1911 in the Council of the Confederate States, she has been allowed since 1911 no less than three representatives in that body, just like the Grand Duchy of Baden, or Hesse. Now it might appear that she was raised thereby to the dignity of a German State and treated on a footing of equality — a deceptive appearance, merely intended to screen a subtle design on the part of the Prussian Government. In the Imperial Council, Prussia disposed of 17 votes only. She gets it decided that Alsace-Lorraine also shall have 3 representatives ; but who is to appoint and instruct those 3 representatives? Not the people of Alsace-Lorraine, but simply the *Statthalter* deputed to Strasbourg by Berlin. The so-called autonomy of Alsace-Lorraine has therefore but one substantial result, namely to raise the number of Prussian votes in the *Reichstag* from 17 to 20. The non-Prussian States were not deceived by this crafty move : they had a special restriction introduced into the Constitution, to the effect that the votes of the representatives of Alsace-Lorraine should not be taken into account in cases when, some important question being at issue, their inclusion in the count would be necessary to make up a

majority for the paramount State, or in other words for Prussia.

Nor were the people of Alsace-Lorraine any the less quick to grasp the situation ; in 1911 their deputies in the Reichstag combined to vote against the new Constitution, just as they had protested one and all, in 1874, against their annexation. Only one Alsatian deputy stood aside, a member of the Roman Catholic Centre, who was rewarded for his disloyalty to his countrymen by being made a judge of the Strasbourg tribunal and appointed a senator.

II

So forty years after the Treaty of Frankfort, the population of Alsace-Lorraine, who had been deprived of their national independence, had not yet had their political autonomy given back to them. Yet Germany, who ruled them *in despite of themselves*, might have refrained at last from making that rule *oppressive*. The authorities who had relegated them to the position of second-rate Germans, might have made it their duty to show sufficient consideration for their feelings and their interests to prevent them from having to suffer at every turn, both materially and morally, through having been restored by violence to the bosom of that so-called mother-country, whose loveable gentleness and superior

Kultur their German brothers had so often vainly extolled in their hearing.

How then did the German authorities behave towards the inhabitants of Alsace-Lorraine, during the years that elapsed between the voting of the Constitution in 1911 and the declaration of war in July 1914? Three notorious incidents mark the public history of Alsace-Lorraine during that brief space of time :

- 1° The affair of the *Graffenstaden* ironworks ;
- 2° The affair of the *Souvenir Alsacien-Lorrain* ;
- 3° The affair of Saverne (Zabern).

The facts relating to these incidents have been proved incontrovertibly and acknowledged as true by the German authorities themselves, in consequence of the public debates to which they gave rise in the parliamentary assemblies, both at Strasbourg and at Berlin. We deem it of interest to reproduce the particulars, as set forth at the time in the *Cahiers de la Ligue pour le Droit des Peuples*. Nothing could show up more clearly the spirit of hostility, nay of savage brutality, evinced by the Germans, on the very eve of the present war, towards the populations of Alsace and Lorraine.

1° The Graffenstaden Affair.

The Graffenstaden ironworks, in the vicinity of Strasbourg, founded at the beginning of the Nineteenth Century, became in 1892 a branch

establishment of the *Société Alsacienne de Constructions Mécaniques*, having its headquarters at Mulhouse. For years they had filled large orders for the Prussian and Imperial railways. In the month of April 1912, orders for locomotives amounting to several millions of marks were suddenly cancelled, which meant the early ruin of the business and the throwing out of employment of some 200 workmen and clerks.

On April 29th, M. Blumenthal, Mayor of Colmar, and a member of the Upper Chamber, brought to the notice of that Assembly the above mentioned withdrawal of orders passed, and the circumstances attending that withdrawal. It was ascertained that it had originated in an information lodged by the *Rhenish and Westphalian Gazette*, the organ of the Krupp interests at Essen. That paper had published an article accusing M. Heyler, one of the managers of the works, of having on sundry occasions given vent to anti-German sentiments and of encouraging anti-German manifestations among the personnel under his orders. In consequence of this accusation, repeated in the Chamber of Deputies at the sitting of April 20th, an enquiry had been called for by the Minister for Railways and carried out by the Government of Alsace-Lorraine. Neither the manager at Graffenstaden, nor the heads of the firm had been informed of the accusation, nor given an opportunity of justifying themselves. The Government at Strasbourg had merely carried

out the instructions received from Berlin, and following upon the report sent in by them to the Prussian Ministry, the *Société Alsacienne de Constructions Mécaniques* was called upon to dismiss M. Heyler and to « give guarantees of their loyalty » to the German cause, under penalty of having withdrawn from it the orders passed by the Prussian, and by the Imperial Railways. The Company refused to submit to this ultimatum and had the case brought before the Parliament of Alsace-Lorraine. After a preliminary debate in the Lower House, the matter was made the subject of three questions in the Upper House, at the long and most stormy sitting of May 7th. The replies of the Government, instead of furnishing proofs of M. Heyler's guilt, revealed the baseless character of the accusations brought against him. His so-called anti-German intrigues turned out to be nothing but idle tales, spread about by a few persons evilly disposed towards the manager of the works, and referring to incidents of so ill-proven and insignificant a character, that the Secretary of State for Alsace-Lorraine, M. Zorn de Bülack, could not refrain from calling them « mere childish nonsense ». Not one of the facts brought up against M. Heyler was in any way substantiated, the Government declared itself unable to name the people who had made the accusations, and these were contradicted by spontaneous — and signed — protests, published in the local papers by workmen and

clerks employed at the works, including a number of immigrants, who certified that the management had never shown them the least want of consideration.

What stood out more clearly in the debates both of the Chamber of Alsace-Lorraine and of the Prussian Chamber was the fact that the guiding motive of the informers was not so much their zeal for the German cause in Alsace, as a desire to further the interests of the Rhenish and Westphalian metallurgical industry, hampered by Alsatian competition. To ruin the latter, and if possible, to substitute a German for an Alsatian firm, would have been both a patriotic and a profitable undertaking. It was demonstrated, further, that the enquiry conducted by the Government of Alsace-Lorraine had been neither impartial nor sufficiently thorough; and that the said Government by obeying the behests of the Rhenish and Westphalian Gazette and of the Prussian Ministry, had made itself the tool of scheming competitors, greatly to the detriment of its own subjects. Its excessive subservience was made the subject of a vote of censure passed unanimously by the Upper Chamber. All the different parties, divided as they are upon so many questions, fell into line as soon as they saw their country wounded in its dignity and its interests, by the very men whose bounden duty it was to stand up in its defence, to conduct an open and straightforward inquiry, to disown with the greatest

energy the spies and informers, whose base work in Alsace-Lorraine was fostered by the Pan-German press, and to refuse to tolerate the intrusion of political motives in a plain business question.

The Government paid no heed whatever to the blame inflicted upon it by the Chamber, although that blame expressed the feelings of the whole country, revolted by the attitude of its rulers.

The *Société Alsacienne de Constructions mécaniques* had thus won its case in Parliament and before the country. None the less did the Prussian Ministry persist in forcing the Company to choose between M. Heyler's dismissal, or the loss of the custom of the Prussian and Imperial Railways. M. Heyler voluntarily tendered his resignation, which was accepted by the advisory committee of the firm, for the sake of preserving the prosperity of the business and the means of livelihood of its numerous personnel.

2° The Affair of the « Souvenir Alsacien-Lorrain ».

The Graffenstaden Affair affected the Alsacians and Lorrainers in their material interests only, whilst that of the *Souvenir Alsacien-Lorrain* was designed to wound their very souls, by striking at their deep reverence for the memory of those who died on the battlefields of Alsace and Lorraine, in defence of their French fatherland.

The association known by the name of *Le Souvenir Français* makes it their business to see to

the upkeep of French soldiers' graves in France and abroad. By reason of the obstacles placed in their way by the German Government in Alsace-Lorraine, they found themselves debarred from carrying out their pious labours in that country, and the task was made over to the *Souvenir Alsacien-Lorrain*. The latter is composed exclusively of natives of Alsace-Lorraine, who tend the graves of our fallen soldiers and provide for the holding of commemorative ceremonies. Its president, M. Jean, of Vallières near Metz, was called upon to supply the police with a list of its members. He refused, believing himself to be acting within his rights, for the law requires the production of the articles of association and of the names of the members of the board only in the case of societies having political aims. He was then ordered to pay a fine of 20 marks, but on appeal, the Metz tribunal demanded proof that the *Souvenir Alsacien-Lorrain* was political in character. For the purpose of procuring such proof, the police, on January 11th 1913 raided M. Jean's private house at Vallières, his office on the premises of the newspaper *Le Messin*, at Metz, and the house of M. Winsback, Secretary-general of the Association, likewise at Metz. No list of members was discovered, but a few letters and pamphlets were impounded.

January 19th 1913, the yearly general meeting of the *Souvenir Alsacien-Lorrain* was held at Metz. In order to avoid any interference on

the part of the police, no one was admitted to the hall, who could not produce a personal card of invitation. Nothing in the proceedings was of a nature to support the assertion that the aims of the Association were political.

Thereupon a decree of the President of Lorraine, communicated to M. Jean, January 23rd, ordered the *Souvenir Alsacien-Lorrain* to be dissolved. That decree was based upon paragraph 12 of the law relating to Associations, whereby the authorities are empowered to dissolve any society, the aims of which are contrary to the laws of the country. The measure appeared justifiable, therefore, to the Government, by reason of the fact that the *Souvenir Alsacien-Lorrain* carried on under another name, the work of the *Souvenir Français*. Now the *Souvenir Français* never having had a decree of dissolution brought against it, how can the fact of carrying on its work, justify the step taken by the Government of Alsace-Lorraine? The Association thus dissolved is accused of having concealed its true aim, alleged to have been the propagation of anti-German feelings — an ever-ready pretext for the justification of such measures.

In the course of a sitting of the Budget Committee in the Landtag, January 24th, M. Zimmer, deputy for Thionville, interpellated the Government's representative, Herr Mandel, Under-Secretary of State, concerning the dissolution of the *Souvenir Alsacien-Lorrain*. He inveighed against

the decree as stating no ascertained facts, but mere unjustifiable assertions. He asked how it was that the president of Lorraine, whose powers are restricted to that province, could take a measure affecting the whole of Alsace-Lorraine. Had he been authorised thereto by the Government?

