

# HOW DIPLOMATS MAKE WAR

## CHAPTER I

1815

“WHAT, speaking in quite unofficial language, is the net purport and upshot of war? To my own knowledge, for example, there dwell and toil, in the British village of Dumdrudge, usually some five hundred souls. From these, by certain ‘Natural Enemies’ of the French, there are successively selected, during the French war, say thirty able-bodied men: Dumdrudge, at her own expense, has suckled and nursed them; she has, not without difficulty and sorrow, fed them up to manhood, and even trained them to crafts, so that one can weave, another build, another hammer, and the weakest can stand under thirty stone avoirdupois. Nevertheless, amid much weeping and swearing, they are selected; all dressed in red; and shipped away, at the public charges, some two thousand miles, or say only to the south of Spain; and fed there till wanted. And now to that same spot in the south of Spain, are thirty similar French artisans, from a French Dumdrudge, in like manner wending: till at length, after infinite effort, the two parties come into actual juxtaposition; and Thirty stands fronting Thirty, each with a gun in his hand. Straightway the word ‘Fire!’ is given: and they blow the souls out of one another; and in the place of sixty brisk useful craftsmen, the world has sixty dead carcasses, which it must bury, and anew shed tears for. Had these men any quarrel? Busy as the Devil is, not the

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smallest! They lived far enough apart; were the entirest strangers; nay, in so wide a Universe, there was even, unconsciously, by Commerce, some mutual helpfulness between them. How then? Simpleton! their Governors had fallen out: and, instead of shooting one another, had the cunning to make these poor blockheads shoot.—Alas, so it is in Deutschland, and hitherto in all other lands; still as of old, ‘what devilry soever Kings do, the Greeks must pay the piper!’”

—Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*.

Within a year of the centenary of Waterloo, Europe is again engaged in a conflict, in which three Powers are united in awful bonds, to overthrow another military tyrant. Another hundred years of treaties, alliances, understandings, secret engagements, and ententes, leave Europe now in the throes of Gargantuan battles, the like of which Napoleon never in his wildest dreams imagined possible. A century ago, the vast majority of the millions of Europe believed it was absolutely necessary for nations to spend every energy in subduing the French Emperor, because he was a danger to the peace of the world and a menace to democracy. Twenty years of carnage, over fields extending from Moscow to Corunna, were spent in crushing the might of the “hero-monster” who rose at Toulon to be master of Europe. When at last the aim of the allies was accomplished, and the “man of blood” was safely isolated on St. Helena, Europe knew little peace, nor did Britain rest from the labours of the arsenal. The nations of Europe did not disband their armies. They did not beat their swords into ploughshares, nor did they decide that battleships would be required no more.

All wars we are told are fought in the interest of the people. It is their land, their nation, their homes, that are at stake. It is their pride, their honour, their patriotism, that are called upon by recruiting statesmen when a diplomatic squabble is to be settled by force of arms. The same appeals were broadly made one hundred years ago that are made to-day. But what do the people, the workers, get in return for all the vast sacrifices they make? The economic, industrial, and financial condition of England, for over a generation after the Second Treaty of Paris, was not a whit less miserable than when her people suffered from the ravages of Napoleonic wars. National distress and widespread disaffection brought agitation and revolt. Riots in the large towns, and rick-burnings in the agricultural districts, were every-day occurrences. For seventeen years artisans and labourers suffered terrible privations. Parliament gave little or no heed to the lamentations of the people who had supplied the armies for Wellington and had made a thousand sacrifices to crush the militarism of Napoleon. After the downfall of military France, diplomacy secured for a time the privileges of some small nations, but Parliament did not secure the rights of those men who had directly and indirectly helped to conquer the man who, no matter what he thought of national rights, had a better conception of individual rights than British statesmen of the time. Parliament was indeed more concerned in those days in transporting to Van Diemen's Land men who had the courage to ask the nation's representatives to observe the first duty of a Parliament: to grant economic, political, and religious rights to all men. National honour, pride,

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and patriotism did not run to that. The rights of individuals could wait, but the privileges of nations were urgent affairs.

