

**GERMAN EAST AFRICA**



A. F. CALVERT'S MILITARY MAP OF GERMAN EAST AFRICA.

*Frontispiece.*

# GERMAN EAST AFRICA

BY

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## PREFACE.

**T**HE creation of a German colony in East Africa was the conception of a private individual, and he embarked upon the enterprise with a privately subscribed capital of less than £10,000. The scheme was submitted to Prince Bismarck, who not only refused his support, but went out of his way to announce that the State would not be responsible for the life of the private individual or for the safety of any property he might acquire on the African mainland opposite the Island of Zanzibar. Why should the Imperial Chancellor, who was responsible for the seizure of South-West Africa, the Cameroons and Togoland, have been so scrupulously careful to discountenance any extension of Germany's African Empire on the East Coast? It may be that he had no faith in Dr. Carl Peters, and anticipated the failure of his mission, or he may have felt that it was too soon to reveal his designs regarding a region in which British influence was paramount. Whichever explanation may be correct, Bismarck washed his hands of the intrepid adventurer and his affairs, and called Europe to witness the correctness of his attitude. He unbent somewhat towards Dr. Peters when he returned to Berlin in 1885 with a sheaf of treaties, which caused him to be recognised as the lessor of a territory as large as Southern Germany, and the Imperial Charter which was conferred upon his German East Africa Company shortly afterwards.

bore the signature of Bismarck under that of the Emperor.

Having thus admitted the establishment of German interests in the Zanzibari region, the Chancellor took steps to have them adequately protected, and when the Sultan of Zanzibar protested against the depletion of his possessions on the mainland, a German squadron made a demonstration in force in the harbour of Dar-es-Salaam, and the British Consulate received instructions to co-operate with the German Consul-General in safeguarding German interests. It is no part of my purpose to attempt to explain the attitude or the action of the English Colonial Office in the matter of German aggression in this part of the world. Whether the Premier and the Colonial Secretary were convinced of Germany's civilising power and the honesty of her intentions, and really welcomed her benevolent intrusion into this slave-trading region, or whether the "man of blood and iron" was a veritable bogey of whom English statesmen stood in awe in the early 'eighties, it is certain that they threw their weight into the scales against the Sultan of Zanzibar, and with this assistance and the presence of the German squadron the German East Africa Company were able to establish the claims put forward under the illegally obtained treaties. The details as to the extent of the territory ceded by the local chiefs, who had carried out negotiations with Dr. Peters without reference to the overlordship of the Sultan, had to be adjusted, and again Britain offered to assist in the capacity of

arbitrator. The magnanimity with which she discharged that duty is revealed by the fact that in an inexplicable splurge of hysterical generosity—a generosity that is only exercised when dealing with another person's possessions—she confirmed the German East Africa Company's rights to the whole of the rich Kilimanjaro region, including a concession that had previously been secured by Mr. (now Sir) H. H. Johnston. The Sultan was permitted to retain his island and a six hundred mile strip of coastline on the mainland.

The German Chancellor, what time these events were happening, continued to observe his correct attitude. He revealed no designs of making territorial acquisitions on behalf of the Emperor; he simply extended the protection of the State to private interests acquired by a Chartered Company. Nothing could have been more proper or less aggressive. But in 1887, while Dr. Peters was endeavouring to obtain from the Sultan of Zanzibar a concession for the ports of Dar-es-Salaam and Pangani, together with a lease of the whole coastline, he was suddenly recalled to Berlin. In order that his interests might not be injuriously affected by his absence, the negotiations upon which he was engaged were continued on his Company's behalf by the Government, and the agreement by which the Sultan leased the customs of his kingdom to the German East Africa Company was signed by the German Consul-General in Zanzibar in the following year. The Consular official was still acting as the agent of the Chartered Company,

probably because Bismarck foresaw the trouble that would attend the Company's attempt to enforce the rights obtained under the Sultan's concession. The insurrections of the Arab Valis, who had been masters of the coastal districts in which the Company's officers who did not save themselves by flight were murdered, proved the correctness of the Chancellor's forecast, although the German East Africa Company's officials are strongly suspected of having engineered the revolt. Months of massacres followed, the situation was palpably beyond the control of the Company, and the aid of the Government was invoked to suppress the spreading insurrection.