Herr Mandel replied that the Government had approved and ordered the dissolution, as being justified by the political activities of a Society whose aim was to detach Alsace-Lorraine from Germany (an accusation tantamount to a charge of high treason). The Under-Secretary of State read out a letter seized in the course of the domiciliary visits. This letter addressed to M. Jean, had been written by a subscriber to the funds of the Association, a Frenchman, who expressed therein a number of chauvinistic sentiments. M. Zimmer retorted that it cannot be taken for granted that the recipient of a letter necessarily concurs in the sentiments expressed by the writer, still less can these be held to justify a measure taken against the whole of the Association of which that recipient happens to be a member.

30 *The Saverne Affair.*

Originating in a local incident, the Saverne Affair grew to the proportions of an important event in the inner history of Germany. Eventually it set at loggerheads Prussian Militarism, as championed by Von Bethmann Hollweg and

General Von Falkenhayn, and a great majority of the representatives of the German people. It led to the dismissal of all the high German officials sitting at Strasbourg : the *Statthalter*, Count Wedel, the Secretary and the Under-Secretaries of State, Zorn de Bülach, Petri and Mandel.

The circumstances arose, in November 1913, at the little town of Saverne, one hour by rail from the French frontier. Here was stationed the 99th regiment of Prussian Infantry. In the early days of November, a young lieutenant, Baron Von Forstner, whose task it was to drill the recruits — comprising a number of Alsatians — heard that one of his men, a native of Rhenish Prussia, had been sent to prison for two months for stabbing an Alsatian with a knife. Quoth the lieutenant to the private : « You may be sure I would not have punished you for that. On the contrary, for each of the dirty *wackes* (roughs) you cut down, I will give you 10 marks », whereupon an under-officer exclaimed : « And I will add another 3. »

Lieutenant Von Forstner, moreover, was in the habit of addressing the Alsatian soldiers under his command as pigs of *wackes* : he compelled them to say when they came into his presence : « *I am a Wackes* ». On every possible occasion, he expressed hatred and contempt for everything Alsatian.

The insulting words of the Prussian lieutenant

to the Alsatians soldiers were resented by the unoffending population of Alsace, just as if he had smacked them in the face and they at once sided with their countrymen. On the very evening of the day when his speech was made known, a crowd assembled before the Baron's windows... Stones were thrown at the closed shutters, to the accompaniment of cat-calls and shouts of « We are not Wackes, we are law-abiding Alsatians. »

Finding that no punishment was meted out to the lieutenant or to the under-officer who had taken such cowardly advantage of their situation, their indignation grew more and more bitter. On the Saturday, October 8th, the lieutenant, on his way to a Restaurant together with a few brother-officers, was followed by several hundred people, chiefly workmen and youths. The crowd took up its station in front of the establishment, hooting, singing and shouting at the top of their voices, *We are not Wackes*. A few of the bolder spirits invaded the restaurant, but without giving way to any violence. None the less did the officers draw their loaded revolvers and lay them ostensibly on the table, which led to an outburst of laughter and jeers. Eventually the officer commanding the regiment, Colonel von Reutter, stepped forward and made an attempt to harangue the crowd, but as he began by using the term commonly employed by German officers when addressing their men, *Leute!* (fellows), fresh shouts arose : « We are Alsatians. » He

found it impossible to obtain a hearing and adopted the course of sending the lieutenant to barracks under escort.

It was generally supposed that in order to avoid any further disturbance, Lieutenant von Forstner would be kept for some little time discreetly out of sight. Nothing of the sort : the very next day, as if out of sheer bravado, he was told off to go the rounds of the sentries posted in different parts of the town. As soon as he set foot in the streets, he was mobbed and hooted. Street urchins dogged his steps, shouting : « *Us you shall not call wackes, for we will join the Foreign Legion.* » The lieutenant proceeded on his rounds, escorted by two of his men, and followed at a distance by two other lieutenants leading a huge mastiff. This fresh provocation added fuel to the fire ; the indignant townsmen began to abuse and ridicule every soldier they came across.

Colonel von Reutter had proposed that the town should be put under martial law, but the *Kreisdirector* (Sub-prefect) refused to countenance this high-handed proceeding, intended without the slightest doubt, not only to intimidate the population, but also, and more especially, to make it appear that the disturbance had been an absolute riot, requiring to be put down at any cost. As a matter of fact, for all the excitement that prevailed at certain stages, the crowd ill-used nobody except in words, and the only material damage it was guilty of was that of severing

the fire-hose brought up one evening to disperse it.

To deal with the real culprits was the least concern of Colonel von Reutter. He taxed his men with having broken their oath of allegiance by revealing to outsiders things that had taken place in barracks, thus besmirching the whole regiment, to his own shame and sorrow. He gave out moreover, that he would have no rest until he had made an example of those who had thus betrayed their duty as German soldiers.

So there was to be no punishment for the evil-doers, but only for those who had divulged their misdeeds. Nor was it long before the threat was carried into effect. The Alsatian soldiers serving at Saverne were displaced almost to a man, some being distributed amongst the other garrisons of Alsace-Lorraine, and the rest, to the number of thirty or thereabouts, packed off to the other end of Germany.

The military police, moreover, made an ineffectual raid upon the offices of a small local newspaper the *Zaberger Anzeiger*, edited and printed by a family of German immigrants. That paper had been the first to call attention to Lieutenant von Forstner's disgraceful conduct and pluckily backed up the protest of the people of Saverne.

True, indeed, the lieutenant and his worthy second, the under-officer, were confined to barracks for a few days, but this punishment had nothing to do with the fact that they had set a price upon the heads of Alsatian soldiers. It concerned an

older offence — the maltreating of one of their men, also an Alsatian, by the way — and was light, indeed, when compared with the severe punishment dealt out to innocent soldiers, dispatched far away from their homes. Revolted by such flagrantly unfair treatment, public opinion took up the challenge to its sense of justice. Every political party in Alsace-Lorraine organised indignation meetings. Notice was given of several questions on the subject in the Reichstag.

By reason of this powerful current of opinion the military authorities made up their minds — at last — to censure Lieutenant von Forstner's conduct openly. On November 25th, at 7 o'clock in the evening, while Lieutenant von Forstner was crossing the *Place du Château*, escorted by four soldiers, an opprobrious epithet was launched at him by one of a group of youngsters. Immediately, at the lieutenant's call, a party of 50 soldiers issued from the barracks with fixed bayonets. Lieutenant Schadt, their leader, began by ordering the people who were in the square — about 50, all told — to disperse, or he would have them fired upon. The soldiers pursued the fleeing crowd into the streets. They arrested some thirty of them, many of whom had not the faintest notion what was the matter. Several of these, including women and children, were ill-treated shamefully. *The soldiers burst into a number of houses, and followed up to the second storey a deaf man who had walked out into*

the street, not knowing that anything was amiss. They subjected him to the most brutal treatment, as well as his mother, an old woman of eighty. The judges and councillors of the Saverne tribunal were just leaving the Law Courts: on seeing what was going on, one of them pointed out to Lieutenant Schadt the illegal nature of the acts committed by his men. He was promptly arrested, with one of his colleagues, and brought before the Colonel. On the intervention of the President of the tribunal, they were set free, but the other arrests were upheld and the prisoners, 28 in number, locked up in a coal cellar, inside the barracks. The following day, they were taken, one by one, to the civil tribunal, where they were examined and dismissed.

During the next few days although it was the express duty of the civil police to maintain law and order, bodies of soldiers went on patrolling the streets, and proceeded to make further arrests under the most ridiculous pretexts.

Early in the morning on Tuesday, December 2nd, Lieutenant von Forstner, at the head of his company, which he was leading to some field manoeuvre, was marching through the village of Dettwiller, not far from Saverne. It was still dark. The soldiers passed some workmen on their way to a factory. Reconignising the lieutenant, the men jeered and one of them swore at him. The officer at once ordered a charge and the workmen took to their heels. *A young*

man, crippled in the legs, who could not get away in time, was the only one to be caught. He was mishandled by the soldiery and the lieutenant dealt him a blow on the head with his sword, cutting it to the bone. Taken before the mayor of the village, the prisoner was released after a short examination. His wound proved a serious affair. An act of such savage brutality committed against a poor cripple, and the equally brutal attempts upon the liberty of peaceful citizens, created a storm of indignation in Alsace-Lorraine and in Germany.

The popular feeling found an echo in the Imperial Reichstag, where the Saverne incidents gave rise to tempestuous scenes, such as have rarely been witnessed in that Assembly. On December 3rd 1913, before a full House, the three interpellations of which notice has been given by the party of the Liberal Democrats (Radical), the Socialist party, and the deputation of Alsace-Lorraine, were backed by all the Alsatian deputies.

M. Roeser (Liberal-Democrat) deputy for Saverne, was the first to address the House. Of the three speakers, he showed the greatest moderation. « We are witnessing, he said, the ruin of every hope of a peaceful political development in Alsace-Lorraine. »

When he related the incidents of November 28th, and described the brutal behaviour of the soldiery while effecting one of the arrests, and the

barbarous treatment inflicted upon the persons arrested — compelled, as they were, to pass the night on the bare ground, in a cellar they were not permitted to leave for a single moment — many indignant exclamations rang through the House. M. Roeser pointed out the senseless wickedness of the charge through the streets, in pursuit of unarmed civilians, many of whom were young children ; he spoke of the lieutenant, going about his shopping under the protection of four bayonets.

M. Peirottes (Socialist) referred to the same facts as the preceding orator, but with greater vehemence and bitterness. He held up to ridicule Lieutenant von Forstner, and the whole attitude of the military at Saverne, which such pungent wit that the House was convulsed with laughter.

« We used to be told in this country, he observed, of a military government existing side by side with a civil government. Now the military government alone remains. Law and justice have been trodden underfoot, in Alsace, by the military authorities... When will the Chancellor take action? It is for him to go and tell the Kaiser that he can no longer accept responsibility for proceedings that take us back to the Sixteenth Century. Our Government permits France to be insulted with impunity. Yet the latter refrains from any rattling of the sword. What an outcry there would have been in Germany, had an insult been offered to Germany in France!...

The instigators of the Saverne business have rendered themselves guilty of high treason : they must be punished in consequence, and it is for the Chancellor to see to it. »

Besides being called to order several times, the Socialist deputy was interrupted frequently by the applause from the left and by the loud jeers of the Conservatives.

M. Hauss (Alsatian Centre) violently taxed Lieutenant von Forstner's superior officers with having infuriated the population by their sustained effort to shelter the young Baron.