The aftermath was enough to satisfy the most war-loving patriot. Over £530,000,000 were added to the National debt. The honour and glory of an all-conquering nation filled the empty stomachs of the people, who knew they were at last safe from the atrocities of the Corsican terror. Carping critics, ignorant, no doubt, of Britain's superb achievements on land and sea, said that corn at eighty shillings a quarter was a poor return for all the people had done to save Europe from the mailed fist of Napoleon. But, it was ever thus. There have been unpatriotic critics in all ages. It may be presumed that after Agincourt some stay-at-home grumbled about the net result of Henry's campaigns. In extenuation it might be said that a short-sighted people may not expect to see the political significance of the work of kings and diplomatists. Patience, a virtue carried to excess by the people of warring nations, is required to an almost unwarrantable degree if one generation is to appreciate the full diplomatic glory the next one will enjoy. Still, peace is not consummated when war on foreign fields is transferred to the villages and towns of one's own country. And even when all the military nations of the earth stand at ease,—not only indulge in an armed peace but disarm altogether,—the people will suffer without cessation all the horrors of economic and industrial war.

But this war is different from any other that has been waged. We are told it is a "holy" war; some say it is a "spiritual" war; there seems to be no

doubt in the minds of most journalists that it is a "just" war. The end of it is to be a democratic millennium. No one is to be left out of the apotheosis of the nations. Russia will be the freest land on earth; Pole and Jew, Finn and Slav, will all unite in a liberty which, in the press, already touches the confines of licence. No more Balkan troubles, no more aggrandizement, no more envy, greed, or bullying. Disarmament is only one of the blessings which will come to the race of man, after the Kaiser is shut up on the Island of Juan Fernandez, or some other pacific spot.

It is a pity Nietzsche died before he completed his *Transvaluation of All Values*. When the bureaucrats of Prussia and Russia regard the interests of all Germans and Russians as a first charge on the departments, then we shall not know what to do with many volumes that now occupy so much space on our book-shelves. New values will be necessary when the churches cry, "We have no work to do." And when war is known no more the woes of the armament ring will call for a system of new values beyond the inventive powers of the sanest superman that ever lived. But what will the heathen think of it all? A real Christendom in the place of a sham Christendom will revolutionize everything that mortal man can think of.

Unfortunately history, that rude awakener from such dreams, jeers at all the fine prognostications of the journalists and statesmen of to-day, and makes us pause while we ponder the question: "Will men, much less Governments, change so quickly?" The noble aspirations of men writing under the strain of a great war are not always warranted unshrink-

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able. Written in the heat of wartime they suffer when the chill of peace sets in. Still, a touch of Pharisaism is a virtue at a time like this, for it makes us forget our vices.

Now that the public is reading the works of authors whose names it never heard of before, it is difficult for a politician who does not see eye to eye with the present Government to say anything profound. The simple middle-class household that was content last spring with the *Daily Mail*, or the *Daily News*, at breakfast, will now take nothing less than copious extracts from Treitschke or Sybel. Since Mr. Archer discovered *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, no afternoon tea is complete without a discussion on *A Genealogy of Morals*. Sociology, Carson, and suffragettes are no longer subjects of interest now that Bernhardi and Beyerlein are household authors. No war was ever the means of discovering so much literature as this. Everybody is so learned that a person of limited knowledge must perforce sit mute in a club, in a restaurant, in a railway train, or in a bus, while some stranger who has read the *Times* expounds the philosophy of some German whose name he cannot pronounce.

But Germany has had no monopoly of Treitschkes and Bernhardis, not any more than Britain has had a monopoly of Cremers and Carnegies. The sentiments of Bernhardi were expressed in many a home in Britain long before *Germany and the Next War* was published. The notion that wars are necessary for the development of the race is not new; and years before Kipling tickled the souls of British Jingoese, a large section of the people of Britain worshipped the god of battles. The wife of an archbishop bap-

tized a dreadnaught not so long ago. During the Boer War, when Britain was busy attending to the "rights" of small nations in South Africa, ministers of the gospel gave the Prince of Peace the cold shoulder. The most popular pictures on the walls of church schools were copies of Maclise's *Battle of Waterloo*, and *Battle of Trafalgar*. Church armies and juvenile regiments of various kinds have been fostered by the clergy; and "leaders of thought," and soldiers, and war office organizers, have joined societies founded for the propaganda of peace,— so that the useful doctrine, "the best way to keep the peace is to be prepared for war," should not be lost sight of altogether. Scarcely one society for the propaganda of useful knowledge has escaped its Jingo. The Psychical Society had a prominent member in the man who led the Jingo in 1909, when the cry was, "We want eight, and we won't wait." This Jingo made an attempt to show his sympathy with Bergson when in the debate in the House of Commons, on August 3rd, 1914, he said the speeches of the pacifists, who had the courage to express their opinions, were "the very dregs and lees of the debate." Perhaps he was conscious that "We trail behind us, unawares, the whole of our past; but our memory pours into the present only the odd recollection or two that in some way complete our present situation." It is most strange what a revolution British thought has passed through since the beginning of August, 1914. No one seems to remember what the nation suffered from 1908 to the end of July, 1914. No one remembers that the contempt of the militarists of Britain for the advocates of peace at home, was just as deep as that of

Bernhardi for the pacifists of Germany. It seems to be forgotten that the section of the British press given over to the crusade of hatred and greed, pushed their campaigns as unscrupulously as did any Krupp-owned journal in Germany. Forgotten are the armament firms that welcomed half-pay officers to their boards of directors. Forgotten, too, are those leaders of religious bodies who did not hesitate to associate themselves with the business of warfare, and its dividends.