In 1899 Commissioner von Wissmann was sent out to raise a force of Zulus and Soudanese, wherewith to pacify the natives. The Reichstag passed a new law purporting to have for its object the suppression of the slave trade in East Africa, and the sum of £100,000, which was voted for the enforcement of the measure, went to finance von Wissmann's campaign. The Commissioner tackled his task with amazing vigour and thoroughness, but, even with money and mercenaries at his command, the revolt would not have been stamped out by the end of the year if Great Britain—always ready to ally herself against the slave traders—had not despatched a squadron to co-operate with the German fleet in establishing a blockade of the Zanzibar coast. Having restored order in the disaffected districts, the German East Africa Company, in 1890, proposed to ratify all agreements covering the territories already acquired,



by the payment of a further sum of £200,000 to the Sultan. The negotiations were conducted by the representatives of the Company, and it was not until the Reichstag passed a credit of £525,000 for the completion of the purchase and the maintenance and development of the new "colony" that England awoke to the fact that a territory with an area of some 364,000 square miles had been made a protectorate of the German Empire.

It may be contended by the defenders and explainers of the Teuton methods of territorial expansion in Africa, that Germany's insuperable difficulty as a colonising power was, as Lord Haldane has lamented, that she came into the field a hundred years too late. When the idea of acquiring oversea dominions fired the cupidity of Prince Bismarck, very little of the unappropriated globe was available for colonisation, but having bluffed, lied and intrigued herself into the recognised possession of over 100,000,000 square miles of African territory, carrying a total native population of nearly 14,000,000 souls, she proceeded to administer it with characteristic forcefulness and assurance. The British ex-Minister for War watched Germany's policy of colonial development with sympathetic interest; he affected to find her studying and applying English methods to the duty she had undertaken; and he contended that "she was penetrating everywhere to the profit of mankind." If the profit of mankind was any part of her intention in Africa, Germany may be entitled to our commiseration, for neither in the west, south-

west, nor the east of the continent, have her aspirations been understood or appreciated by the natives under German rule, or by the white inhabitants of neighbouring provinces. That Germany investigated English methods is true, and if she had applied herself to the study with an unprejudiced and receptive mind, she would have discovered that British colonies are not mere offshoots of the home country, but component parts of the Empire, bound to her and to each other in practical as well as sentimental bonds of allegiance. It would seem that nothing but their own arrogant stupidity and wilful perversity caused the German administrators to misconceive this first principle of successful colonisation. As Sir Francis Piggott has pointed out, we have made no secrets of our methods. German students would have received truthful answers to their inquiries, and they were free to examine the workings of those methods in every quarter of our Empire. Yet, in spite of the welcome we extended to the subjects of the Kaiser, and of the generosity with which we placed at their disposal the experience of centuries of Empire-building in all parts of the world, "they have misunderstood what was so plain, and the hopelessness of the blunder which has resulted from the misunderstanding has been ruthlessly demonstrated by the hard facts as the world knows them to-day."

In spite of the results that had been achieved by English methods down to 1884, the new-born German Colonial Office convinced itself that the British conception of colonisation was utterly wrong, and the

German system was entirely right. Germany instituted a system of Government by professors, and her professors betrayed the nation into a war against freedom, civilisation and humanity. Neitsche and von Treitschke preached the holy gospel of the destruction of the British Empire, and the erection of a Greater Germany upon the ruins. Bernhardi justified the policy on the grounds that "the German nation, from the standpoint of its importance to civilisation, is entitled not only to demand a place in the sun, but to aspire to an adequate share in the sovereignty of the world far beyond the limits of its presence sphere of influence." The one invented the aspiration and the other justified it; it only remained for the late Professor Cramb to explain how feasible it was to put Germany's predatory theories into practice. He had no difficulty in demonstrating to the entire satisfaction of himself, and a nation eager to be convinced, that the English had lost, if we ever possessed them, "the qualities of pride of birth, valour in arms, and creative genius in religion," and were become "a timorous, craven nation, trusting to its fleet." He declared that our failure to govern India was conspicuous, ignoble and complete, that our failure to hold Egypt was inevitable, and that our colonies were shivering with impatience "under the last slight remnant of our yoke."

If German statesmen could accept such representations of the results of all our efforts and sacrifices in the construction and maintenance of our Colonial Empire, they were not more blind than Lord Haldane,

who saw Germany "penetrating everywhere to the profit of mankind," and having these evidences of our incapability and failure before them, they decided to replace our system by a policy of their own. That policy was characterised by the defects of the German temperament; it led from misunderstanding to maladministration, from blunders which were hopeless and incomprehensible, to inevitable disaster. The Colonial Party's official organ in Africa, at the very outset of her African enterprises, declared that "Germany had nothing to learn from England or any other colonising nation, having a method of handling social problems peculiar to the German spirit." Mr. Evan Lewin, in a trenchant article contributed to *The Nineteenth Century*, writes: "Germany has from the first stood for scientific methods in colonisation, and with true German arrogance she has applied fixed rules to flexible problems. Such success as she has had—and in many directions this success must be freely admitted—has been neutralised by certain things that have tended to throw ridicule upon the efforts of her scientists and social reformers to impose, by the aid of the military caste, rigid rules and inflexible regulations upon the natives. The complex military and administrative machinery of the Fatherland has been little suited to the soil of Africa, and the scientific methods of dragooning the natives into a dull comprehension of the meaning of German *Kultur* have cast discredit upon the excellent work that German administrators have performed in other directions.