« On them lies the heaviest burden of responsibility. It may be said in extenuation of the lieutenant's behaviour that he did but follow examples set by those above him... Colonel von Reutter acted illegally, and the worst of it is he was able to assert that he had done so by superior orders. Now it cannot be alleged that the intervention of the military was rendered necessary by the helplessness of the civil authorities. They were helpless, indeed, against armed force, but not against the population... All the work accomplished in Alsace-Lorraine, to win over the country to the German Empire, has been annihilated by the heavy heels of the soldiery. Nor have we to deal with a case of artificial excitement, fomented by the French Press. The indignation of the Alsations wells up from their very hearts. Natives and immigrants alike concur in blaming the Government's attitude.

Let the Chancellor to-day speak the decisive word whereby the Alsations may have it brought home to them that there is still such a thing as justice in the land. »

The Chancellor's reply, indefinite and lacking in straightforwardness, obviously inspired, withal, by the reports of the military authorities, and solely concerned, in spite of its boasted impartiality, with extenuating, when it did not flatly deny, the faults of the military, was greeted by frequent marks of approval from the right, and by many loud protests on the part of the Socialists.

Yet this agitation was as nothing when compared with the tumult raised by the Minister for War, General von Falkenhayn. He asserted that the responsibility for the Saverne incidents could by no means be laid at the door of the military, but that they were due to the systematic excitations of the public Press. A tremendous uproar spread through every part of the House. It was some minutes before the Chairman was able to restore a certain measure of order, when the Minister proceeded with his speech. ¶

He was interrupted practically at every sentence, his voice being drowned time and again by violent protests, shouts, bursts of laughter, and derisive exclamations from the left, chiefly from the Socialist benches. ¶

In the course of the subsequent debate, two deputies expressed their deep disappointment at the words spoken by the Chancellor and by Gene-

ral von Falkenhayn. Herr Ferenbach (Baden Centre) went so far as to say that such words awoke in him a feeling of shame. « What we have heard is absolutely unbelievable, it comes from another world... If the military are to be no longer amenable to the laws, if the civil authorities are to wait upon their good pleasure, then do I say : *Finis Germanicæ!* It is a crying scandal to debar the Alsatians from protesting against the insults offered them. The Badeners, for instance, would never submit to such treatment without protest. Nor does the case concern the Alsatians only : it might occur again, under similar conditions, in any part of Germany. »

Herr von Calker, a professor at the Strasbourg University, lamented the undoing of the work of conciliation to which he had applied himself unremittingly during the sixteen years he had spent in Alsace. « What can we do now ? he asked, what policy are we to adopt? Let the Chancellor speak out, let him tell us what steps he intends to take in order to prevent Alsace-Lorraine from becoming more and more estranged from the Empire. »

M. Ricklin (Alsatian Centre) likewise deplored the fact that the Alsatians had obtained no redress from the Government for the grievous wrongs inflicted upon them. « All that has been stated hitherto concerning the lamentable effects of the speeches we have heard from the Chancellor

and the Minister for War is the positive truth. The Alsatian Centre Party, whose chief concern is for the quiet and peaceful evolution of the country, find themselves confronted with the utter ruin of their hopes. When the Minister for War declared yesterday that without the Army these august walls would not exist, he might have added that militarism is to blame if Alsace-Lorraine is morally lost to Germany... The Chancellor declares it to be his aim to pursue a conciliating policy. But will he have the necessary power? I very much fear we shall witness the application of a policy more in accordance with the spirit that inspired the words of the Minister for War. In that case, woe to our country ! Yet we will accept the challenge and in the end we shall prevail. »

After this speech, the following resolution was submitted to the Assembly :

« The Reichstag considers that the Chancellor has dealt with the matter referred to in the interpellations in a manner that does not conform with the sentiment of the Reichstag. »

After a count had been taken, the vote of censure was declared carried by 293 ayes, as against 54 noes and 4 abstentions, the minority being made up exclusively by members of the parties belonging to the Right.

It was now for the Kaiser to decide : he had to choose between the handful of Pan-Germans, whose political leadership Herr von Bethmann-

Hollweg had now assumed openly and officially, and the great majority of the representatives of his people. His choice on this occasion, was like the choice he made in the month of July following ; in point of fact the latter was implied by the former. In January 1914, the military tribunal at Strasbourg acquitted the Prussian officers concerned in the Saverne affair, while the civil authorities of Alsace-Lorraine were called upon to tender their resignation. Had they not presumed, in the course of the debates in the Chambers of Alsace-Lorraine, to defend the conduct of the administrative and judicial authorities against the overbearing pretensions of the military? A new *Statthalter* was sent to Strasbourg, whose task it would be to carry out the programme enunciated by the Prefect of Police at Berlin, Herr von Jagow, in these never-to-be-forgotten words : « *The Germans must act in Alsace-Lorraine as in enemy country.* » Nor was it long before the declaration of war, made against France a few months later by William II, under a pretext that was nothing but an infamous lie, created the opportunity for the application of this formula.

Such were the far-reaching effects of the Saverne affair — not that it has been exaggerated, after the event, by virtue of a sort of retrospective and frequently observed optical delusion, but such as it appeared at the time to clear-sighted German observers. No later that January 21st

1914, the *Journal d'Alsace-Lorraine* published under the heading *Une voix allemande sur Saverne*, the following remarks by a South-German, Herr Emil Deyener-Boening, whose irrefutable testimony records beforehand the objective and impartial judgment of History as regards the situation of Alsace-Lorraine on the eve of the present war :

« Forty-three years ago we conquered France after a series of glorious victories. In the town beloved of the *Roi Soleil*, in the Gallery of Mirrors of Versailles Palace, the Imperial crown was laid upon the head of the founder of our national unity. Our great Chancellor compelled the enemy to pay us 5.000 millions of francs and to consent to the separation of Alsace-Lorraine from the mother-country. We might have obtained even more, perhaps. France was utterly exhausted, though not so depressed or so despondent as was Prussia after her defeat at Jena. By a stroke of the pen, one and a half million of French citizens became German subjects.

« That is the open sore.

« *Thousands of men who, for several generations, had belonged to the great civilised nation in the West, were torn away from France to be incorporated in our country in spite of their entreaties and as the result of a bloody contest. Such proceedings belong to another age. The land became German, the spirit of the inhabitants remained French, and*

Alsace-Lorraine rebelled against the violation of its rights.

« There was no open resistance, no rioting. What could be attempted against millions of German bayonets? But beneath the surface, passive resistance was organised, — the resistance opposed by the spirit to the right of the mailed fist. And it is on account of this faithful attachment to France that our warriors and chauvinists are beside themselves with rage, that they stoop, as they did at Saverne, to acts that make them the laughing-stock of Europe. A blush of shame rises to our cheeks.

« For my own part, indeed, I bow with reverence before the fealty of Alsace-Lorraine, so well in keeping with the traditions of its intelligent and sturdy race. But I stand aghast at the blindness of our authorities, at their contemptuous treatment of its civilians and of the young soldiers sprung from it. Is it a matter of no importance that, even at the present time, the foremost French generals bear Alsatian names?

« And you, officers of the German army, who have duly celebrated the anniversaries of 1813, have you forgotten that Ney, Kléber and Kellermann were sons of Alsace? For this is the people you think yourselves entitled to subject to the insults of a young lieutenant, barely out of his teens, and as devoid of manners as of experience. You do not seem to realise the immense harm you are doing the German cause. By reason

of your insults, of your threats, the moral conquest of Alsace-Lorraine becomes more and more problematical. To lead such a people, a Government is needed having at its head men that are independent, a Government imbued with ideas of fraternity, tolerance and equality before the law. Every attempt that is made to enslave their minds, to stifle their ideal of liberty and independence, which has become since the great French Revolution the common patrimony of civilised nations, will but make Alsace-Lorraine look back to France with greater regret.

« When Heinrich Heine, some 75 years ago, was reproached by certain German patriots with having insulted the German flag and betrayed his country, this was the cutting reply he addressed to his traducers :

« You may be easy in your minds, I will honour
 « your colours when they deserve to be honoured.
 « Set up the German flag on the exalted level of
 « the German ideal, make it the standard of free
 « humanity and you will find me ready to shed
 « the best of my blood in its defence.

« I do not find so easy as you do to incorporate
 « Alsace and Lorraine with Germany ; for their
 « population are strongly attached to France on
 « account of the rights bestowed upon them by
 « the French Revolution, laws equal for all, free
 « institutions... The Alsatians and the Lorrainers
 « will revert to their allegiance to Germany-
 « when we have accomplished what the French

« have begun, when we have excelled the French in
 « our deeds as we have excelled them in... words,
 « when we have redeemed God-in-man from degra-
 « dation and granted their proper place to the peo-
 « ple, to genius and to beauty, as our masters have
 « written and sung. And not only shall Alsace
 « and Lorraine revert to us, but all Europe, the
 « whole world will become German. As I take my
 « walks under the acacia-trees, my dreams are
 « of this universal German domination. And
 « there you have my patriotism. »

« ...Heine's ideal is still far up there, among
 the stars. Nothing is yet accomplished. *Alsace-
 Lorraine has not reverted to its allegiance to Ger-
 many.* We have conquered the land by wa-
 ding in gore, but the hearts have remained closed
 against us. We have not set up the German
 flag on the exalted level of German sentiment,
 we have not made it the standard of free huma-
 nity. Neither Europe nor the world have become
 more German since Heine's time, but our over-
 bearing attitude has, little by little, made all
 Europe bristle with bayonets and implanted guns
 on every bastion. And some day those bayonets
 and those guns will be pointed, one and all, against
 us. »



CHAPTER V

ALSACE-LORRAINE DURING THE PRESENT WAR

In the early months of 1914, owing to the outcome of the Saverne affair, no doubt could subsist as to the final trend of politics within the German Empire. The last velleity of resistance on the part of what had been German liberalism was swept away by Prussian militarism. The civil authorities who had governed Alsace-Lorraine since the Constitution was voted in 1911, were dismissed by William II and replaced by men advocating strong methods : first and foremost that typical Prussian Junker, Statthalter von Dullwitz. The war regime to be imposed upon Alsace-Lorraine was now provided for. On August 3rd 1914, the Kaiser initiated hostilities by assuming responsibility for the infamous lie of an aerial raid by the French upon Nürnberg, a lie officially repudiated by the Bavarian military authorities. From that time

forward, the last scruples of legality that might yet restrain the rulers of Alsace-Lorraine were flung to the winds : the German Terror, ruthless and unbridled, swooped down upon the miserable population of the annexed provinces.

I

War upon the French Language.

Significantly enough, the first step was the savage enforcement of the ban decreed against the French language, to which in spite of threats and unremitting persecution thousands and thousands of Alsatians and Lorrainers still clung faithfully. It was a blow at the very heart and soul of our annexed populations.

