

Marx Hardy Machiavelli Joyce Austen  
Defoe Abbot Melville Montaigne Cooper Emerson Hugo  
Stoker Wilde Christie Maupassant Haggard Chesterton Molière Eliot Grimm  
Garnett Engels Schiller Byron Maupassant Schiller  
Goethe Hawthorne Smith Kafka  
Cotton Dostoyevsky Kipling Doyle  
Baum Henry Flaubert Nietzsche Willis  
Leslie Dumas Stockton Vatsyayana Crane  
Burroughs Verne  
Curtis Tocqueville Gogol Busch  
Homer Tolstoy Whitman Twain  
Darwin Zola Lawrence Dickens Plato  
Potter Freud Jowett Stevenson Andersen Harte  
Kant London Descartes Cervantes Burton Hesse  
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# **Armageddon –And After**

W. L. (William Leonard) Courtney

# Imprint

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DEDICATED  
WITH ALL HUMILITY AND ADMIRATION  
TO  
THE YOUNG IDEALISTS OF ALL COUNTRIES  
WHO WILL NOT ALLOW THE DREAMS OF THEIR  
YOUTH TO BE TARNISHED BY THE  
EXPERIENCES OF AN  
OUTWORN AGE



## PREFACE

I dedicate this little book to the young idealists of this and other countries, for several reasons. They must, obviously, be young, because their older contemporaries, with a large amount of experience of earlier conditions, will hardly have the courage to deal with the novel data. I take it that, after the conclusion of the present war, there will come an uneasy period of exhaustion and anxiety when we shall be told that those who hold military power in their hands are alone qualified to act as saviours of society. That conclusion, as I understand the matter, young idealists will strenuously oppose. They will be quite aware that all the conservative elements will be against them; they will appreciate also the eagerness with which a large number of people will point out that the safest way is to leave matters more or less alone, and to allow the situation to be controlled viii by soldiers and diplomatists. Of course there is obvious truth in the assertion that the immediate settlement of peace conditions must, to a large extent, be left in the hands of those who brought the war to a successful conclusion. But the relief from pressing anxiety when this horrible strife is over, and the feeling of gratitude to those who have delivered us must not be allowed to gild and consecrate, as it were, systems proved effete and policies which intelligent men recognise as bankrupt. The moment of deliverance will be too unique and too splendid to be left in the hands of men who have grown, if not cynical, at all events a little weary of the notorious defects of humanity, and who are, perhaps naturally, tempted to allow European progress to fall back into the old well-worn ruts. It is the young men who must take the matter in hand, with their ardent hopes and their keen imagination, and only so far as they believe in the possibility of a great amelioration will they have any chance of doing yeoman service for humanity.

The dawn of a new era must be plenarily accepted as a wonderful opportunity for reform. If viewed in any other spirit, the ix splendours of the morning will soon give way before the obstinate clouds hanging on the horizon. In some fashion or other it must be acknowledged that older methods of dealing with international affairs have been tried and found wanting. It must be admitted that

the ancient principles helped to bring about the tremendous catastrophe in which we are at present involved, and that a thorough re-organisation is required if the new Europe is to start under better auspices. That is why I appeal to the younger idealists, because they are not likely to be deterred by inveterate prejudices; they will be only too eager to examine things with a fresh intelligence of their own. Somehow or other we must get rid of the absurd idea that the nations of Europe are always on the look out to do each other an injury. We have to establish the doctrines of Right on a proper basis, and dethrone that ugly phantom of Might, which is the object of Potsdam worship. International law must be built up with its proper sanctions; and virtues, which are Christian and humane, must find their proper place in the ordinary dealings of states with one another. Much clever dialectics will probably be employed in order to prove that idealistic dreams are vain. Young men will not be afraid of such arguments; they will not be deterred by purely logical difficulties. Let us remember that this war has been waged in order to make war for the future impossible. If that be the presiding idea of men's minds, they will keep their reforming course steadily directed towards ideal ends, patiently working for the reconstruction of Europe and a better lot for humanity at large.

Once more let me repeat that it is only young idealists who are sufficient for these things. They may call themselves democrats, or socialists, or futurists, or merely reformers. The name is unimportant: the main point is that they must thoroughly examine their creed in the light of their finest hopes and aspirations. They will not be the slaves of any formulæ, and they will hold out their right hands to every man—whatever may be the label he puts on his theories—who is striving in single-minded devotion for a millennial peace. The new era will have to be of a spiritual, ethical type. Coarser forms of materialism, whether in thought or life, will have to be banished, because the scales have at last dropped from our eyes, and we intend to regard a human being no longer as a thing of luxury, or wealth, or greedy passions, but as the possessor of a living soul.

