

AFRICA AND THE GERMAN PLAN

By John Buchan

PROFESSOR ERNST HAECKEL, who describes himself for the purpose as a "free-thinking Monist," has been adding to the gaiety of nations by discoursing in an American magazine on Germany's future plans. We have not hitherto associated Professor Haeckel with high politics, but in these hard times all the *gelehrten* have been mobilised and the venerable author of "*Welträthsel*" with the rest. He explains that Germany needs an empire, not like England for lust of gold, or like France for vain glory, or like Italy for megalomania, or like Russia because of sheer barbarous greed, but because she is overcrowded at home and wants a dumping ground for her surplus population. Africa is going to be a substantial part of this empire; the Congo especially, which is to come to Germany as a consequence of the espousal of Belgium. The whole of Central Africa from sea to sea will be German, while the Cape will be restored to Holland, and Egypt to the Turk, and perfidious Britain will depart from the continent altogether.

Professor Haeckel is not to be taken seriously, except in so far as he gives expression to popular opinion in his own land. At this moment there is but one German colony in Africa. Togoland fell in the first month of the war; a year ago General Botha secured the surrender of South-West Africa; two months ago the last German resistance died in the Cameroons. Only German East Africa still stands, ringed round with enemies, and General Smuts' mobile columns are already pressing the defence southward upon the main railway. But the ultimate fate of Germany's overseas possessions depends upon the decision of the struggle in the main theatres, and that decision is not yet. It is too soon for any of the combatants to count spoils. But it is worth while to remind ourselves of the purpose for which Germany went to Africa and the precise views she entertained with respect to that continent. In striking at German Africa the Allies are not attacking irrelevant and half-forgotten dependencies, but an integral part of the German scheme of world-empire.

The Origin of German Africa

Other colonial empires have come about by accident and the slow process of time, "growing as the trees grow while man sleeps"; but Germany's was the outcome of a sudden ambition developing into a methodical plan. The oldest of her African possessions has a history of less than fifty years. After the defeat of France in 1870 and the industrial development which followed, she aspired to all the appurtenances of a great nation. She saw France and Britain with colonies, and she desired quite naturally to have some of her own. Her population was growing and she wished an outlet for emigration under her own flag. She was in the throes of a new industrialism, and she sought her own producing grounds for raw materials. Besides, national glory is always measured to some extent in terms of territory, and she wished more of the map of the world to be the German colour. She was of the opinion of Captain John Smith that "the greatest honour that ever belonged to the greatest monarchs was to enlarge their dominions and erect commonwealths." Her publicists, List and Friedel and Treitschke, pointed out that trade followed the flag, and Bismarck, playing on Europe as on a stringed instrument, saw in overseas adventures a chance for securing fresh assets to bargain with in the European game. German colonisation was a reasoned policy, not the haphazard work of individuals which gradually merges into a national purpose. And, like all reasoned policies, in its first stages it marched fast.

The way had been prepared for her in Africa by many path-finders. The history of Africa in the last century is full of German names, missionaries, explorers and scientists, who must rank high in the record of exploration. Such were Kolbe and Lichtenstein, Mohr and Mauch in South Africa; in West and Northern Africa Hornemann and Barth, Ziegler and Schweinfurth, Rohlf and Nachtigal; in East and Central Africa, Gutzkow, F. F.

and von Wissmann. At first she found her path made easy, for Britain was friendly and unsuspecting. The few men at home who knew anything about the subject were thinking only of the slave trade and welcomed a European collaborator in its suppression. Mr. Gladstone in the House of Commons publicly thanked God for the advent of Germany to assist "in the execution of the great purposes of Providence for the advantage of mankind."

The year 1884 saw the foundation of German Damaraland, of German Togoland, and of German Cameroons. That same year the Berlin Conference regularised her acquisitions, and six years later the Caprivi Agreement settled the borders of German East Africa. By 1890 German Africa existed practically in its present form, and during the Moroccan troubles of 1911 it was increased by a strip of French Congo. She had obtained territory nearly five times the size of Germany in Europe, much of it of great potential richness. And she had succeeded in building a fence across the British road from the Zambesi to the North.

Germany's Colonial Methods

Having got her colonies, Germany proceeded to handle them vigorously after her own fashion. She had no notion of live and let live with the native populations. The hapless black was dragooned under the system of government which obtained on the banks of the Spree. In the words of Dr. Moritz Bonn, who may rank as one of the ablest students of German colonial affairs, she "solved the native problem by smashing tribal life and creating a scarcity of labour." She spent money like water and her colonial deficits grew, but she got value for her outlay. The roads and railways in the Cameroons, in Togoland, and in German East Africa were models of tropical engineering.

Settlers did not appear in any large numbers, for the good reason that their life was made too difficult by an ever-present bureaucracy. The colonist of whatever nationality must be given a fair latitude or he will never

get his roots down into the soil. The result was that German settlers used to trek across the border into British territory, finding their country's hand too heavy under an equatorial sun. The truth was that Germany did not really want settlers. In spite of Professor Haeckel she had no great surplus population to export, for in late years her tide of emigration had slackened. What she desired was producing grounds for raw material under her own flag, and she was in a fair way to get them. Her most successful colony, German East Africa, was a planter's country, with huge agricultural estates, like the old Portuguese *prazos*. Producing grounds, military outposts and observation stations—this was the future she designed for her oversea possessions.