Germany had indeed much to learn from England, but she was too proud and too imbued with the consciousness of her own superior merit to stoop to Anglo-Saxon levels."

The truth of the foregoing is emphasised, after thirty years of experiment in the settlement of Germany's African colonies, in the pathetic admission, on January 13th, 1914, of Professor Bonn of Munich University: "We are only just now beginning to understand native administration." The belated understanding, which the Professor optimistically claims on behalf of his countrymen, has come too late to be applied to the problem. The sun is setting upon the efforts of Germany as a colonising power. As the High Commissioner for South Africa has declared, Germany really never colonised at all, either in Africa or anywhere else, and, by her disregard of the rights of humanity, her violation of treaties and the brutality of her treatment of natives, she has made it impossible for Germany and Britain to march again, side by side, in the work of colonisation in Africa. In the first place, the Germans have made it plain to the whole world that they have no genius for the responsible task of colonial administration, and in the second place, they will be left with no colonies to administer. When the war is at an end, the territory in Europe that the hordes of the Kaiser and his ally of Austria have overrun will be cleared of the enemy, and Belgium, Poland, Serbia, Roumania, and the northern provinces of France, will be restored to the States from which they have been temporarily

wrested, but the possessions which Germany is losing, or has already lost, in Africa, China and the South Pacific will be lost to her for ever. The egregious Herr Dernburg has assured the world at large that his Imperial master will consent to no terms of peace that do not include the return of all her lost colonies to Germany, and that irrepressible humourist, Dr. Solf, in December, 1914, issued an official statement offering to "cease hostilities which the South African Government forced on Germany, provided that the Union Government also refrains from hostile action against German territory, and evacuates regions already occupied by Union Forces." The German Colonial Secretary further protested that Germany never had any intention of occupying, either permanently or temporarily, the territory of the South African Union.

The Rev. William Greswell wrote an article in *The Fortnightly Review*, over thirty years ago, in which he warned his countrymen that the annexation of South-West Africa by Germany was no sporadic effort, but part of a plan—"a series of ventures and projects thrust forward by keen business men, backed by official support and directed by a master hand. . . . The real value (of South-West Africa) lay in the proximity of the region of the Boer States, disaffected to Great Britain. The land was not taken for *bona fide* colonisation, but only as a *point d'appui*." This warning was ignored by the English public in the early 'eighties, but the activities of the Germans in South-West Africa were all directed

to placing the colony in an offensive and defensive position. Compulsory military service gave the authorities a standing army of ten thousand trained German soldiers, fully equipped with arms, stores and military supplies. This force, it was explained, was a precautionary measure of defence against surprise risings on the part of the unwarlike and unarmed Ovambos, who inhabit a district situated over 1,000 miles from the German military headquarters, but the explanation scarcely tallies with the facts that the headquarters of the army and the arsenal were located at Keetmanshoop, within 150 miles of the Cape Union border, and that the railway lines were strategically planned towards that objective and constructed on what is still called the Cape gauge. For many years past the German military preparation in South-West Africa had been a menace to the people of the neighbouring Dominion, and the abortive insurrections of Maritz and De Wet are further proof of the designs of the German Government. Unfortunately for Germany her professors were in error when they trumpeted their faith in the instability of British rule, and they blundered again when they predicted the disintegration of the Empire in the first clash of international conflict. All their conclusions were based on inefficient observation. If the German system of colonisation is entirely right, why are the Kaiser's subjects in Alsace-Lorraine weeping tears of joy at the prospect of speedy liberation, and why should the Togolandese have welcomed the allied Anglo-French forces with tumultuous

enthusiasm? If the British conception of colonisation is utterly wrong, and our hold upon our dominions is so insecure as to justify the enemy's prognostication of the inevitable dissolution of the Empire, why do we find the white and native races of all our colonies banded together to protect that Empire against the common foe?