Under this head, with characteristic legal ingenuity and malicious spite, the German authorities invented a special misdemeanour, the offence of provocation.

On February 22nd 1916, for instance, the sub-prefect at Boulay, arguing that « in this time of war the population of Lorraine should consider the feelings of the German population and of the many German soldiers stationed in the country » advised the mayors of the district as follows :

« The use in public of the French language, by people knowing German sufficiently to make themselves understood or to enable them to avail themselves of the assistance of people having a

sufficient knowledge of German, will be considered as deliberate provocation and punished accordingly. »

And the minutes of the proceedings of the extraordinary Military Court at Metz record the infliction of penalties such as the following :

« Two women were sentenced to a fortnight's imprisonment on a charge of provocation, for having persistently made use of the French language, when riding in a tramway, although cautioned repeatedly by the conductress. »

Or again, in the minutes of the proceedings of the extraordinary Military Court at Strasbourg :

« A heavy fine was imposed upon a tradesman, who had not only continued to make use of French designations on his wrappers, but furthermore affixed a French label to a parcel sent out to a client who knew German well. It was held to be an extenuating circumstance, in this particular case, that the man lives in a part of the town where several languages are spoken, and that he denied any malicious intent. »

Sometimes the circumstances are held to be an aggravation :

« A term of imprisonment was inflicted upon a little girl, who in spite of repeated warnings made use of the French language, although she is conversant with German. »

At La Brosque, a French-speaking commune in the Bruche valley, the Mayor, M. Humbert, was prosecuted for having spoken French in the

public street, when addressing the inhabitants of the commune. The Military Court at Strasbourg, laying particular stress upon the unseemliness of his conduct and upon the bad example he, as Mayor, was thereby setting his fellow-citizens, sentenced the delinquent to three months' imprisonment.

Nor was the German inquisition restricted to the streets alone. It found its way into the schools for girls — reputed, on account of their essentially French course of studies, to be keeping alive in Alsatian circles the firm conviction of the superiority of French civilisation. « In times of peace, wrote the *Strassburger Post* (March 31st 1915), such an attack upon the holy tabernacle of the middle classes would have been inconceivable ; but the Statthalter has been brave enough, by his ordinance of March 10th, to submit all schools for girls to a particularly efficacious control. The teaching of French is reduced to the smallest proportions, and all private conversation in that language is strictly forbidden in the schools. Measures have been taken to ensure that the lessons imparted, notably as regards the teaching of History, shall be of a thoroughly fruitful patriotic character. »

After the schools, the Church. The president of the Directory of the Augsburg Confession, Herr Curtius, one of the few immigrants who had not allowed himself to be swept along by the chauvinistic current, had opposed the suppression

of the French parish of Saint-Nicolas, demanded by the Government. He was promptly discharged, and his successor, Baron von der Goltz, agreed to all that was required of him. Many Protestant Ministers who were mistrusted from a political point of view, were imprisoned or suspended from their duties, as for instance the venerable Dean Gerold, of Strasbourg ; Pasteurs Amstutz, of Guebwiller ; Horst, of Sainte-Marié ; Herzog, of Walderstrack.

The military authorities did not trouble to conceal their aim in resorting to such measures, as witness the following highly significant occurrence :

A special ordinance having suddenly prohibited the use of the French language in commercial intercourse, a few delegates called upon the governor with a view to obtaining some small delay in the application of this decree. The governor, lolling in his armchair, his tunic unbuttoned in the most free and easy manner, addressed them in a loud tone of voice : « *Well, Gentlemen, what the civilians have not dared to attempt in the course of forty-four years, we soldiers have accomplished by a mere stroke of the pen.* »

Is such a declaration consonant with the truth? A small fact will suffice to prick the bubble of Prussian arrogance, and that fact is the following : in the earliest days of the war, the German authorities suppressed all the French papers published in the country, such as the *Journal d'Alsace-*

Lorraine, the *Messin*, the *Nouvelliste d'Alsace-Lorraine*, etc.

But no sooner had they done this, than they started a semi-official publication in Metz, the *Gazette de Lorraine*, the forerunner of the *Gazette des Ardennes*, published under the control of the German authorities after the invasion of our Northern departments, for the purpose of demoralizing the population of the occupied territory. The publication of that sheet was convincing proof that the German authorities, for all their boastful allegations to the contrary, viewed the population of Alsace-Lorraine as *essentially French*, which indeed it was, and had never ceased to be.

II

The Treatment of the Soldiers of Alsace-Lorraine.

The attitude of the German authorities in matters relating to Alsace-Lorraine is characterised by a mixture of bluff, intended to hoodwink foreign opinion, and genuine uneasiness at home. As they dealt with the language question, so do we find them dealing with the military problem.

At the beginning of the war, the civil and military authorities launched forth into loud proclamations extolling the loyalty of Alsace-Lorraine; yet a few months later on the occasion of the opening of the local Parliament, in April 1915, the

Statthalter vehemently denounced the *anti-patriotism* of a part of the population, and after stigmatising the *traitors* who had gone over to the *enemy*, declared that an end had been made of the ridiculous notion of a two-fold culture, that all the citizens of Alsace-Lorraine must unite, henceforth, in making the country a centre of German *Kultur* and an advanced bulwark of *Germanism*.

There had indeed, been very many of the voluntary enlistments for which Germany appealed... but they were made in the French Army. As many as 14,000 Alsatians and Lorrainers, in spite of the post terrible dangers and at the cost of the greatest sacrifices, contrived to join the colours of their real mother-country. Intermittent are the lists published in the newspapers of Alsace-Lorraine, giving the names of citizens deprived of their property and of their rights for disobeying the Kaiser's orders, and held up to the undying admiration of their countrymen under the name of *deserters*, as glorious a title, withal, as was the contemptuous nickname of *Gueux*, given to the Dutch rebels who resisted the introduction of the Inquisition into the Low Countries under Philip II of Spain.

Even in the thirty-second month of the war, the process retained its activity, as witness the terms of the following ordinance, which would be considered unbelievable, were it signed by any other but a German General.

« Whoever, after mature reflection, has reason to think that a soldier, or a man under temporary exemption, intends to desert, and who is yet able to prevent that crime from being accomplished, is in duty bound to give immediate information on the subject to the nearest military or police authority.

« Given at Sarrebrück, March 14th 1917.

« *The General commanding the district :*

« Von MOSSNER. »

Furthermore, since the German generals assumed the right to brand as deserters the Alsations and Lorrainers who left the German Army of their free will, they incurred the duty thereby of considering those enrolled by the Kaiser as genuine German soldiers, of whose blood they should be sparing, whose sufferings and sacrifices, at least, were deserving of respect. That duty the German Command failed to perform. Soldiers born in Alsace-Lorraine were sent to the Russian front and were told off for the most dangerous duties, as will be seen by the following secret orders, emanating from the Prussian Ministry for War, and transmitted by the General in temporary command of the XIVth Army Corps.

« Stellverts, General Kommando XIV A.K.

February 1916.

« It is all-essential to conform with the ministerial prescriptions. All Alsatians and Lorrainers employed as secretaries, officers' servants, etc., should be relieved of their present duties and sent to the front. In future, the routine will be to send all Alsatians and Lorrainers declared fit for general service straight to Headquarters, whence they will be distributed among the units at the Eastern front. Reports to be sent in before April 1st 1916.

« For the Stellverts, Generalkommando,

« RADECKE, Major. »

The very cruelty of such an order betrays the real opinion of the German Government : in spite of all their official declarations, and for all that the representatives of German *Kultur* would have us believe, *it is undeniable proof that Alsatian or Lorraine-born soldiers are not treated as Germans in the Imperial army.*

III

The Martyred Civilian Population.

Nor are the measures applied to the civilian population less convincing.

Between Alsace-Lorraine, denominated *Reichs-*

land by Bismarck, and the German Empire as a whole, has not the Imperial Government taken good care to interpose a moral ditch that none may overstep? A dweller in Alsace-Lorraine has no right to post his letters in Germany ; otherwise he would become the equal of any other German citizen, and *in the eyes of his rulers, an inhabitant of Alsace-Lorraine is not a German.*

The Strasbourg newspapers complain that the proximity of the frontier is a constant temptation for the people of Wissembourg to post their letters in the Palatinate, thus infringing the ordinance in terms of which no letters may be sent out of Alsace-Lorraine otherwise than by post.

For such an infraction, Mlle Lina Sch..., a piano-forte teacher at Wissembourg, was sentenced in March 1917 to a fine of 100 marks by the Military Court at Saarbrücken.

That same court, moreover, has not hesitated to call to book the diplomatic representatives of neutral Powers.

In June 1916, the Spanish consul at Saarbrücken was found guilty of infringing the military ordinances dealing with post-office control. That consul, indeed, had authorised the wife of a manufacturer of Sarreguemines to have letters from her sons, who had taken refuge at Lausanne, addressed to her at his Consulate. So the addressee used to call at the Spanish Consulate for letters coming from Switzerland and sent off her replies by the same consular channel. A fine of 80 marks

was imposed on the Consul, the Court having considered that there had been no evil intention on his part, but that he had been led astray by a mere desire to oblige. (*Gazette de Lausanne*, July 10th 1916.)

Within the boundaries of Alsace-Lorraine, carefully isolated from the rest of the German States, the military authorities were free to indulge in all the grotesque and odious practices that would occur only to a German mind.

It was proposed quite seriously to forbid the Roman Catholic clergy to wear their cassocks, for the simple reason that this was a custom proper to Latin countries, but repugnant to German ideas. This problem of ecclesiastical garb has received no final solution, but the German police showed no mercy to the firemen. The *Neue Strassburger Gazette* published the following semi-official notification :

Molsheim, December 9th 1915.

« During the early months of the war, the Generals commanding the 14th, 15th, 16th and 21st Army Corps regions published a decree ordering the suppression of the uniform of the Alsace-Lorraine firemen, the cut of the said uniforms, as well as the caps, having remained French. This ordinance appears not to have been observed strictly in rural communes and in small towns ; for quite recently, a fire having broken out in a commune of the Molsheim district, it was observ-

ed that the firemen still wore their old uniforms and that the alarm was given by means of the old bugles, of the type used in France. The *Kreisdirektion* thus finds itself compelled to impress upon the mayors the urgent necessity of doing away with the condemned uniforms and French bugles, and to instruct them to report any future infractions that may occur in this respect.