W.L.C.

*November 10, 1914.*

I wish to acknowledge my obligation to Mr. H.N. Brailsford's *The War of Steel and Gold* (Bell). I do not pretend to agree with all that Mr. Brailsford says: but I have found his book always interesting, and sometimes inspiring.

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1

## ARMAGEDDON – AND AFTER

### CHAPTER I

## PROBLEMS OF THE FUTURE

The newspapers have lately been making large quotations from the poems of Mr. Rudyard Kipling. They might, if they had been so minded, have laid under similar contribution the Revelation of St. John the Divine. There, too, with all the imagery usual in Apocalyptic literature, is to be found a description of vague and confused fighting, when most of the Kings of the earth come together to fight a last and desperate battle. The Seven Angels go forth, each armed

with a vial, the first poisoning the earth, the second the sea, the third the rivers and fountains of waters, the fourth the sun. Then out of the mouth of the dragon, of the beast, and of the Antichrist come the lying spirits which persuade the Kings of the earth to gather all the people for that great day of God Almighty "into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon." Translated into our language the account might very well serve for the modern assemblage of troops in which nearly all the kingdoms of the earth have to play their part, with few, and not very important, exceptions. It is almost absurd to speak of the events of the past three months as though they were merely incidents in a great and important campaign. There is nothing in history like them so far as we are aware. In the clash of the two great European organisations—the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente—we have all those wild features of universal chaos which the writer of the Apocalypse saw with prophetic eye as ushering in the great day of the Lord, and paving the way for a New Heaven and a New Earth.

### **A Colossal Upheaval**

It is a colossal upheaval. But what sort of New Heaven and New Earth is it likely to usher in? This is a question which it is hardly too early to discuss, for it makes a vast difference, to us English in especial, if, fighting for what we deem to be a just cause, we can look forward to an issue in the long run beneficial to ourselves and the world. We know the character of the desperate conflict which has yet to be accomplished before our eyes. Everything points to a long stern war, which cannot be completed in a single campaign. Every one knows that Lord Kitchener is supposed to have prophesied a war of three years, and we can hardly ignore the opinion of so good a judge. If we ask why, the obvious answer is that every nation engaged is not fighting for mere victory in battle, nor yet for extension of territory; but for something more important than these. They fight for the triumph of their respective ideas, and it will make the greatest difference to Europe and the world which of the ideas is eventually conqueror. Supposing the German invasion of France ends in failure; that, clearly, will not finish the war. Supposing even that Berlin is taken by the Russians, we cannot affirm that so great an event will necessarily complete the campaign. The whole of

Germany will have to be invaded and subdued, and that is a process which will take a very long time even under the most favourable auspices. Or take the opposite hypothesis. Let us suppose that the Germans capture Paris, and manage by forced marches to defend their country against the Muscovite incursion. Even so, nothing is accomplished of a lasting character. France will go on fighting as she did after 1870, and we shall be found at her side. Or, assuming the worst hypothesis of all, that France lies prostrate under the heel of her German conqueror, does any one suppose that Great Britain will desist from fighting? We know perfectly well that, with the aid of our Fleet, we shall still be in a position to defy the German invader and make use of our enormous reserves to wear out even Teutonic obstinacy. The great sign and seal of this battle to the death is the recent covenant entered into by the three members of the Triple Entente. [1] They have declared in the most formal fashion, over the signatures of their three representatives, Sir Edward Grey, M. Paul Cambon, and Count Benckendorff, that they will not make a separate peace, that they will continue to act in unison, and fight, not as three nations, but as one. Perhaps one of the least expected results of the present conjuncture is that the Triple Entente, which was supposed to possess less cohesive efficiency than the rival organisation, has proved, on the contrary, the stronger of the two. The Triple Alliance is not true to its name. Italy, the third and unwilling member, still preserves her neutrality, and declares that her interests are not immediately involved.

[1] Subsequently joined by Japan.