Now, colonisation is something more than a chain of plantations and factories, and it is much more than a string of military garrisons. It involves *settlement*—the adoption by emigrants of the new land as their home, the administration of that new land with a view to its own future and not with regard only to the ambitions of the Motherland. Mere exploitation is not colonisation, as the Dutch and the Portuguese found. The inhabitants must get their roots down, must acquire a local patriotism as well as a patriotism of origin. The duty to the land itself must be recognised, and not less the duty to the older masters who continue to live side by side with the new. True colonisation is a slow business, an organic growth rather than a mechanical construction. Such are the British colonies, both in the tropical and temperate zones; such are those of France, whose sons have shown in North Africa a very special aptitude for handling native races and a true devotion to their adopted land. Colonisation is a game which has certain rules, and if these rules are broken it cannot succeed. The German possessions have never been true colonies. Successive waves of colonial enthusiasm have overflowed Germany; missionaries like Herr Dernburg have been despatched

neglected. Garrisons and plantations have been created, but not daughter states; and garrisons and plantations are not destined to endure, for they are never deep enough in the soil.

Further, the German colonies, being what they were, were a constant menace to their neighbours. If one man is digging trenches to drain his farm, and another digs to make the foundations of a fort, there is nothing in common between the two and no possibility of harmonious neighbourship. All Germany's activities have in late years been given a military purpose, and competition in the old fair sense was impossible. The State used its credit to build up great industries and establish shipping lines, and often money was spent lavishly from which there could be no purely economic return. All this was legitimate enough, but it naturally gave other colonising powers matter for thought. Just as in private business the British and French merchant felt that the German was not competing with him on fair terms, since he had his Government behind him, so in colonisation it was perceived that Germany did not run for the proper stakes or play the game by the recognised rules.

The Military Purpose

The truth is that the genuine colonising impulse which existed in Germany about 1880 had utterly disappeared during the past decade. The German colonies had become part of the Pan-Germanist propaganda, like the Baghdad Railway or the fortress of Tsing-Tau. They represented one side of the plan of expansion, as the control of Mesopotamia represented the other. There was this difference between the two, that while the extension south-eastward of the Central European Powers might be possible by military strength only, the maintenance of armed colonies demanded a navy. Again and again the enthusiasts of

the Navy League used the colonial argument to support their pleas; Germany in her effort after *Weltmacht* must have her oversea garrisons and an omnipotent navy was needed as a link between them. Given that navy, their strategic value would have been great. German East Africa was on the southern flank of the road to India as Mesopotamia was on the northern. With German influence on both sides of the great waterway to the East, the most vital interests of Britain would have been menaced. The *Drang nach Osten* was largely and subtly conceived.

Professor Haeckel looks forward to the restoration of the German colonies in Africa and their vast aggrandisement. His dream can only come true if the Allies are beaten to the ground. If the Allies win there can be no question of handing back African territory. It is not only that our own African colonies would strenuously oppose it; the thing is forbidden by Imperial strategy, by our knowledge of what Germany aimed at, and of the purpose which she destined her colonies to serve.

She has never shown the colonising spirit. As there is an honourable camaraderie among pioneers in wild countries, so there is a certain freemasonry among those Powers which have experimented in colonisation. Their object is to make a garden of the desert, to create a new land which, while owing allegiance to the Motherland, shall yet be free to follow its own natural development and shall be administered for its own advantage. If a tropical colony, it owes duties to the soil and the former inhabitants; if a white man's land, it seeks settlement and the advent of a new nation. But a colony which is used as an armed post and as a point of vantage in some great strategical game, is outside this comity. It is eternally a spy, an alien, and a potential disturber of the peace. During its life it will be regarded with just suspicion, and its end will be unlamented.

The Man and the Machine

By G. K. Chesterton

IT is obvious that war will probably punish the particular neglects of peace; and England in this war has suffered sharply from the principal neglect in English education. I mean the almost complete neglect of history, even of English history. But even our ignorance of the historic would have been less disastrous if it had not been overweighted with two affectations of cheap culture; the prehistoric and what I may call the post-historic.

Our philosophers in fact and fiction were almost entirely occupied with a remote past and a remote future. In other words, they were exclusively concentrated on what everybody has forgotten or on what nobody can foresee. For instance, the merest magazine-writer could tell us that all men were once cannibals; which is extremely doubtful. Or he might very probably tell us that all men will eventually be vegetarians; which is even more doubtful. But if you asked such a man so cogent and fundamental a question as whether the food of the English populace has been really cheaper in mediæval or modern times, you would find that he had not looked even for the materials of a decision. Yet it is hardly an exaggeration to say that this involves the whole question of whether the chief change in our history has been for the better or the worse. To neglect such real things, and live in remote things, is to breathe the air of falsehood and prepare the penalties of mere comfort. Our tales about the past were told at random, in the confidence that deadmen tell no tales. And in our tales about the future we wallowed in prophecies, which we knew we should not live to see falsified.

annexing the whole of the earth and the other the whole of the sea. Other groups and institutions, such trifles as the Roman Empire, the French Revolution, the melting-pot of America and what can only be called the continent of Russia—these things did not exist at all, except as things to be annexed. It is legitimate, I think, to be proud of having really artistic dreams; and it has not disadvantages, except that in order to dream we must sleep. And we awoke when the knife was at our throat. When we sought for our brother we saw the face of a stranger, and looked into the eyes of a savage.

The truth is that no two men, neither of them literally black or literally naked, could well be more different than the two types which have come to stand for England and for Germany. It is the islander against the inlander, the amateur against the specialist, the eulogist of a liberty driven into laxity against the eulogist of a discipline against the chief of a ruined Roman province against the heir of a half-baked and hardly baptised tribe, the wanderer whose winnings have all been at the ends of the earth against the plodder who has laid field to field, and taken his provinces from his nearest neighbours. The perception of this contrast is no mere recoil due to the war; it has long been apparent to those who preferred European history to Teuton mythology. Its solidity can be proved by the fact that the contrast holds in the weaknesses as in the merits of England.

No two types are more different than the shame-faced snob and the entirely shameless slave. It is true that too many English citizens merely try to be gentle-