« Other societies and associations, such as the choral societies, the uniforms of which often bear a resemblance to those of French collegians, are likewise called upon to bring in the prohibited articles of dress, which will be taken over by the police. »

Of course, in the carrying out of this systematic persecution, the Germans did not lose sight of their own material advantage : they sequestered not only the property belonging to French subjects, but also that of such inhabitants of Alsace-Lorraine as, being free from any military obligation, had exercised their perfect right to live abroad. They were commanded to return at once to German territory, a command they were not always in a position to obey, but which supplied the Imperial Government with a convenient pretext for denaturalising them and declaring their property forfeit.

Mere *parvenus*, with no real culture, the Germans exhibit a loathsome delight in laying their hands upon the beautiful and delicate productions

of ancient France. It wrings one's heart to read in the *Letzte Strassburger Nachrichten* :

« A sale by public auction will be held of the estate of François-Marie-Joseph-Laurent-Victorien de Rochechouart-Mortemart, Prince de Tonnay-Charente, situated at Homburg and consisting in a lordly château, Louis XIV furniture, most valuable Gobelins tapestries, family portraits, Chapel, outbuildings, ponds, farms, gardens, fields, meadows and forests. This sale is no doubt but the first of a long series that will be made after the war of French estates, now sequestered, for their French owners are hardly likely in future to cross the frontier and settle in our country. (August 24th 1916). »

The action thus taken by the Germans is reflected upon as follows by the *Tribune de Lausanne* of September 9th :

« All these estates were sequestered at the beginning of the present year. Now legally enforced sales can be accounted for only by the intervention of unpaid creditors — the Treasury, perhaps, in this particular instance. In France, as in Germany, it is forbidden by a special ordinance to send money or valuables to enemy countries, the penalty for doing so being one year's imprisonment and a fine of 30.000 francs. It is just possible, therefore, that the measure was

taken at the instance of some creditor. We are surprised, however, that the Court at Thionville, competent to deal with the matter, should have sanctioned a step so little justified by the Prince's financial standing. »

No more respect is shown to persons than to their property. The law dealing with auxiliary national service — down to April 1917 at least — provided merely for voluntary enrolments. Yet as far back as last January, the military authorities availed themselves of that law to give the population of Alsace-Lorraine the benefit of the experience they had acquired in Belgium and in the occupied French departments.

« A considerable number of civilians of Mulhouse and the surrounding district, aged from 17 to 60, were assembled on January 5th in the military barracks at Mulhouse, whence they were then dispatched to Central Germany. »

Such deportations *en masse* are, moreover, but the crowning act of the regime of terror inaugurated at the very inception of hostilities. Hundreds of Alsatians and Lorrainers were expelled from the *Reichsland*. A place of residence was assigned to them in Germany, where they were subjected to all manner of vexations by the police who kept close watch upon them.

Another means of providing for German secu-

riety has been the *Schützhaft*, or imprisonment before judgment. All suspected persons, whatever the motive of suspicion — for instance, because they have relatives serving in the French army — are liable to be imprisoned without any reason being given for such a measure. In this way Samain was sent to jail at Coblenz, before he was dispatched to the Russian front, where he was eventually killed. M. Bourson the former correspondent of *Le Matin* in Alsace-Lorraine, has been interned at Cannstatt, in Würtemberg, together with other journalists, since the beginning of the war. Other private citizens have been detained for weeks that grew into months, or have been exiled to Germany. The military are actuated by the most arbitrary motives, mere anonymous information being held sufficient to justify their proceedings.

At the end of two years, the Germans found themselves overwhelmed by the effects of the demoralising regime they had set up in the French provinces, and which they themselves were made to undergo. On December 6th 1916, the *Haguenauer Gazette* published the following official notification :

« Instances of information lodged anonymously, and almost in every case either groundless or purposely misleading, have occurred of late with appalling frequency. The authorities are duly grateful when abuses are pointed out to them in

a regular way, and it is their duty to sift all such indications. Whoever believes himself to be on the track of a felony should report the fact in a straightforward manner, over his own signature, mentioning the cause of his suspicions and the channel through which such reports have reached him. Being moved by good intentions, the writer of such a letter need have no fear of unpleasant consequences, even if his information should prove to be incorrect. Anonymous informers, on the other hand, are guilty of a misdemeanour, and liable, if their identity be discovered, to be summoned before the Courts. It is not the German way to act in a hypocritical manner and to throw undeserved suspicion upon others. »

We are not acquainted with the full particulars of the martyrdom our departements of Alsace-Lorraine have had inflicted upon them, while under the heel of Prussian militarism. Not until they revert finally to their real mother-country will they be in a position to reveal the actual facts. The German Government has repeatedly forbidden the newspapers to publish the proceedings of the Military Courts, accounts of which, instead of producing the terrifying effect that was intended, only served to stir up either the mocking spirit, or the patriotic wrath, of the native population.

A few typical instances, however, will enlighten us as to the different ways in which the Alsatians

and Lorrainers earned the thousands of years of imprisonment — more than 5000, at the time of writing — to which the German Courts have sentenced them :

M. Griessmann, master-tailor, an old man of seventy, saluted some French prisoners in the street at Strasbourg : six weeks imprisonment for this heinous crime ;

Guillaume Kohler of Saverue, an infantryman, was summoned before the Military Courts at Saarbrücken, on a charge of grave disrespect towards his superiors. On his way through Germany he had permitted himself to reflect upon the inhuman treatment applied to their men by certain German officers at the front. Guillaume Kohler was sentenced to two years' imprisonment.

Emilie Zimmerle, a cook at Colmar, in the employ of one Bacara, an innkeeper, from June to December 1915, was accused of having sung an anti-German song on several occasions, while washing up her plates and dishes. Penalty : a fine of 30 marks for giving expression to anti-German sentiments.

To speak of the violation of Belgium in terms similar to those used in the Reichstag by the Chancellor von Bethmann-Hollweg, when he admitted the injustice of the act committed by the Kaiser, becomes a crime in the case of a native of Alsace-Lorraine.

The Military Court at Mulhouse inflicted a

month's imprisonment on the daughter of Pasteur Stern, of Mulhouse, and six weeks imprisonment on Abbé Théophile Seiler, of Levoncourt, found guilty of speaking in defence of law and truth.

As will be seen by these last cases, Protestants and Roman Catholics are victimised to a like degree by the German inquisition.

At the beginning of 1915, the *Neue Zürcher Gazette*, stated that the Chaplain of the Strasbourg Deaconry, a German Swiss, was discharged for having preached brotherly-love without distinction of nationality ; and that, on the other hand, Pasteur Hoffet, who at one time had enjoyed the Kaiser's favour, was so disgusted with official chauvinism that he voluntarily tendered his resignation to the President of the Metz Consistory, to return to Switzerland, his native country (January 8th.)

On March 30th 1916, two teaching sisters of Guebwiller : Sister Ludwina, Mother Superior, *née* Eugénie Bach, and Sister Émerentine, *née* Anna Eckert were sentenced to six months' imprisonment for giving expression to anti-German sentiments. Of the charges brought against the Mother Superior the following are the most characteristic :

« That she regularly declared to be mere lies the numbers of Russians and French prisoners set down in the German *communiqués*.

« That she exclaimed at the time of the Rheims bombardment : « How is it possible that any one « should wish to destroy so beautiful a Cathedral « by shelling it? Yet those who are bombarding « it inscribe on their banners : God is with us ! »

« That she regularly denied the German victories announced in the Sisters' establishment, saying : « Dear Sisters, it is not true ! »

That she observed, in reference to the German invasion of Belgium : « How can they fall upon an unoffending country in such a way? »

Truly a typical trait of the German mind, to treat as public malefactors women of an upright conscience and superior culture, in whom a French education has preserved intact both delicacy of feeling and liberty of moral judgement.

The judges of the Military Courts at Mulhouse, however, went still farther, they themselves *joined the ranks of public malefactors*, such as the murderers of Miss Edith Cavell and Captain Fryatt when, on December 15th 1915, on the strength of monstrous calumnies, the flagrant falsity of which was fully brought out at the trial, they dared to cast into prison a Sister of Mercy who had tended the victims of the war — German and French wounded alike — Sister Valentine.

The *Oberelsässische Landes Zeitung* and the *Mülhauser Tageblatt* published the following report of the proceedings, a report that suffices in itself as evidence of one of the most barbarous crimes

committed by the Germans in the whole course of the war :

Military Court of Mulhouse, December 14th 1915 :

« Madame Berthe Judlin, Sister Valentine, born at Soultz, and fifty one years of age, appeared before the Military Court of the *Mobilen Etappenkommandantur* of Mulhouse, on a charge high treason. The trial lasted from 9 in the morning to half past nine at night, with a short break at noon. The crime imputed to the accused was that of having, being a German subject, tendered aid and succour to a foreign Power, during the campaign and at the seat of war, to the detriment of the German Military Forces.

« The accused had offered, at the very beginning of the War, to serve in the field hospitals, but she had been attached to the private hospital installed in the Redemptionist Convent at Riedenheim. From August 9th to August 15th she neglected her duties as nursing Sister, by favouring the French wounded in a most unjustifiable manner to the detriment of the German wounded. The following are the principal charges brought against her :

« 1^o a) She refused admission to the hospital
 « to a severely wounded German though she knew
 « there was plenty of room and that many of
 « the beds were occupied by unwounded French-
 « men.

« b) She repeatedly and without any reason
 « took away, from a wounded German suffering
 « from sunstroke, the ice-bag ordered by the
 « doctor and prevented the other nurses present
 « from supplying him with another.

« 2° She set aside the cartridges of the French
 « wounded, subsequently hiding them in a garret,
 « so that the German soldiers should not find
 « them. »

« After the hearing of the witnesses — 9 for
 the prosecution, 14 for the defence — the Govern-
 ment Prosecutor explained that from a purely
 humanitarian point of view, the accused's beha-
 viour had been perfectly scandalous, wherefore
 he urged a penalty of 15 years' hard labour and
 10 years' deprivation of civil rights.

« Counsel for the defence, Dr. Bordmann, whose
 address lasted an hour, pleaded for acquittal.