### **Never Again!**

In order to attempt to discover the vast changes that are likely to come as a direct consequence of the present Armageddon, it is necessary to refer in brief retrospect to some of the main causes and features of the great European war. Meanwhile, I think the general feeling amongst all thoughtful men is best expressed in the phrase, "Never again." Never again must we have to face the possibility of such a world-wide catastrophe. Never again must it be possible for the pursuit of merely selfish interests to work such colossal havoc. Never again must we have war as the only solution of national differences. Never again must all the arts of peace be suspended while

Europe rings to the tramp of armed millions. Never again must spiritual, moral, artistic culture be submerged under a wave of barbarism. Never again must the Ruler of this Universe be addressed as the "God of battles." Never again shall a new Wordsworth hail "carnage" as "God's daughter." The illogicality of it all is too patent. That everything which we respect and revere in the way of science or thought, or culture, or music, or poetry, or drama, should be cast into the melting-pot to satisfy dynastic ambition is a thing too puerile as well as too appalling to be even considered. And the horror of it all is something more than our nerves will stand. The best brains and intellects of Europe, the 6 brightest and most promising youths, all the manhood everywhere in Europe to be shrivelled and consumed in a holocaust like this—it is such a reign of the Devil and Antichrist on earth that it must be banished in perpetuity if civilisation and progress are to endure. Never again!

### **Unexpected War**

How did we get into such a stupid and appalling calamity? Let us think for a moment. I do not suppose it would be wrong to say that no one ever expected war in our days. Take up any of the recent books. With the exception of the fiery martial pamphlets of Germany, the work of a von der Goltz or a Treitschke, or a Bernhardi, we shall find a general consensus of opinion that war on a large scale was impossible because too ruinous, that the very size of the European armaments made war impracticable. Or else, to take the extreme case of Mr. Norman Angell, the entanglements of modern finance were said to have put war out of count as an absurdity. We were a little too hasty in our judgments. It is clear that a single determined man, if he is powerful enough, may embroil Europe. However destructive modern armaments may be, and however costly a campaign may prove, yet there are men who will face the cost and confront the wholesale destruction of life that modern warfare entails. How pitiful it is, how strange also, to look back upon the solemn asseveration of the Kaiser and the Tsar, not so many months ago (Port Baltic, July 1912), that the division of Europe into the two great confederations known as the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente provided a safeguard against hostilities! We were constantly assured that diplomats were working for a Balance of

Power, such an equilibrium of rival forces that the total result would be stability and peace. Arbitration, too, was considered by many as the panacea, to say nothing of the Hague Palace of Peace. And now we discover that nations may possibly refer to arbitration points of small importance in their quarrels, but that the greater things which are supposed to touch national honour and the preservation of national life are tacitly, if not formally, exempted from the category of arbitrable disputes. Diplomacy, Arbitration, Palaces of Peace seem equally useless.

### Proximate and Ultimate Causes

In attempting to understand how Europe has (to use Lord Rosebery's phrase) "rattled into barbarism" in the uncompromising fashion 8 which we see before our eyes, we must distinguish between recent operative causes and those more slowly evolving antecedent conditions which play a considerable, though not necessarily an obvious part in the result. Recent operative causes are such things as the murder of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand at Serajevo, the consequent Austrian ultimatum to Servia, the hasty and intemperate action of the Kaiser in forcing war, and—from a more general point of view—the particular form of militarism prevalent in Germany. Ulterior antecedent conditions are to be found in the changing history of European States and their mutual relations in the last quarter of a century; the ambition of Germany to create an Imperial fleet; the ambition of Germany to have "a place in the sun" and become a large colonial power; the formation of a Triple Entente following on the formation of a Triple Alliance; the rivalry between Teuton and Slav; and the mutations of diplomacy and *Real-politik*. It is not always possible to keep the two sets of causes, the recent and the ulterior, separate, for they naturally tend either to overlap or to interpenetrate one another. German Militarism, for instance, is only a specific form of the general ambition of Germany, and the Austrian desire to avenge herself on Servia is 9 a part of her secular animosity towards Slavdom and its protector, Russia. Nor yet, when we are considering the present *débâcle* of civilisation, need we interest ourselves overmuch in the immediate occasions and circumstances of the huge quarrel. We want to know not how Europe flared into war, but why. Our object is so to understand the present

imbroglio as to prevent, if we can, the possibility for the future of any similar world-wide catastrophe.

