

## SIAM AND THE GERMANS

*On the 22nd of July, 1917, Siam declared war upon the Central Powers. Nine enemy merchant vessels with a number of smaller craft, of an aggregate total of 19,000 tons, which had been lying interned since August, 1914, in the river Menam at Bangkok, have been seized by the Siamese Government and will be duly adjudicated upon by the Prize Court which has been constituted. Meanwhile all enemy aliens, men, women and children, to the number of more than 300, have been interned and will shortly be deported.*

**S**UCH was the gist of the brief notice of Siam's entry into the Great War which appeared in the British papers of the time: and most people, having read the item of news with a certain degree of interest, probably dismissed the matter from their minds and devoted themselves once more to their allotted tasks.

But our Empire is world-wide and no country, small or large, can take such a definite step without affecting one or more of the arteries which feed the Empire's heart, and for this reason, without wishing to exaggerate unduly the importance of Siam's act, it would be useful to give some idea of the part that the Germans have played in that country in the domain of politics, commerce and social life, and of the effect that the total withdrawal of Germany's influence will have upon her future dealings with Siam.

It is clear, even from the few wandering hints that Berlin has allowed to escape to the outside world, that the Germans realise fully the significance to them of Siam's declaration of war, which they attribute, of course, to pressure brought to bear by Britain and France: although this is not in any way true, since Siam's action was entirely spontaneous. But the Germans are alive to the fact that one of the few *points d'appui* open to them, which they hoped to utilise in the Far East after the war for the reconstruction of their commercial edifice, has disappeared, possibly never to present itself again.

Siam is a long way from the North Sea, but it is a country deserving of great sympathy from the British people, not only by reason of our commercial ties, but also from a political point of view. Practically the whole of her seaborne trade passes through British hands—southward to Europe through Singapore, the gateway of the Far East, 900 miles away at the foot of the Malay Peninsula, and northward through Hongkong, the great distributor of China's produce and of her requirements, and the half-way house between Japan and Siam.

It will thus be realised to what an extent the import and export trade of Siam can be controlled by Britain during a time of war; and from this fact it may be observed in passing that nowhere else in the world has it been possible, since the war began, to deal

such a proportionately heavy blow to German trade as in Siam. But we will return to this subject later.

There may be some difficulty in realising what the possession of these small insignificant islands of Singapore and Hongkong, occupied and held by British enterprise and foresight, means to us in relation to our trade with the Far East, and what Germany would have given to possess them. Germany's chance has gone, yet one day we may have a rude awakening as to the value set upon them by other nations; but that time is not yet. Since in the past, however, Germany could not possess them, she did the next best thing. Aided by our system of the "open door" and our willingness to share the pie with all who had teeth to bite, she gradually wormed her way into the heart of their economic body until, as in many another British colony, she could fairly say that she was part owner in reality, if not in name. There is no doubt, moreover, that, had her schemes not gone awry, when the time came and when she was able to dictate her terms to a trembling Europe, she meant to own them in name also, for it has been stated on reliable authority that when the Germans were interned in Hongkong soon after war broke out, there was found upon one German resident a document actually appointing him Civil Governor of the colony, and also plans for renaming the streets in German.

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There is an excellent little book, written by one of the liquidators of the German firms in Hongkong and published in the colony. It does not pretend to possess a literary value, but it shows very clearly the methods employed by the German merchants trading there to undermine British trade, and it should be read by all interested in business in the Far East. What strikes one most is the amount of over-trading indulged in, in the hope, no doubt, of establishing a footing; though it is difficult to understand how businesses are to thrive which are carried on, as some appear to have been, year after year at a continual loss. Even if subsidised, the subsidy will not be continued for ever, and when it ceases, the business must surely cease too.

Yet it must not be thought that over-trading was the general custom among the Germans in Hongkong. Much of the business done showed great enterprise and a desire to understand and supply the needs and desires of the native, and the dye industry in China may be cited as an instance in which the Germans captured the trade almost to the exclusion of the British merchant.