But all these methods of stimulating interest in the destruction of life and property were, we are told, not to be held parallel with similar designs in Germany. Not by any means. Even comparison is not to be tolerated for a moment. For the Germans have a war-lord who is absolute; a melodramatic villain, jealous of Britain's might. Besides, our war-like preparations were not made for the purpose of aggrandizement; our objects were pacific, our intentions laudable. Defence, not defiance, was our motto. Nothing could be clearer. We had as much territory as any one but a Kaiser could wish for, and all we asked of other nations was to let us alone in the enjoyment of our vast empire. Britain had only one desire, and that was to keep what she had got. Germany, on the other hand, had a strictly limited area for expansion, because she came rather late into the game of pushing afield. Her ambitions were behind the times. Still, though it was unfortunate for her colonial policy, it was but natural, all the same, that she should want to get from us what we took from others. Neither Machiavelli nor Plato understood the British position. "Might is Right,"—up to a point. When



an empire is established nowadays nothing can be right that questions its fundamental notion, that God sanctioned its making. "Might is Right," ceased to have any virtue as a doctrine, once the British Empire was formed. Plato's notion that Justice is the end for which a state exists, is classical; in modern days, no such Utopian idea can exist.

When the Kaiser was studying the law of nations, Bismarck should have taught him those two useful maxims (which every monarch should in future memorize): "First come, first served," and "Possession is nine points of the law." It is true Napoleon did not always let those useful precepts guide him; but it must be remembered that a century has passed since his methods of laying the basis of an empire upset so many Europeans. Besides, Napoleon was a mere amateur at making war, and waging war. His Government never voted £52,000,000 in a single year for naval purposes. In these days a boy scout could tell him things about explosives and submarines that would make his hair stand on end; so far has science carried us onward and progress left the victor of Jena behind. Perhaps the writers of books on Napoleon do not know how harmful their works are in giving false notions of what can be accomplished by studying strategy and empire-making; the monarchs and generals that have been led astray in this respect are legion. Even so, it is not to be inferred that this war would not have taken place if the Kaiser had not taken to reading books on Napoleon. The Emperor of Germany may, however, sometimes console himself with the thought, that Britain one hundred years ago said of Napoleon what she now says of the Kaiser,

and that Napoleon, long dead, has somehow lived it all down.

Nevertheless, our political leaders and newspaper editors tell us we are fighting in the interest of the people. That is what the Kaiser is telling the German. The Czar is telling the same story to the Russian. And the French Government no doubt assures the disciples of Sorel that the carnage is for the benefit of the people. It is a great time for democracy,—surely never so many statesmen and diplomatists talked so affectionately of it before. One editor told us that the Triple Entente is no alliance formed for the purpose of keeping their peoples in subjection. Rather a nasty slap at the Monarchical League!—still, it is just as well we should know the truth about the Triple Entente. Another editor, eager to set his readers right as to why we are fighting, said, “Austria and Germany must be thrashed because the principles of democracy must be maintained by Britain, whose duty it has always been to keep open the road of progress.” All seem to be agreed the principles of democracy are at stake. No country thinks of putting these principles into practice, but somehow they seem to be worth fighting for. And the fight might cost twice as much as was spent on beating Napoleon, ten times as many lives might be sacrificed as the nations lost during the whole of Napoleon’s campaigns, and one hundred times as many wounded and crippled, and then in the end, the people find themselves economically, industrially, and financially, worse off than they were in 1830; no matter, the Kaiser must be crushed, for he is a menace to peace and a danger

to the democracies of Europe. One hundred years ago, the *London News* told its readers that:

“The situation of this country at the *successful* close of a long war is singular, and worthy of observation. It is a fact that peace, instead of having brought us security, retrenchment, relief from burthens, or extended commerce, to enable us to bear them, has left us all the expenses of war, without gaining to us the friendship of the very Powers for whom we undertook it. Of all the countries, that one against which we fought has come out of the contest with the least harm; and that which set all the rest in motion has suffered in the highest degree.”

That was the way wars were conducted in the days of Palmerston and Canning; and no one can say the men of 1814 were 'prentice hands at diplomacy or war.