« Before the Court withdrew to deliberate, *Sister
 Valentine once more denied the charges brought
 against her.*

« The Military Court pronounced judgment
 after an hour and a quarter's deliberation. The
 charge relating to the ice-bag was set aside.
 The soldier suffering from sunstroke was an Alsa-
 tian, one Schaller, a school-teacher at Vieux-
 Thann. Being delirious he had himself thrown
 off the bag. There was no proof that Sister
 Valentine had taken it from him. Sister Valen-
 tine, however, acted in a manner préjudicial to
 the German Army and sought to render assistance

to the enemy in refusing to admit a wounded German and concealing the cartridges. The Sister was seen with cartridges in her apron ; others were found on the floor. *It may therefore be taken as proved that the Sister and no other, carried the cartridges up to the garret.*

« The minimum penalty for each such case of high treason is three years' hard labour. The military Court reduced the sentence to 5 years' hard labour and five years' deprivation of civil rights. »

IV

The Failure of German Terrorism.

Such, then, as far as the German authorities have seen fit to allow it to be known, is the martyrdom endured by Alsace-Lorraine.

What has been the result of this policy of terror? It can be stated objectively, by quoting the opinion of the *Nazionalzeitung*, the Basle newspaper that has the widest circulation, and is at no pains to hide its pro-German sentiments. In a notable article of February 8th 1916, we read as follows :

« Notwithstanding their attachment to French traditions the Alsatian people would certainly not have asked to become French once more at the cost of a war. But war supervened, shaking the established order of things to its foundations ;

and now, as the result of a *system of oppression* vexing the people even in the privacy of their daily lives, former hopes and yearnings have revived, more powerful than ever. Comparisons are rife and great is the fear that never again will it be possible to live in accordance with the old traditions and the national temperament, if the power remains in the hands of those who now make use of it in so brutal a manner.

« The war, therefore, with all its attendant circumstances, the latter particularly painful for the Alsatians, has dug but deeper the ditch between the two elements in the *Reichsland*. *Inevitably, then, their eyes turn more and more towards France.* And this is true even in those circles which before the war were inclined to become reconciled to historical facts. The very German elements are perfectly conscious of this change of popular feeling in Alsace-Lorraine. »

This significant expression of opinion finds confirmation, moreover, in the unimpeachable testimony of an eye-witness, Dr. Petri. Chosen by the Berlin Government as one of its most influential agents in the work of winning over Alsace-Lorraine to Germany, this statesman, appointed for the purpose Under-Secretary of State for Justice, at Strasbourg, had accepted the task of dealing with the question of Alsace-Lorraine in a publication, for which he had secured the collaboration of 40 German writers, and bearing the title of

Peace within for the German people. He writes as follows :

« During the memorable days in August 1914, when all Germany thrilled with the deepest enthusiasm, it looked as if this powerful impulse had not stopped short at the frontiers of Alsace, but that the surging tide had swept to the very top of the Vosges mountains. But truth compels us to admit that the observations registered since that time have by no means borne out that notion. It was noticed that certain elements of the population, and more particularly a considerable part of the bourgeoisie, both in the smaller towns and in the cities, have stood aside from the paths trodden by the German peoples in perfect union. True indeed, it could hardly be expected that the sentiments of all Alsatians and Lorrainers should be in harmony with those of the rest of the German races. But it ought to have been possible to admit that in the presence of a common danger and of almost identical interests, all disagreements would give place to one compelling sentiment of solidarity.

« Instead of this, what is it we see? A disintegrating spirit of rancorous disparagement, purposely ignoring the momentous world catastrophe that fires the heart of every individual member of the German race. We are confronted with I know not what secret leaning towards the Western enemy. This deplorable state of mind is created

in the first place by the fallacies entertained in Alsace concerning the deeper origins of the war and the ultimate responsibilities involved in its inception. It is an established fact that as often as not the present inconvenience and manifold worries are not looked upon as the inevitable consequence of a state of war, but laid at the door of the civil and military authorities. When some ordinance restricting the liberty of action or speech is considered unnecessary, misplaced, or unfair, people are not content with reflecting upon it or complaining about it to the competent authorities. Nay, but they must needs vent their spleen upon Germany herself and upon all that is German. They show but scant appreciation of the fact that the great majority of our population have been spared the horrors of war. They are impervious to any feeling of gratitude towards the gallant defenders of our homes and their noble leaders.

« It is necessary also, to take into serious account the effects of the miscalculation whereby Germany is thought to be doomed to final defeat, owing to the numerical superiority of her enemies. The trend of events in this connection does not seem to have opened the eyes of many Alsatians and Lorrainers any wider than it has the eyes of the populations of enemy countries. Others indeed, less inclined to be communicative, remain sceptical as regards the outcome of the war. » (*Strassburger Post*, June 8th 1916.)

As though to bear out the words of this supporter of the German cause, we find the Kaiser's own representative in the military Court at Mulhouse, contributing by his wrathful bluster to render *official homage* to the imperishable loyalty of Alsace-Lorraine to France. The following was the report, published by the *Mülhäuser Volkszeitung*, of a trial that took place before that Court in March 1916.

« Abbé Eugène Horber, Vicar of the Saint-Etienne parish, was brought before the extraordinary Military Court in Mulhouse, on the charge of having given utterance to the following anti-German sentiments, while imparting religious instruction to the pupils of the higher elementary school in that town :

« 1^o As regards temporal authority, there is
« no obligation to love it. Obedience is all that
« is required.

« It transpired in the course of the hearing that
« accused went so far as to aver that there was
« no call to love the Kaiser or the Vaterland.

« 2^o It is much the same to-day as the time of
« religions persecutions, for priests of the Church
« are compelled to change their traditional dress.
« We are oppressed just as we were under the
« Revolution.

« Accused alleged in his own defence that he
« had but paraphrased the Catechism, wherein

« it is stated that due regard and obedience are
 « all that is owed to temporal authority. That
 « authority, he added, may indeed be changed,
 « nor can any one be bound, for instance, to love
 « the authority now governing Alsatian territory
 « occupied by the French.

« Accused denied that he had spoken the second
 « of the sayings attributed to him ; but he was
 « contradicted by the evidence of certain of his
 « pupils, whom another of their teachers described
 « as exemplary pupils, and it was further proved
 « that the greater part of the class clapped their
 « hands when they heard Abbé Horber compare
 « the present time to the age of persecutions. The
 « public prosecutor called a number of witnesses
 « who testified that a thoroughly French spirit
 « had never ceased to be rampant in the Saint-
 « Etienne parish ; that inscriptions in the French
 « language were constantly scribbled on the pews
 « and confessionals ; that contrary to the Bishop's
 « express desire, the Latin Liturgy was read out
 « with the French pronunciation, and that high
 « Mass, in particular, was invested with an en-
 « tirely French character by the fact that the
 « singing and the sermons were conducted in
 « French.

« The address to the Court delivered by the
 « military councillor Schott assumed the propor-
 « tions of a general impeachment of the spirit
 « prevailing in the country. That official de-
 « clared, notably :

« When I was put in charge of the case, my
 « first concern was to collect information of a
 « nature to exonerate the accused. But on
 « hearing what he had to say, and when he him-
 « self informed me *that he had received a first-class*
 « *education in Germany*, I saw his case in a diffe-
 « rent light and as a typical example of the local
 « spirit. How was it possible indeed, to put a
 « different interpretation upon the fact that a
 « man of his intellectual standing should forget
 « himself to such a degree? I was thus led to
 « the conclusion that the prime responsibility
 « for his behaviour did not fall upon Abbé Horber,
 « *but upon the system, upon the tendencies of his*
 « *surroundings, which reacted upon him.* Accused,
 « being of a weak disposition, had not the moral
 « courage to swim against the current. *The*
 « *Protestant parish of Saint-Etienne, moreover, is*
 « *no better than the Roman Catholic.* It is a burning
 « shame to have to acknowledge that the great
 « majority of the clergy of Upper-Alsace have
 « not justified our expectations. No whit less
 « to be deplored is the fact that the school
 « children greeted Abbé Horber's comparison with-
 « applause. It is hard to believe one's own ears,
 « when testimony is adduced to the effect that
 « the children's parents came and reproached him
 « with teaching respect for duly constituted au-
 « thority.

« A state of utter chaos !

« Of course, proceeded the councillor in a louder

« voice, when the children clapped their hands,
« the idea was not their own, — still less was
« it imparted to them at school. The children
« did but carry out what they had been taught
« at home.

« Accused was sentenced to five months' im-
« prisonment, the Court admitting, in extenu-
« ation, that the chief blame did not fall upon
« the Abbé, but upon the general spirit prevailing
« in the parish. »

Special note should be made of the fact that the state of affairs, upon which the Military councillor animadverted with concentrated fury, was found to exist, not in Lorraine — the essentially French proclivities of which the Germans themselves no longer dare to deny — but in the very heart of that Alsace, peopled — so they asserted — with their own German brothers.

At Strasbourg, there occurred an incident more significant still, as having led to an unedifying controversy between Protestant and Roman Catholic Germans.

In February 1917, the Kaiser Wilhelm University of Strasbourg had to elect a Rector for the school year 1917-1918, commencing in the month of April. The Assembly of Professors elected Dr. E. W. Mayer, Professor of Systematic Theology at the Protestant Theological Faculty. This choice simply infuriated the chief organ of the

German Roman Catholic Centre, the *Kölnische Volkszeitung*. In the words of that newspaper : « The Roman Catholic Theological Faculty, whose turn it was, this year, to have its nominee appointed to the Rector's chair, had chosen as its candidate Dr Eugen Müller, who obtained but eight votes at the ballot, just the eight votes to which the faculty is entitled. All the remaining votes, to the number of 37, were cast for Dr. Mayer, and so the nominee of the Roman Catholic Faculty was eliminated. »

Now this elimination was made in favour of a Francophile, almost a French candidate. « Professor Mayer is an Alsatian and was *for a time a Frenchman*. Beyond the Vosges, his election will be looked upon, in certain circles, as a victory *and will give rise to much jubilation*. » An insidious pronouncement that was countered in the *Strasburger Post*, the semi-official organ of the Berlin Government, by an accusation no less favourable to the French cause.

« We are inclined to think that Professor Müller's political attitude exerted some weight in the balance. Professor Müller is a member of the Centre party in the Landtag and albeit his personal sentiments as regards our national policy would appear to be above reproach, he laid himself open to blame, in German circles, by not taking position more firmly against his former

colleague, Wetterlé, and by doing nothing to have him suspended, at the time when the outrageous lectures delivered in France by the aforesaid Wetterlé led to a debate in the House. The fact that Professor Müller had remained a member of a political group to which, under Herr Hauss's chairmanship, Abbé Wetterlé at one time belonged, may be held to explain why the Professor appeared ill-qualified to fill the highest post of honour in the Kaiser Wilhelm University. »

« Whereupon the *Kölnische Volkszeitung* once more takes up the cudgels. This time however, neither Mayer nor Müller are implicated, but the German University of Strasbourg, a creation of the German Government itself.

