



KAISER WILHELM. THE WAR LORD OF EUROPE



TOWERING above the nations and the statesmen of nations in the present world conflict is one colossal personality—Wilhelm II, by the grace of God, King of Prussia and Emperor of the German people.

No matter what the final fortunes of the war may be, it still will converge in all points like fillings towards a magnet, about the life and the personality of this one man. For it is this war that is the culminating point in his life and in the life of the nation that he has, in a measure, created.

Whether the conflict bring ultimate success to him or failure, it has in it the elements that will give the world the right to inscribe in history "the Great" after the name of this latest Emperor in a line of Emperors who have rightfully and gloriously worn the title of greatness.

The world, or much of the world, attributes the present war to the aggression of the Kaiser. Much of the world, likewise, attributes it to aggression from the Slavonian side of Europe and Asia. History in a few years hence may be able to write the real causes back of the war in clearer words than it can be expressed in the present moments of inter-racial passion and jealousy.

And yet, whether the war originated from the Kaiser or from other source, the mere fact of the existence in the world today of this strangely vigorous and paradoxical personality, made it inevitable that the clash of nations should come to pass.

"This young Hohenzollern will considerably outshine all his predecessors on the throne," predicted Prince Gortschakoff, the Russian Chancellor, when Wilhelm was yet a child—and a child with striking military tendencies. "He will be the mainspring of Germany and his influence will be felt throughout the world. When the time comes he will astonish Europe."

Point for point the prophecy of the old Russian Chancellor has been proved true in a dozen times since it was made, and today it is being proved true on a grander scale than ever before in the illustrious life of the Emperor of the German people.

Trained Like an Athlete.

Wilhelm II seems to have sensed his destiny from the beginning and his life, off the throne and on the throne, has been one of preparation to meet that destiny. He foresaw the task that Fate had set for him and he trained himself to carry it out. Physical disabilities were overcome, and by a life of rigid self-denial and careful drill and study the Kaiser has kept himself always like a fine athlete trained to perfect condition for the race he must run.

And in his preparation of himself he has drawn with him the whole German nation; and the nation has followed him willingly.

"We may like or dislike him," says Price Collier in his classic study of the character of Wilhelm II, "approve or disapprove, rejoice in autocracy or abominate it, admire the far-reaching discipline or regret the iron mold in which much of the German life is encased, but for the moment all this is beside the mark.

"Here is a man who in a quarter of a century has so grown into the life of a nation, the most powerful on the Continent and one of the three most powerful in the world, that when you

touch it anywhere you touch him, when you think of it from any angle of thought or describe it from any point of view, you find yourself including him.

Not so, however, with the people of Germany.

Rules by Divine Right.

In their history there is no Magna Charta; no Declaration of Independence; no storming of a Bastille. The rulers of the German Empire, for 200 years and more, have behind them a tradition of kingly dominance that seems well to vindicate the phrase "by the grace of God." Wilhelm and his ancestors made Prussia. They built up their reigning power by their own might and there was no Runnymede at which they were ever compelled to relinquish a jot of it. The citizens of Prussia never stormed the battlements of equal rights to make a treaty with their sovereign, but the sovereigns voluntarily gave to them such political rights as they have.

Wilhelm II believes in the divine right of his rulership, as his ancestors before him believed in it, and his people find in none of the traditions of their nation any testimony that would tend to cloud his title.

Thus it becomes conceivable that the Kaiser holding his rule with an avowed belief in its divine origin, and supported in this belief by the temper of his people, being as he is a character dynamically different from the typical conservative Teuton, should grip hold of the nation and mold it toward the vision that he as an individual saw.

"Kaiser Wilhelm II is today the master key of every question, institution and problem of a country of more than 65,000,000 people."

Germany, before he was born, had suffered bitterly from the scourge of foreign conquerors, and was just beginning to bud into the protective military system that was to lift her out of danger of being further harassed. He shared with his grandfather the dream of the full return of the glory and brilliancy of the old German empire of the time of the Hohenstaufen dynasty.

"All this must come again," his grandfather told him as a boy, when he had recited the tradition of the great Frederick Barbarossa. "The might of the empire must be restored and the glory of the Imperial Crown blaze out afresh. Barbarossa must be set free from the Kyffhauser Mountain."

This was the vision! this the desire—and in this age of the world as in other ages, the surest means of bringing the vision to pass was through military greatness.

When Wilhelm ascended the throne of the empire, June 15, 1888, his first proclamation was to the army; his second to the navy, and his third to the people.

And he began to make strong the arms of his empire.

Serene in the confidence of his divinely bestowed right he went forward with his work. There can be no question of the sincerity of his belief in God's bestowal of the throne.

"I have taken over this government



Future Emperor of Germany



Prince August Wilhelm



Prince Oscar



Prince Adalbert



Princess Victoria Louise



Prince Eitel Frederick



Kaiserin of Germany



Crown Prince Frederick William and his wife



Prince Joachim

touch it anywhere you touch him, when you think of it from any angle of thought or describe it from any point of view, you find yourself including him.

"The write about Germany without writing about the Emperor is as impossible as to jump away from one's own shadow. When the sun is behind any phase or department of German life, the shadow cast is that of Germany's Emperor."

The complaisance of a people that would so allow one personality to grip and dominate them in every phase of their national life is scarcely intelligible to the citizen of Great Britain or of America. Our liberties in both of these countries are the results of cen-

in the presence of the king of kings," he proclaimed when he assumed the throne, "promising God to be a just and a merciful prince, cultivating piety and the fear of God."

Again in a speech at Bremen in 1897, near 10 years later:

"If we have been able to accomplish

what has been accomplished, it is due to the fact that our house possesses the tradition by virtue of which we consider that we have been appointed by God to preserve and direct, for their own welfare, the people over whom he has given us power."

Earlier than this, about two years after his accession to the throne and while the break between him and Bismarck was impending, he declared at Brandenburg on March 5: "I look upon the people and nation handed on to me, as a responsibility conferred upon

me by God, and that it is, as is written in the Bible, my duty to increase this heritage, for which I shall be one day called to give an account.

His Sinister Prediction. "Those who interfere with my task been made, such as, at Koenigsberg in 1914.

"It was in this spot," he said, "that my grandfather in his own right, placed the royal crown of Prussia on his head, insisting once again that it was bestowed by the grace of God alone, and not by Parliaments and