There is, however, one thing certain about this war; and that is, it cannot go on for ever. All particular wars have an end; but there has so far been no end to the power that makes wars. When the might of Britain in 1815 put an end to the military achievements of the “monster,” who poor English villagers believed made a daily meal of boiled babies with brain sauce, it did not alter one tittle of the real dangers to peace. Kings, and courts, and diplomatists flourished just as strongly in the nineteenth century as they did in the eighteenth. The god of battles was still worshipped by huge congregations; and the god was busy enough finding new fields for military operations years before Victoria was crowned. His activities roamed over enormous areas: there were wars in Burma, Man-

chester, Algiers; the Triple Entente destroyed the Turkish and Egyptian fleets at Navarino; there were revolutions in Spain, Portugal, a second revolution in France, and Belgium revolted from the Netherlands; the kingdom of Poland was abolished, and all that remained of its territory was swallowed up by Russia. In Britain there were riots, plots to murder the King's Ministers; and Parliament was busy for a number of years passing legislation which restricted the freedom of the people. In 1832, the victor of Waterloo was obliged to barricade his house against the fury of a London mob. Seventeen years after his triumph over Napoleon, when he saved Europe, and showered blessings upon the democracies extending from the Urals to Bantry Bay, it was ungenerous, to say the least, that Londoners, of all citizens, should be guilty of inflicting such indignities on the Iron Duke, merely because he was opposed to a Reform Bill.

The diplomatic machine, stronger by far than any military organization, did its work night and day in the Chancelleries of Europe, no matter who was Foreign Minister. Castlereagh, Canning, or Goderich, the figure-head could do little to change the fixed methods of the permanent officials. Canning might be more liberal-minded than Castlereagh, but Canning could not affect the policies of all the embassies, nor inculcate radical ideas in all the officials at the Foreign Office. The machine was against change, for the whole system of parasitism had its roots firmly embedded in diplomacy. It was a social growth which extended its privileges to one class. It was beyond the efforts of any Foreign Minister to uproot the Upas tree of traditional diplomacy;

the Minister was here to-day and gone to-morrow; diplomacy remained.

There is only one way to bring about a change. Only the people, the people of the leading nations, acting in concert, can perform that formidable task. The people of England have made great efforts to bring about a change in education, in the franchise, in taxation, and in many other things, but they have never attacked the diplomatic machine. The reason is because the people of England and of Europe have not yet connected diplomacy with the horrors of war. Diplomacy carries on its work in secret; it is removed from the notice of the general public. Moreover, an utterly false idea has crept into the minds of people that the term diplomacy is synonymous with peace. When a too curious person at a political meeting has put a question on foreign affairs, consternation has struck the audience. How should any one be so mad as to question the virtue of our diplomacy? Besides, foreign policy is something too complicated for the understanding of any one living in a house assessed at less than £100. Thus the machinations of diplomats seldom reach the mind of the vast majority of the electors. Secrecy being essential to the existence of the Foreign Office, it is not surprising that the public takes so little interest in its work. Even in an assembly reputed so free as the British House of Commons, its members, when they question the Minister for Foreign Affairs, are often silenced by the reply, that "it would not be to the public interest to give the information." Secrecy encircles a Foreign Secretary with mysterious walls. His work, like the mole's, is subterranean. This is not always his fault; the

best Foreign Secretary must be a victim of the system, and what he does must be accepted by an electorate,— ignorant in these affairs,— as labours performed in the public interest.

It is a pity so many do not know all the wonderful schemes carried out by a vigilant Foreign Office for their individual well-being. How few know that there is a net-work of agents all over the world, watching and waiting for opportunities to add another sandy acre to the area of the empire; frustrating the attempts of alien agents to take that acre from us; making friendships to preserve the balance of power in Uganda or Tibet; allotting territory in Africa and Asia, so that the natives will not quarrel among themselves for more land than is good for them. Think of the value of the work of these agents, helping concessionaires to stir the lazy natives into labours only known in Christian countries! It is a shame the electors cannot picture these agents, carrying the torch of Liberty in one hand, and the bandage from the eyes of Justice in the other; undertaking all the irksome business of painting red dots on the map of the world, for the glory and the preservation of the British Empire,— when they are not engaged in countries where dreams of colonization are governed by the size of the nation's navy. It is so good for the British people to have a department occupied from one year's end to another in seeing that the slum-dwellers of our great cities, towns, and villages, have a place in the sun; and that the missionaries we do not need at home shall not lose their lives abroad. The public learns slowly; and nothing is heeded so little as the lesson of the marvellous "utilities" of diplomacy.