« Before the war, for the delivery of lectures unconnected with the teaching of foreign languages and in the seminaries of the Strasbourg University, even old-German professors were wont to speak in French, out of weak consideration for their foreign hearers, and much to the vexation of the German students ; was that a German way of proceeding, we wonder? In the University quadrangle, the majority of the students addressed one another in French, so that a stranger on a visit might well have believed himself in a French University ; was that the German way, we ask? At certain lectures on Medical or Pharmaceutical Science, lecturers and pupils spoke French to

their heart's content, without troubling about their German colleagues, and for many years, in the Pharmaceutical Section, a professor was allowed to indulge in all manner of anti-German remarks, while engaged in making chemical experiments, which conduct eventually led to a noisy scandal; was that German, once more? Under the very noses of the University authorities, there existed for many years an Alsatian and Lorrainer Students' Association, where practically all the native students foregathered and found encouragement in their nationalist and anti-German aspirations: was that German, we should like to know?

V

The Evolution of German Policy with Regard to Alsace-Lorraine.

The war, therefore, has rudely dispelled whatever delusions the Germans might still cherish concerning Alsace-Lorraine and the failure of the Germanising process as applied to those provinces has, at times, been acknowledged by themselves with the greatest candour. In the month of November 1916, for instance, when William II attempted to bring off the kingdom of Poland « coup »; the Prussian Junkers were all in favour of annexing the province of Warsaw to Prussia. But the *Schwäbischer Merkur* made so bold as

to write : « After our experience in Alsace-Lorraine it would be difficult, we hope and believe, to find in Germany a single sensible politician to approve of such an attempt. »

On March 4th last, in reference to the nonsensical pro-Fleming campaign instituted by von Bethmann-Hollweg, the *Kölnische Volkszeitung* complained that the German authorities were repeating in Belgium some of the blunders of which they had been guilty in Alsace-Lorraine, « just as if they had not been sufficiently enlightened by the experience acquired in the annexed provinces ».

On March 8th, the *Rheinische-Westfälische Gazette*, in its report of a meeting, held at Dresden by the Progressist Popular Party, recorded these words by Municipal Councillor Beck : « Alsace-Lorraine is for us a source of weakness. »

At a time when the military and economic situation of Germany still justified the hope of carrying the war to a successful issue, each of the States of the German Confederation sought to exploit that source of weakness for its own particular advantage.

Bismarck when he decided that Alsace-Lorraine should be an *Imperial territory*, was actuated by a conception to which the *Kölnische Volkszeitung* (March 14th 1916) referred with all the brutal outspokenness of the master himself : « In creating the *Reichsland*, our great Chancellor was certainly not trying to please the Alsatians and Lorrainers. His one concern was to insure the

lasting success of his glorious achievement. Wherefore he refused to grant an increase of territory to any one of the Confederate States. »

The failure of the Germanising process having become an accepted fact, it was clearly necessary to adopt different tactics, so each German State came forward with a remedy — the best indeed for its own interests. This led to a most instructive polemic between the *Frankfurter Gazette* the semi-official representative of the Imperial Chancellory, and the *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, under the direct inspiration of the ecclesiastical and political leaders of German Catholicism.

The following are the arguments put forward by the *Frankfurter Gazette*, in its issue of November 10th 1915 : « No doubt, it confesses, assuming that the Grand Duchy of Baden is no more desirous to-day than it was in 1871 — when Bavaria offered it Alsace, in exchange for certain portions of its northern territory — to receive any portion of Alsatian territory, the simplest arrangement from a purely territorial point of view, would be to annex Lorraine to Prussia, and Alsace to Bavaria. » This arrangement however, the *Frankfurter Gazette* proceeds to deprecate. « From an economic point of view, it observes, such an arrangement would be tantamount to a reward for Lorraine, and to a punishment for Alsace, unless the latter country should derive a new and powerful impulsion from her annexation to Bavaria. » It is necessary, moreover, to

consider the question chiefly from the political point of view : Now, in those circles that have hitherto remained deliberately on the outskirts of the nation, a feeling of joy in belonging to the Empire can be created only if the flow and ebb of the beneficent Pan-German tide overruns Alsace as well. Restricted to Bavaria alone, the connection might indeed mitigate to a certain extent the effects of the persistent isolation in which Alsace has stood up to the present, but only in a small degree.

« It lies with Prussia, as the predominant partner, to accomplish the all-essential task of bringing about in Alsace itself the conditions necessary for the fulfilment of the Imperial design. »

This long and doctrinal survey of the position in the *Frankfurter Gazette* elicited an equally long and no less doctrinal pronouncement on the part of the *Kölnische Volkszeitung* for March 8th and 9th 1916 : from the very principles laid down by its adversary, the Cologne newspaper deduces the necessity of annexing Alsace to the Kingdom of Bavaria.

« At the present time, it avers, *Alsace-Lorraine is not a German country*. The arguments based upon linguistic or racial considerations are by no means conclusive. Language and race are but conditions that facilitate and justify the adaptation and assimilation of one culture to another, but they are not a determining factor in the process. With few exceptions — some there are, no doubt — the inhabitants of both

provinces observe, let us say, a frigid and expectant attitude, as regards German culture, when they do not treat it as a stranger and refuse to have anything to do with it. »

An unreserved confession of German failure.

« In creating the *Reichsland*, the first step taken was to fashion its political organism, but as the population had no political conscience, the only result obtained was to feed by legal measures *the antipathy of the Alsatians and Lorrainers to everything German.* »

« The mass of the population of Alsace-Lorraine, specially in the towns, will have none of German culture ; it refuses to think, or to feel, or to will, after the German fashion. To be a native of Alsace-Lorraine is, in the eyes of the masses, *to be above all something else than German.* »

To refer, therefore, to an autonomous culture in Alsace-Lorraine is to recognise the existence of a rooted antipathy to any scheme of fusion with German Kultur. Therein lies the difference between autonomy in Baden, or Bavaria, and autonomy in Alsace-Lorraine. Bavaria and the Duchy of Baden are German States, German countries. *Germanism* is as it were the breath of their national life. Alsace-Lorraine, on the other hand, is not a German country, in the same sense of the word. But it must be rendered so. *Germanism* must be infused into its organism. This means that the natives of Alsace-Lorraine must be brought into close communion with Ger-

many by a natural process, not by attempts at coercion, which would certainly fail to produce the desired effect. Political autonomy could be nothing but an obstacle along this road. The national life of Alsace-Lorraine is not German. Alsace-Lorraine, therefore, has not the same inherent right to autonomy, or to the quality of a Confederate State as, for instance, Baden, Bavaria or Wurttemberg. It behoves the Empire to see to it that in its own interests Alsace-Lorraine *shall become German*.

« The only possible settlement is the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine to one of the Confederate States, full annexation leaving no room for exceptional treatment, whether favourable or the reverse.

« Now to what State, or States, should the two provinces be annexed? The question to be solved is not to decide which State is entitled to receive a patch of Alsace-Lorraine as a reward, but what will be the best way of carrying out that annexation in the interests of the Empire as a whole, and of facilitating the process of assimilation as regards the *Reichsland*. Far from being given a present, the Confederate State chosen for the purpose will have a heavy burden imposed upon it.

« This point established the *Gazette* proceeds to ask : Should the whole of Alsace-Lorraine be given to Prussia? Such an arrangement would certainly not be to the general interest of the

Empire, on account of the other Confederate States. Nor would it lead to the desired result, for a great majority of the Alsatians and Lorrainers simply loathe the Prussians, and their annexation to Prussia would threaten with extinction every hope of peaceful Germanisation. Lorraine, indeed, must needs be allotted to Prussia; a settlement required by its economic and geographical, as well as by its material interests. The German-speaking Lorrainers of the Sarreguemines district would prefer Bavaria, no doubt, but the mass of the rural population of Lorraine is so ignorant of everything that relates to Germany, that it has no marked preference or antipathy in this respect.

« Except the official elements, certain Liberal-Protestants of Strasbourg University, the Municipal authorities of Strasbourg, and the leaders of the Liberal-Protestant party, Alsace is unwilling to be annexed to Prussia.

« And for what reasons?

« 1^o On account of its constitution and democratic sentiments. To an even greater extent than Lorraine, Alsace lived the life of the French Revolution. It has no aristocracy, no magnates of any description, save perhaps a few manufacturers of Upper Alsace who take no part in politics, and whose « French leanings » are an obstacle, not an element of life for the country. To their thinking Prussia, with her plutocratic system is above all a State made over to classes and castes ;

« 2° Because the Prussian conception of a State utterly ignores the lawful aspirations and rights of minorities. Of this there is no better proof than the policy applied to Poland before the war. With that policy every one is acquainted in Alsace, and it is universally feared lest similar measures should be adopted in that province, if not immediately, then at the first available opportunity. Hence the fear and unconquerable mistrust with which Prussia is regarded in Alsace ;

« 3° Because the economic advantages held up as a bait are but a delusion and a snare. Economic policy is an Imperial concern. It brings certain advantages to the several Confederate States, according to their situation, the nature of their soil, and so forth. The railways of Alsace-Lorraine are already in the hands of Prussia and are managed in accordance with Prussian interests. Prussia would always sacrifice the interests of Alsace to those of her older provinces ;

« 4° For religious motives. The greater part of Alsace is Roman Catholic. Liberalism has no deep roots in the country. The political struggle is carried on between the Centre and the Social-Democrats. The experience acquired in the course of the present war has convinced the Roman Catholics of Alsace that on them is visited the discontent to which Alsatian nationalism has given rise in German circles. For instance, when reference is made to nationalists who betray the

country, the names put forward are invariably the names of Roman Catholics. Very little is said about the two Weills, the Socialist Grumbach, the Liberal Boll, and others. It is never stated that in Strasbourg adherents to the nationalist movement were one and all Liberal-Protestants. In Alsatian eyes, Prussia is preeminently the fount and origin of Protestant traditions.

« Then how about Baden? For one thing, Baden is too small a country to do inate Alsace culturally. Alsace would constitute in its policy a factor of such importance as to cause that policy to deviate. It may be added, by the way, that the Alsatian people hold Baden in great aversion.