Whether the facts revealed by the only answers that can be supplied to such questions as the above have been appreciated or not in the Wilhelmstrasse, the professorial ostrich of Germany, with his head firmly buried in the mire of his own platitudinous verbiage, is officially unacquainted with them. As recently as February of 1915, Professor Meinhof, of the Hamburg Colonial Institute, delivered a lecture on "Our Colonies and the War," in which he declared that these possessions are absolutely necessary to Germany if she is to engage in world trade, and to pursue, unhindered, her activities in missionary enterprise." Professor Meinhof evidently has not taken the trouble to peruse the hundreds of columns of reports of the Reichstag debates which are taken up with tales of fiendish cruelty practised on the natives of Africa by such notorious ruffians in authority as Prince Arenburg, Carl Peters and Chancellor Leist; he has no information concerning the details of the horrors of the Herero war; he is still as convinced as Lord Haldane that Germany's work in Africa is consistently benevolent and beneficial. It was the missionary aspect of colonial expansion which mainly interested the professor, and



the "general observations" to which, for fairly obvious reasons, he confined himself, were mainly concerned with the missionary's task of introducing German *Kultur* into lands hitherto benighted and corrupted by other white nations. "Germany," he said, "conducted its colonial operations in a different spirit from the methods employed by England, and East Africa is proof of the success of the German methods. Germany seeks the solution of colonial questions from a moral, not from a business, point of view, and it is this method of solution which is alone worthy of the German nation."

In the following pages I have not considered it necessary to devote much space to the examination of the missionising efforts of the German administrators. My purpose has rather been to describe, for the benefit of future British settlers, traders and investors in Germany's East African colony, the nature and resources of the territory that General Smuts and his army are acquiring for the Empire, and the lines upon which the German authorities have developed them, in the past thirty years, at a calculated outlay of £50,000,000. Dr. Peters, who, having served his purpose as the cat's paw of the Chancellor, was recalled and disgraced in 1895, was tolerably conservative in his estimate of the value of the territory he had acquired for the Fatherland. "Take it all in all," he wrote, "it is not a colony of the first class. As a whole, it may be described as a good agricultural country." Although fairly well watered, he could not pretend that it was a British India, but compared

with South-West Africa, the Cameroons or Togoland, he declared it to be "one of the most priceless of the colonial pearls in the Imperial Crown."

The territory hitherto known as German East Africa possesses three distinct plantation areas, six chief sea-ports, all having good harbours, two railway systems with a total of a thousand miles of line, and a labour problem that under Teuton administration would never have been solved to the satisfaction alike of the white settlers and the native population. The Germans have transformed the dirty negro villages of Dar-es-Salaam and Tanga into substantial and imposing towns, they have opened up trade routes and established markets in every direction, and they have experimented in almost every branch of plantation and native cultivation. They have made the colony the most important German possession from the point of view of fibre cultivation, and obtained excellent results in the raising of coffee, copra, tobacco, spices, and cereals. In 1912, they had 35,000 acres of rubber plantations, while everywhere the fruits of their industry and enterprise were only beginning to be gathered. In the building of towns, railways, roads, barracks, post, and telegraph stations, the Germans have done admirable work, and have furnished the colony in a thoroughly substantial and typically Teutonic manner. But the labour difficulty was outside the scope of their capacity; the method "peculiar to the German spirit" with which they handled social problems was

powerless to placate or elevate the native mind ; the machinery by which *Kultur* is inculcated broke down under the weight of aboriginal prejudice, suspicion and hatred. At the beginning of the war the solution of the problem seemed as remote as ever, for if the authorities did not attempt to settle it as they did in South-West Africa by "smashing tribal life," they approached it without intuition, sympathy or imagination. Hans Zache may be sincere in his belief that work is provided by the German employers "for the blessing of the negro," but they certainly lack the art that is required to convince the negro of its blessedness or to induce him to receive the provision made for him with becoming thankfulness. Yet if the authorities failed and failed completely, it was not because they hesitated in the application of first-rate German systems to fifth-rate negro races. They tried a method of recruiting native labour through the agency of trained native recruiters ; they appointed Government officials to superintend the relations between employers and employees ; they introduced all sorts of alluring regulations concerning wages, work and length of contracts ; and they established labour markets. But it was doubtful, according to the latest Consular Report, whether any final solution of the numerous difficulties was possible in the near future, and the Administration in 1914 was considering the adoption of the system in force in Togoland, of imposing a head tax upon the natives and compelling them to pay in forced labour. The

German colonisers will be relieved, as the result of the campaign which the British forces are now carrying into their territory, of a large measure of trouble with which they are not constituted to successfully deal, while the native population will be spared the infliction of a protracted course of *Kultur* which they are equally unconstituted to appreciate.

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