### **European Dictators**

Let us fix our attention on one or two salient points. Europe has often been accustomed to watch with anxiety the rise of some potent arbiter of her destinies who seems to arrogate to himself a large personal dominion. There was Philip II. There was Louis XIV. There was Napoleon a hundred years ago. Then, a mere shadow of his great ancestor, there was Napoleon III. Then, after the Franco-German war, there was Bismarck. Now it is Kaiser Wilhelm II. The emergence of some ambitious personality naturally makes Europe suspicious and watchful, and leads to the formation of leagues and confederations against him. The only thing, however, which seems to have any power of real resistance to the potential tyrant is not the manœuvring of diplomats, but the steady growth of democracy in Europe, which, in virtue of its character and principles, steadily objects to the despotism of any given individual, and the arbitrary designs of a personal will. We had hoped that the spread of democracies in all European nations would progressively render dynastic wars an impossibility. The peoples would cry out, we hoped, against being butchered to make a holiday for any latter-day Cæsar. But democracy is a slow growth, and exists in very varying degrees of strength in different parts of our continent. Evidently it has not yet discovered its own power. We have sadly to recognise that its range of influence and the new spirit which it seeks to introduce into the world are as yet impotent against the personal ascendancy of a monarch and the old conceptions of high politics. European democracy is still too vague, too dispersed, too unorganised, to prevent the breaking out of a bloody international conflict.

### **The Personal Factor**

Europe then has still to reckon with the personal factor – with all its vagaries and its desolating ambitions. Let us see how this has worked in the case before us. In 1888 the present German Emperor ascended the throne. Two years afterwards, in March 1890, the Pilot was dropped – Bismarck resigned. The change was something more than a mere substitution of men like Caprivi and Hohenlohe for the

Iron Chancellor. There was involved a radical alteration in policy. The Germany which was the ideal of Bismarck's dreams was an exceedingly prosperous self-contained country, which should flourish mainly because it developed its internal industries as well as paid attention to its agriculture, and secured its somewhat perilous position in the centre of Europe by skilful diplomatic means of sowing dissension amongst its neighbours. Thus Bismarck discouraged colonial extensions. He thought they might weaken Germany. On the other hand, he encouraged French colonial policy, because he thought it would divert the French from their preoccupation with the idea of *revanche*. He played, more or less successfully, with England, sometimes tempting her with plausible suggestions that she should join the Teutonic Empires on the Continent, sometimes thwarting her aims by sowing dissensions between her and her nearest neighbour, France. But there was one empire which, certainly, Bismarck dreaded not so much because she was actually of much importance, but because she might be. That empire was Russia. The last thing in the world Bismarck desired was precisely that approximation between France and Russia which ended in the strange phenomenon of an offensive and defensive alliance between a western republic and a semi-eastern despotic empire.

### **Kaiser Wilhelm**

Kaiser Wilhelm II had very different ideals for Germany, and in many points he simply reversed the policy of Bismarck. He began to develop the German colonial empire, and in order that it might be protected he did all in his power to encourage the formation of a large German navy. He even allowed himself to say that "the future of Germany was on the sea." It was part of that peculiar form of personal autocracy which the Kaiser introduced that he should from time to time invent phrases suggestive of different principles of his policy. Side by side with the assertion that Germany's future was on the sea, we have the phrases "Germany wants her place in the sun" and that the "drag" of Teutonic development is "towards the East." The reality and imminence of "a yellow peril" was another of his devices for stimulating the efforts of his countrymen. Thus the new policy was expansion, evolution as a world-power, colonisation; and each in turn brought him up against the older arrangement of

European Powers. His colonial policy, especially in Africa, led to collisions with both France and Great Britain. The building of the fleet, the Kiel Canal, and other details of maritime policy naturally made England very suspicious, while the steady drag towards the East rendered wholly unavoidable the conflict between Teutonism and the Slav races. Germany looked, undoubtedly, towards Asia Minor, and for this reason made great advances to and many professions of friendship for the Ottoman Empire. Turkey, indeed, in several phrases was declared to be "the natural ally" of Germany in the Near East. And if we ask why, the answer nowadays is obvious. Not only was Turkey to lend herself to the encouragement of German commercial enterprise in Asia Minor, but she was, in the judgment of the Emperor, the one power which could in time of trouble make herself especially obnoxious to Great Britain. She could encourage revolt in Egypt, and still more, through the influence of Mahommedanism, stir up disaffection in India. [2]

[2] Turkey has now joined Germany.