One curious point is worth noticing, namely, that the Germans made unusual efforts to appear successful and wealthy, and spent a great deal of money upon the erection of fine villas and upon lavish entertaining.

We know less of the methods which the Germans used in Singapore, since no one has as yet published any information dealing with the subject, but we may take it for granted that the methods employed in Singapore were very much the same as in Hongkong. In any case there is little doubt as to the influence gained by the Germans in the Malay market, or as to the danger to which the colony was exposed by German influence when the Mutiny broke out in the spring of 1915 among the native troops stationed there.

But German influence in Singapore and Hongkong has now happily vanished like an evil dream, never to return—to Hongkong at least, if the views of the good people of that colony prevail.

When, therefore, to the situation of the Germans in Singapore and Hongkong, we add the facts that Japan has been at war with Germany since 1914, and China also broke off relations with the Central Powers some time ago and has since declared war, the reader will be able to gauge more fully the eagerness with which Germany looked at Siam as the one country in the Far East, besides Java and the Philippine Islands (now also closed to our enemies through America's entry into the war), upon which they hoped to gain a footing, both political and commercial, once again. Now Siam is closed to them.

The constitution of Siam is and always has been

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an absolute monarchy, and Treaties have, in modern times, at various dates from 1855 onwards, been entered into with the European Powers for the regulation of affairs between the Siamese Government and the subjects of the various nationalities residing within the kingdom.

Up to 1907 all these Treaties provided for the exercise by each European Power of extra-territorial jurisdiction by means of Consular Courts over its own nationals resident in Siam. But in that year France concluded a Treaty by which she agreed to waive her rights of jurisdiction over her Asiatic subjects, who thus became subject (albeit with guarantees in the shape of European advisers) to Siamese jurisdiction. Britain followed suit in 1909, but in her case waived her rights over Asiatic and European alike, with similar guarantees as in the case of France. Denmark, which has considerable commercial interests in Siam, later on in 1913 likewise gave up her rights of extra-territorial jurisdiction.

Germany, however, refused to follow the lead set by France and Britain and up to the last maintained her Consular Courts for the trial of cases in which her nationals were involved. Also, of course, no laws or regulations passed by the Siamese Government and agreed to by those of Britain and France were binding on German subjects in Siam unless they had been accepted by the German Government.

It might be considered, then, that the British have been since 1909 at a disadvantage politically in Siam as compared with the Germans. We do not think, however, that such has actually proved to be the case, or that the Germans have reaped any benefit at the expense of the British.

As in Japan many years ago, when she was only emerging from mediævalism, so in Siam, which is still in an early but progressing stage of its development, and can as yet give little scope for technical or administrative education, recourse has been had during the past thirty years to European advisers and assistants in the various Government Departments, to guide the administration into proper channels and give the younger Siamese the benefit of the example of a high moral standard. These adviserships have been offered, as occasion arose, to subjects of those nationalities which seemed most suited for the posts, and naturally a certain degree of rivalry has arisen among the different Powers to obtain as many of these posts as they could for their own nationals.

The rivalry has, however, been surprisingly small and matters have worked very smoothly. Britain certainly cannot grumble, as she has supplied the advisers to the Ministries of Finance, Agriculture and Lands, and Justice, and those to the Forest, Railway, Police, Irrigation, Health, Customs and Harbour Departments.

These posts have not been given to British officials simply out of partiality, but because Siam being contiguous to India with which her interests are closely connected, and prevailing conditions being very similar to various parts of the Indian Empire, the Siamese Government have naturally borrowed officials freely from the Indian Administration, to assist them in developing the country to its fullest extent along lines best suited to the country's needs. It may be said that five out of the ten advisers mentioned have been lent by the Indian Government.

France has also come in for her share. The members of the Code Commission, which is engaged in drawing up all the different Codes, Penal and Civil, necessary for the modernising of Siamese jurisdiction, are Frenchmen. The Director of Excise is French; also all the European members of the Sanitary Department and a number of the Assistant Legal Advisers.

