

AMBITION.

By REV. R. SCOTT, D.D.

THERE are three main causes of the present war. The first and fundamental one is the desire to check the growth of democratic feeling. The German Government hoped that by uniting the masses with the ruling classes in what they described both as a war of defence and as a war of conquest, they would check the socialist movements and turn into new directions the thoughts and aims of the people. They expected also to be able to dictate to other countries in regard to the restriction of popular power. The second cause lies in the restless activity of a dark international organization which works mainly in underground channels and has hoped since the war of 1870-71 to make the German Empire the instrument of the recovery of lost privileges and of the obtaining of new world-wide opportunities. The third, and for the present the most active cause, is summed up in the word *ambition*. This principle is incarnated in the Imperial family, but it has been developed amongst the people at large by various means. The Germans are by nature envious and delight in malignant intrigue. They have the memory of the mediæval empire when they imagined themselves the successors and continuators of the ancient Roman Empire; they have been taught in school-books perverted history and the duty of hate; and they have been assured by thousands of apostate clergymen that they are the chosen people of God to rule or to exterminate. Hence a sort of national anthem is *Deutschland über alles*; and the check received in the West has added to their sacred treasury the *Hymn of Hate*.

Ambition is more often seen in individuals than in nations. But it seems to be a law of nature that whatever has attained to a definite type in the sphere of individuals is capable also of acquiring temporary dominance over extensive communities. And not only so, but feelings or desires of the most subordinate or obscure character do, in our whirligig of life, come occasionally to the top and assume a temporary predominance. About a year ago a philosophic statesman remarked that Germany presented the very extraordinary phenomenon of a whole nation gone mad. The brutality of the rulers, the blood thirstiness of the women, the general exultation in horrors, were things that to an insular people seemed new. One that had formerly judged the people favourably could give now no explanation of the transformation except the hypothesis of sudden insanity. But the diagnosis was wrong. It is true that there is moral insanity scarcely distinguishable from crime; but in the German outburst there was skilful method, the outcome of forty years of preparation. The simple and true diagnosis is ambition brought to a head and bursting forth simultaneously from the minds of millions.

Ambition is the supreme development of egotism, exhibiting a preternatural activity in ways and movements that subserve the self with an entire

indifference to the wrongs, of crime or cruelty, inflicted on whatever may happen to lie in its path. The ancients, who were familiar with the ways of the oppressor, regarded Pride as the supreme evil, the essence of the Satanic character; but more truly our poet Milton assigned the pre-eminence to the more active, less passive, quality when he made his Satan say: "Till pride and, worse, ambition threw me down." Our even greater master of life, Shakespeare, who in thirty or forty plays portrayed the whole of it, has given us two full-length sketches of the ambitious man in *Richard III* and *Macbeth*. Of these the latter, drawn in the fulness of the poet's power, is the greater were it only that it shows the hero as brave, generous and capable of nobility until the poison entered his soul and transformed his being. Let us recall a few points in the Shakespearean portrait. Macbeth long hesitating but strongly spurred by his wife (as the Kaiser by the scarlet figure) resolves on murder. They agree to put the blame on the murdered King's sons and they kill his grooms as the plausible agents, and to prevent their evidence from being given. So in this war it was resolved to destroy Serbia, and the Central Governments put the blame on the Government and people of Serbia of the crime (the murder of the Archduke) which they themselves designed and secured, and which one of their prime ministers took the lead in carrying into effect. The initial methods are those of treachery and unlimited falsehood. The plunge into crime is followed by sleepless distrust, and soon the usurper murders the foremost subject, Banquo, because he "feared his royalty of nature." This intensifies the troubles, and Macbeth feels himself in a stream of blood which he has to wade through to get to the other side. The foremost nobleman is now Macduff who succeeds in escaping to England, so that Macbeth vows there will be no more delays, the "firstlings of his mind will be the firstlings of his hand"; whereupon he murders the wife, the children and the relatives of the dreaded thane. A few sentences picture the condition into which the country is brought. Rosse describes the universal uneasiness:

But cruel are the times, when we are traitors,
And do not know ourselves; when we hold rumour
From what we fear, yet know not what we fear,
But float upon a wild and violent sea.

The progress of tyranny and suppression is such that,

Each new morn,
New widows howl, new orphans cry; new sorrows
Strike heaven on the face, that it resounds
As if it felt with Scotland, and yell'd out
Like syllable of dolour

And Macbeth's own character has so developed that it is said he is,

Bloody,
Luxurious, avaricious, false, deceitful,
Sudden, malicious, smacking of every sin
That has a name.

Such is ambition in its effects on men and nations. Evil becomes the ruling principle instead of good, and every sacred cause is disregarded. Vice and greed

and cruelty grow apace. But the result is failure. Lady Macbeth reveals herself in her somnambulism and at last dies by her own hand. The husband is unmoved even by this, but sinks deeper and deeper into a world-weariness from which he emerges, galvanized for a moment by the approach of the forces of retribution, to fight madly and to lose his crown and his head. The Kaiser is, possibly enough, the unhappiest man in Europe to-day. He has destroyed the smaller peoples, has wasted Belgium and devastated Poland and desolated Serbia. But his greater designs have miscarried. France has not yet been "bled white" nor has her capital been razed. The manufacturing cities of England still stand, and the island has not become a German colony. Russia has not yet succumbed to "my destructive sword." The Kaiser is neither Admiral of the Atlantic nor Emperor of the East. On the contrary he is a conscious and convicted criminal, in a superlative degree. Would that he had only lived to "point a moral"! He has filled the earth with sorrow and the skies with horror. He has broken the forces of civilization and made the churches of his land temples of defilement. For himself and for his race he has won nothing,—except a name that will be accursed for the next ten thousand years.

"I charge thee, fling away Ambition.

By that sin fell the angels. How can man, then,

The image of his maker, hope to win by't?"

MEDICAL CONFERENCE AT DELHI.

By MISS MACKENZIE.

THE Northern and Eastern division of the Association of Medical Women of India held their Annual Conference at Delhi on January 4th to 6th 1916. The meetings were held in one of the halls of the new Lady Hardinge Medical College, and many of the members were accommodated in one of the Students' hostels.

Two important subjects discussed during these meetings were Tuberculosis and the Indigenous Dhari. Among the visitors present were Dr. Lankester who is appointed by Government to conduct the tuberculosis research, and Miss Graham and Miss Griffin. These ladies are two nurses engaged under the Government Research Fund in enquiring into the causes of infantile mortality, and preventible diseases amongst women; they are also engaged in training and supervising the indigenous dharies.

Dr. Lankester read an interesting and most instructive paper on Tuberculosis. To give a résumé:—Dr. Lankester remarked how in India tuberculosis dominated other diseases, and that anti-tuberculosis workers might almost be regarded as social reformers, as domestic and social reform were important measures in their campaign. Referring to the improvement in