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### **An Aggressive Policy**

And now let us watch this policy in action in recent events. In 1897 Germany demanded reparation from China for the recent murder of two German missionaries. Troops were landed at Kiaochau Bay, a large pecuniary indemnity of about £35,000 was refused, and Kiaochau itself with the adjacent territory was ceded to Germany. That was a significant demonstration of the Emperor's determination to make his country a world-power, so that, as was stated afterwards, nothing should occur in the whole world in which Germany would not have her say. Meanwhile, in Europe itself event after event occurred to prove the persistent character of German aggressiveness. On March 31, 1905, the German Emperor landed at Tangier, in order to aid the Sultan of Morocco in his demand for a Conference of the Powers to check the military dispositions of France. M. Delcassé, France's Foreign Minister, demurred to this proposal, asserting that a Conference was wholly unnecessary. Thereupon Prince Bülow used menacing language, and Delcassé resigned in June 1905. The Conference of Algeçiras was held in Jan-

uary 1906, in which Austria proved herself "a brilliant second" to Germany. Two years afterwards, 15 in 1908, came still further proofs of Germany's ambition. Austria annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina. Russia immediately protested; so did most of the other Great Powers. But Germany at once took up the Austrian cause, and stood "in shining armour" side by side with her ally. Inasmuch as Russia was, in 1908, only just recovering from the effects of her disastrous war with Japan, and was therefore in no condition to take the offensive, the Triple Alliance gained a distinct victory. Three years later occurred another striking event. In July 1911 the world was startled by the news that the German gunboat *Panther*, joined shortly afterwards by the cruiser *Berlin*, had been sent to Agadir. Clearly Berlin intended to reopen the whole Moroccan question, and the tension between the Powers was for some time acute. Nor did Mr. Lloyd George make it much better by a fiery speech at the Mansion House on July 21, which considerably fluttered the Continental doves. The immediate problem, however, was solved by the cession of about one hundred thousand square miles of territory in the Congo basin by France to Germany in compensation for German acquiescence in the French protectorate over Morocco. I need not, perhaps, refer to other more recent events. One point, however, 16 must not be omitted. The issue of the Balkan wars in 1912 caused a distinct disappointment to both Germany and Austria. Turkey's defeat lessened the importance of the Ottoman Empire as an ally. Austria had to curb her desires in the direction of Salonica. And the enemies who had prevented the realisation of wide Teutonic schemes were Serbia and her protector, Russia. From this time onwards Austria waited for an opportunity to avenge herself on Serbia, while Germany, in close union with her ally, began to study the situation in relation to the Great Northern Empire in an eminently bellicose spirit.

## **Militarism**

Now that we have the proper standpoint from which to watch the general tendency of events like these, we can form some estimate of the nature of German ambition and the results of the personal ascendancy of the Kaiser. We speak vaguely of militarism. Fortunately, we have a very valuable document to enable us to understand

what precisely German militarism signifies. General von Bernhardi's *Germany and the Next War* is one of the most interesting, as well as most suggestive, of books, intended to illustrate the 17 spirit of German ambition. Bernhardi writes like a soldier. Such philosophy as he possesses he has taken from Nietzsche. His applications of history come from Treitschke. He has persuaded himself that the main object of human life is war, and the higher the nation the more persistently must it pursue preparations for war. Hence the best men in the State are the fighting men. Ethics and religion, so far as they deprecate fighting and plead for peace, are absolutely pernicious. Culture does not mean, as we hoped and thought, the best development of scientific and artistic enlightenment, but merely an all-absorbing will-power, an all-devouring ambition to be on the top and to crush every one else. The assumption throughout is that the German is the highest specimen of humanity. Germany is especially qualified to be the leader, and the only way in which it can become the leader is to have such overwhelming military power that no one has any chance of resisting. Moreover, all methods are justified in the sacred cause of German culture—duplicity, violence, the deliberate sowing of dissensions between possible rivals, incitements of Asiatics to rise against Europeans. All means are to be adopted to win the ultimate great victory, and, of course, when the struggle comes there must be no misplaced leniency to any of the inferior races who interpose between Germany and her legitimate place in the sun. [3] The ideal is almost too naïve and too ferocious to be conceived by ordinary minds. Yet here it all stands in black and white. According to Bernhardi's volume German militarism means at least two things. First the suppression of every other nationality except the German; second the suppression of the whole civilian element in the population under the heel of the German drill-sergeant. Is it any wonder that the recent war has been conducted by Berlin with such appalling barbarism and ferocity?

[3] *Germany and the Next War*, by F. von Bernhardi. See especially Chap. V, "World-Power or Downfall." Other works which may be consulted are Professor J.A. Cramb's *Germany and England* (esp. pp. 111-112) and Professor Usher's *Pan-Germanism*.