Germany, on the other hand, has had to be content with fewer and less important posts, as is but right, since her political interests have never been so extensive as those of Britain and France, but she managed to instal a number of her nationals in the Government Medical Service. Also the direction of the Post and Telegraph Department has been, almost since its inauguration, in German hands, as represented by an adviser, a secretary, and various technical assistants;

and up to July 22, 1917, she had full control of the administration of the Northern Railway.

Moreover, Germans have been prominent in the directorate and have monopolised the managerial posts, since its inception, of the Siam Commercial Bank, the only Siamese bank in existence.

Since the beginning of the present century Siam has contracted two Foreign Loans, one of £3,000,000 and one of £4,000,000, for the particular purpose of constructing her two main systems of railways.

The first mentioned loan, which was floated in 1907, was for the purpose of continuing the Northern Railway, which ran from Bangkok to Korat, as far as Chiangmai, the most important city in the Lao Dependencies of the North and the centre of the teak trade. The loan of £4,000,000, on the other hand, which was made by the Federated Malay States Government in 1909 in connection with the Anglo-Siamese Treaty of that year, was contracted with a view to the extension of the Siamese Southern line and the linking-up by rail of Bangkok with Penang and Singapore.

The controlling officials of the Southern Railway have naturally been British, but the Northern line, which, after many vicissitudes, is now at length nearing completion, and which is also a very creditable piece of work, is the product of German engineering skill. The total length of the line will be 450 miles,

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and railhead is at present at Lampang, about 50 miles short of the ultimate goal.

As far as Pitsanulok, which is the dividing line between the Southern plains and Northern hills of Siam, the construction of the permanent way has been comparatively easy; but north of that town it has been no mean engineering feat to cope successfully with all the difficulties which forest, mountain, stream and flood present to the railway builder.

The number of Germans employed by the Northern Railway department, not only on construction work, but also in executive posts, and in the workshops attached to headquarters, has been considerable, and since 1914, up to the time of their internment, these Germans have had unique opportunities, of which they have made full use, of tampering with the loyalty of large numbers of British Indian subjects who are employed in various minor capacities on the railway, or are engaged in the cattle and cloth trades in the chief provincial centres of this country.

Fortunately, the Siamese Government had their eyes wide open to the possibility of seditious doctrines being inculcated among the Indians in Siam, not only by Germans but also by the disloyal agents of the various Indian revolutionary parties; and through the vigilance of the police department, with two British Indian officers as its guides, effectually nipped the movement in the bud. With the intern-

ment of the Germans the possibility of serious trouble entirely vanished, and thus by Siam's declaration of war at least one source of danger to Britain's Empire has been definitely removed.

It will be noted with interest that since July, 1917, the Northern and Southern Railway departments have been amalgamated under the direction of a Commissioner-General of Railways with a British adviser, and the posts formerly occupied by the Germans on the Northern line will doubtless be refilled by British and French officials as occasion arises.

Coming now to the question of finance, it has already been mentioned that Germans were in charge of the Siam Commercial Bank. The British have established branches of two banks in Siam, the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation and the Chartered Bank of India, Australia and China, while the French are represented by the Banque de l'Indo-Chine. But there was no branch of the Deutsch-Asiatische or other German Bank in Siam; and it will thus be seen that the control of the only Siamese banking institution was a very effective weapon in German hands. This control has ceased since July, 1917, and the affairs of the Siam Commercial Bank are now in Siamese hands with the assistance of two British officials.

German doctors have disappeared from the Government service, as has also the German Director of

the National Museum and Library, and all the German officials connected with the Post Office. In such wise has the Siamese Government service been thoroughly purged of its German element. Care of the Museum and Library will be transferred to a Frenchman.

Here we can leave the domain of German political influence which, in spite of the "Mailed Fist," for various reasons has never been very great in Siam, and turn to commerce and shipping, in both of which Germany has shown herself, as may be imagined, no mean competitor of British trade with that country.