« In order, therefore, that the Germanising process should have a chance of being carried out peacefully in Alsace, it would be necessary for that province to be annexed to some country strong enough not to be thrown off its balance by that annexation, and sufficiently liberal in its politics to bestow universal suffrage upon the Alsatians. That country would have to be one free from the domination of classes and castes ; one, above all, that by virtue of its past history and of its political constitution could be trusted not to oppress existing minorities by exceptional laws. Such a country is Bavaria, possessed as it is of a further advantage : the Roman Catholics of Alsace would be drawn to the Bavarians by

reason of a common religious faith. And in both countries Roman Catholics form the great majority. »

Could one wish for better, for more convincing evidence than the above admissions published in a Prussian newspaper at the height of the war? They must have caused mighty displeasure in Government circles, judging by the sourness of the *Frankfurter Gazette's* reply :

« No astonishment will be felt at seeing the author of the article in the *Kölnische Volkszeitung* ascribe, or pretend to ascribe our views to an anti-Catholic bias, to a latent hostility on our part towards *Clerical Bavaria*. His indignant references to our alleged motives are hugely entertaining, more especially when followed — as in the present instance — by an attempt to contrast, after the true demagogic fashion, Protestant Prussia and Roman Catholic Bavaria, for the sole purpose of demonstrating the necessity of annexing Alsace to Bavaria. »

In giving way to this fit of inspired fury, the *Frankfurter Gazette* appears to be totally oblivious of the fact that the controversy which has assumed so « entertaining » a character was started in its own columns. And in sober earnest, were we able to turn away our thoughts from the martyrdom endured by the population of Alsace-

Lorraine, we should find no little entertainment in witnessing the contest of hypocrisy and greed wherein the leading circles of Berlin and Frankfurt are arrayed against those of Cologne and Munich.

Meanwhile, in the course of the year 1916, the great stand at Verdun and the successful offensive of the French and British Armies in the Somme rang the knell of Germany's dreams of universal domination. From that time forward the German attitude towards Alsace-Lorraine assumes a different aspect.

The Germans soon had recourse to all the refinements of their ingrained hypocrisy, for the purpose of impressing Alsace-Lorraine with their zeal in its defence, while throwing the blame for past errors on the Imperial Government.

The signal for this change of front was given on January 15th 1917 by the very member of the Centre Party who, ever since that fateful month of August 1914, had fawned more slavishly than any other upon the political authorities at Berlin, Dr. Ricklin.

At the opening of the session of the Council General of Upper-Alsace, it chose as a pretext for an attack upon the Government the death two months earlier of the former deputy in the Reichstag, Jacques Preiss. Preiss had died at Munich in which city, according to the impudent euphemism employed by the *Frankfurter Gazette*,

he had chosen to reside since the beginning of the war — but where, as a matter of fact, he had been interned by the German police... To the surprise of all, Dr. Ricklin protested against the unjustifiable suspicions that had brought Preiss to this unfortunate end. He added that although it was necessary at such a time to refrain from criticising the higher command of the Army, that was no reason why the political authorities should expect to receive « general absolution. »

This unforeseen attack was taken as a sign of the times by the politicians at Berlin, as witness the sudden excitement that took possession of the majority of the Reichstag, when the Budget Committee called attention to a case similar to Preiss's, the case of Deputy Lévêque. Lévêque is the representative in the Reichstag of the Sarrebourg-Château-Salins ward, in Lorraine. In the course of the summer 1916, he had been interned in Pomerania by special order of the Government. It was stated that on his way back from Berlin, where he had sat in the Reichstag, he had, in reference to the military situation, made use of inconsiderate, or at all events equivocal the language. At the moment (August 1st 1916), *Kölnische Volkszeitung* alluded to this barbarous incident merely to disavow Lévêque and to deny the calumnious insinuations of the National-Liberal newspapers, to the effect that Lévêque had been elected with the help of the Roman Catholic Centre. But now, in the spring of 1917, Deputy

Riesser in the name of the National Liberals, and Deputy Groeber in the name of the Roman Catholics, suddenly affect the highest indignation. They cry shame on the Prussian police for keeping a deputy away from his constituents, and for obliging him, whenever his parliamentary duties called him to Berlin, to report to them in person.

Better still, in order to join in the outcry raised by the middle-class parties against the high-handed proceedings of the Imperial Government, the Imperialist-Socialists depute to speak in the Reichstag the most truculent admirer of the Bismarckian policy, an out-and-out upholder of the annexation of our French departments of Alsace-Lorraine, Hermann Wendel. He it was who on March 23rd last inveighed against the regime of terror applied to the *Reichsland*.

« Hundreds of people have been arrested in Alsace-Lorraine, who never displayed the very slightest anti-German activities. Among them were actually to be found two Knights of the Red Eagle. On the mere insinuation that a certain person was a member of the *Souvenir Français*, that person was summarily arrested. Now if the aim of that Association was certainly not to propagate pro-German sentiments, the reason is quite insufficient to entitle the authorities to treat each of its members — or any one alleged to be such — as a species of traitor to Germany. High State Officials have been hono-

rary members of that Society, and representatives of the civil and military authorities have attended the ceremonies organised by it. Furthermore, many people have been prosecuted, who had relatives in France, or who in former days had gone to France on several occasions, for business purposes or for pleasure — in short, practically all the well-to-do or influent Alsatians and Lorrainers. These people have been treated like criminals. *If they are able, some day, to give an account of their experiences, a cry of indignation will ring through the world*, the more so as the conditions of their imprisonment have been outrageous, notably in the fortress of Ehrenbreitstein specially prepared, before war broke out, for the detention of suspects. To this day, a regime of extreme severity prevails : arbitrary banishment; the obligation to report daily to the police; refusal of leave, even in urgent cases, etc... The new law is evaded constantly. All that the Reichstag has done hitherto to ensure its due application has been of very little use.

« Our efforts to awaken sympathy for German Kultur had thus been held in check. After the present war, it will be far more difficult than in 1871 to win back the hearts of the people of Alsace-Lorraine. To what a pass things have come in the *Reichsland* may best be judged by the fact that the highest official of Alsace-Lorraine, von Gemmingen, Prefect of Metz, has given vent to his indignation by declaring that the

system now prevalent in Alsace-Lorraine is barbarity itself. Spies and informers are as plentiful as in the worst days of the Roman Empire. It is high time to make an end of these abuses ! »

Yes, indeed, *it is high time to do away with these abuses*, and to punish those responsible for them, by delivering Alsace-Lorraine from the Barbarians who themselves admit the impotence of their barbarous methods. It must be restored to itself, or in other words, to that French civilisation that imparted to it a higher degree of culture and to which it feels itself more than ever to be indissolubly united. That this rightful restoration will be hailed with joy throughout the country, not only the past, but the present is there to testify. We have but to quote the evidence recorded by an American visitor Mr. Lincoln Eyre, in the *New-York World* of February 4th 1917.

« The reply of the Entente to Mr. Wilson is posted up in every corner of Alsace occupied by the French Troops. The inhabitants have read it over so often that they must know it by heart.

For them indeed it has a more tragic significance than for any other race. They have waited for it for 45 years. At the beginning of the French occupation they lived in anxious doubt as to how long it would last. To-day they go

about their business with the silent composure of people whose destiny is secure. They work hand in hand with the new authorities as though they had never known any others. The German signs have disappeared, together with the posts marking the former frontier. *Nothing is more impressive than the grave aspect and reserved tone of this population restored to its original mother-country.*



CHAPTER VI

IN RECONQUERED ALSACE

The time has not yet come to describe what has been, for the last three years, the life of the small portion of Alsace joined once more to France at the beginning of the war. By publishing forth certain particulars we might call down upon the country, its inhabitants, or their relatives, the most cruel reprisals.

It is permissible, however, to state briefly that the French occupation, greeted at first with effusive joy, is now looked upon as the most natural thing in the world. The Alsatian of the villages and small towns, of the valleys and of the plain, has taken his seat once again at the French fireside and it might be thought, at times, that he has never left it; the Frenchman who has come from beyond the Vosges, feels at home in the Alsatian country. The soldiers quartered in Alsace are filled with wonder and gratitude

at the welcome extended to them in Alsatian homes.

On public holidays, with a spontaneity unwitnessed for 45 years, the windows are dressed in bunting: old discoloured flags appear on the scene, that had lain carefully hidden in the deep wardrobes of the country.

The children, in whom the Alsatian soul is mirrored freely, encouraged thereto by their elders, have set to work with passionate eagerness to learn the French language; far more efficacious than the « fear of the stick » has been the love of France to ensure punctual attendance and the daily effort.

Nor can the results obtained this year be looked upon as anything but most encouraging, if we take into account that the majority of the pupils knew no French at the beginning of the war:

16 children were awarded the *brevet élémentaire* ;
 19 » » » » scholarships in the *Ly-*
cées and *Ecoles primaires supérieures* ;

520 were awarded the *Certificat d'études*.

(In 1915, 17 had been awarded the *Certificat d'études* ; in 1916, 283.)

Municipal life has revived wherever military circumstances have permitted, sometimes even under daily shelling by the enemy. The Communes have reorganised their finances, the present

state of which may be considered relatively prosperous, in spite of the heavy charges resulting from the war. Several of the Communes have built up considerable reserves.

Industrial activity has been re-established, as well as the workmen's Assurance and Pensions companies. Alsatian products find ready markets, trade being particularly brisk, owing to the influx of military customers. The high prices commanded by agricultural products amply reward the field labourers, who by their unremitting toil have considerably increased the yield of the rich Alsatian soil.

Consequently, in spite of the material damage still wrought by German shells — a circumstance that does not contribute to make their absence regretted — French Alsace leads a normal, nay an easy life; and the people appreciate these favourable conditions all the better, in that they are fully aware of the material sufferings endured by the rest of their fellow-countrymen, those living beyond our lines. Yet economy is widely practised in Alsace, and as the desire to back up France's effort is seconded by perfect trust in her credit, the delivered population brings in its savings and its gold, as may be judged from the following statement :

By November 1st 1916, gold to the value of two and a half millions of francs had been paid into the banks.

Concurrently, there had been subscribed :

250.000 francs for the purchase of National
Bonds ;

2.200.000 to the War Loan ;

11.800.000 francs for the purchase of 5 % Go-
vernment Stock ;

14.250.000 francs, in all.

The number of subscribers to the last War Loan reached the figure of 2.500, a very high one considering the actual number of the inhabitants of reconquered Alsace.

The above results are the more remarkable in that the people are cut off from the financial establishments wherein their funds are deposited; they afford further evidence as regards the sentiments of the Alsatian population and the success of the efforts made to re-establish the economic life of the country.

How different from the bitter resentment caused by the annexation in 1871 ! There is no resistance to French ideas, no regret is felt for the German regime.

France, when she returned to the southern valleys of the Vosges, was welcomed with outstretched arms by her faithful children.

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