The two principal German firms in Bangkok are, or rather were, Messrs. Markwald & Co., and Messrs. Windsor & Co. The latter firm was, as the name might indicate, not originally German, but was established in 1868 by an adventurous Mr. Windsor, who, curiously enough, was not an Englishman but a Frenchman. In its early days it soon became associated with German trade, and finally fell wholly into German hands on the death of Mr. Windsor in 1902.

Messrs. Markwald & Co., who of late years represented a wealthy Bremen "ring," was originally established by a Mr. Markwald and two partners as long ago as 1858. In modern times they took a certain interest in fire insurance, but their principal busi-

ness has been the milling and export of rice, in which they did a very extensive trade. It is interesting to note that Markwald & Co. once held the agency of the Chartered Bank of India.

Messrs. Windsor & Co., on the other hand, interested themselves in the import trade, chiefly in piece goods, and in life insurance. At the same time they acted as general agents for German shipping firms, and in particular for the North German Lloyd, which had a large share in the shipping trade of Siam with Singapore and Hongkong. This share was formerly in the hands of the Scottish Oriental Company, a British firm of which the French Mr. Windsor was one of the founders. Doubtless it was due to this fact that, when the Scottish Oriental Line was eventually bought out by the North German Lloyd, the agency of the latter firm was given to Messrs. Windsor & Co.

Another German firm that established itself at an early date in Bangkok (1858) was Messrs. Paul Pickenpack & Co., which also dealt principally in piece goods. This firm did not, however, survive the outbreak of the war in 1914, when it passed into French hands, where it is to be hoped it will remain.

Three other firms of importance, which were however established in Bangkok at considerably later dates, were Behn, Meyer & Co., B. Grimm & Co., and Falck & Beidek. Behn, Meyer & Co.

are well known throughout the Far East as importers of piece goods, and did an extensive business in Siam. The activities of Mr. Diehn, the manager of the Singapore branch, in connection with the Mutiny which broke out there among the Indian troops in February, 1915, are not likely to be forgotten by the residents of that colony for some time to come. Diehn subsequently escaped from the internment camp on the island, and is now in the Netherlands Indies.

B. Grimm & Co. was founded in the early eighties as a dispensary only, but later developed into an important general store, with a tailoring establishment, which has obtained and executed large Army and Navy orders in the past. For a good many years of its existence the chief share in the business was Austrian.

Falck & Beidek, which was solely concerned with the hardware trade, also began life in a small way, but by hard work and industry on the part of its proprietors, gradually extended its business until it became one of the chief importers of this class of goods.

This does not by any means exhaust the list of German firms in Bangkok—there were many others in addition, importers and exporters, photographers (the best in the city), a stone works company, a number of dispensaries and commercial enterprises

of various kinds—but it is enough to show that the Germans were early in the field, as far as Siam was concerned, and that the latter's declaration of war has lost to Germany some very valuable business connections.

It appears from old records, which are now being brought to light, that in 1871, at a dinner given in Bangkok on the late Emperor's birthday, it was claimed that the Germans in Siam were then more numerous than Europeans of any other nationality: and though this is no longer true, there is no doubt that they have up till the present been a very good second to the British, and that competition between the two nations has been as close and exacting in Siam as it has been elsewhere.

Whatever may have been the business methods employed by the Germans in Singapore, Hongkong and other British colonies, we do not think that it would be fair to say that the German trade with Siam was either artificial or built up on an unsound basis. As will have been observed from the brief survey of the principal firms here recorded, they were mostly established by private enterprise a long time ago, and in nearly all instances an important business has been built up by the only two legitimate methods known to the commercial world, ability and industry.

In spite of the fact that of late years some of the enemy firms have been responsible for the introduc-

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tion of long credits (very acceptable to the native dealer) and other unsound business methods, there have been very few examples of the over-trading which has been a feature of German methods elsewhere.

Only a nation young in (business) years would attempt to deal on unsound lines in order to reap a temporary advantage. Such artifices are sure to rebound sooner or later upon the head of the perpetrator, and Germany has probably already found out that they are not conducive to the permanent welfare of its commercial community, and she will certainly discontinue their use in the near future. It is just like the opening of a new store in the city. It must attract somehow, so it undercuts its rivals: but once established, the undercutting ceases, and its business is conducted on normal lines. Nations are exactly the same as individuals, wise according to their years and experience. Japan, later still in the commercial field, is passing through an even earlier stage of economic evolution, but she will eventually discover the truth of the world-old adage that "honesty is the best policy."

German business connections have, we think, been built up in Siam on sound lines in the main, and it is therefore all the more a matter of congratulation to the British to know that the German firms in Bangkok have since July, 1917, literally ceased to exist

and that, whatever happens, they will in the future require construction (as in 1858) *ab initio* under, we may hope, less advantageous circumstances.

But although the Germans had to wait until 1917 before receiving their "knock-out blow," they were hard hit in Siam as soon as the Trading with the Enemy Proclamation came into force. We have already remarked that practically the whole of Siam's sea-borne trade passes through either Hongkong or Singapore: there is a certain amount of direct trade with Swatow in China (mostly native produce), and also with Java, but it is of little importance.

The result has been that no German firm has been able to receive from, or send to, Europe or elsewhere anything at all, either goods or correspondence, except by the use of subterfuge and surreptitious means. The embargo has extended to enemies of all nationalities and classes, to private as well as commercial correspondence, to the receipt or sending of parcels—in fact, to all connection with the outside world; and Germans in Siam have been known to say that ever since the outbreak of war they have been prisoners of war in reality if not in name.

This curtailment of intercourse with their kin at home, which has been irksome to a degree, led to the publication of a local German weekly journal called *Die Umschau*, issued for propagandist purposes both in German and in the hated English

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language (this latter because very few Siamese have even a cursory knowledge of German). It did its little best to keep up the flagging spirits of the German colony in Siam, and poured out the vials of its wrath upon alleged British hypocrisies and vanities, but, except for the fact of its giving a certain amount of insight into the workings of a typically German mind, we doubt if the value of the words which were printed was equal to the value of the paper upon which they were impressed—at a time, even, when paper was scarce. We are inclined to think that the *Umschau* achieved its noblest effort in its description of the weekly unofficial summaries of events (before the change in direction took place) cabled out to the various neutral countries, which it apostrophised as “nauseating muck”!

It must not be thought that the German firms quietly acquiesced in the embargo on their trade for a moment. One German firm, it is true, let it be known in a rather dignified manner that as it could not import openly, it would not import at all. It contented itself therefore with selling off its old stock, and cutting down its expenses as much as possible until times should mend. But the majority of the other firms resorted to some remarkable subterfuges in order to gain touch with their agents outside Siam and carry on their business.

In no direction, to our mind, has the modern

German shown his criminal tendencies more than in the talent for conspiracy which he has developed throughout the world—the result, as in “Professor Moriarty’s” case, of over-education and specialisation. In Siam he has not belied the reputation his brother has gained elsewhere, and he has severely taxed the brains of the various censors and “amateur detectives” (into which all British officials abroad have perforce been turned) by the ingenious schemes he has evolved to deceive them. Chinamen have been his chief medium for correspondence, and many a German script has been discovered in an innocent-looking “coolie-letter.”

He has also spared no pains to enlist the Chinese and other native dealers in the merry but (to them) precarious game of importing goods on his behalf. It was known that a certain class of this race was prepared to undertake fairly heavy risks if there was money to be made at the end of the venture, but it was always regarded as an axiom that to get money out of a Chinaman for nothing was like the “drawing of blood from a stone.” Yet the Germans fooled a large section of the Chinese in Bangkok in rather a neat manner.

It will be remembered that the Germans possess extra-territorial rights in Siam, and are thus not subject to Siamese jurisdiction. Being very hard pressed for ready money in 1916, they issued tickets

at five ticals each (7s. 6d.), ostensibly on behalf of the German Red Cross. Each subscriber of a certain amount or over was, however, given a verbal promise that, if he presented his ticket at the German Legation after the war, he would be registered as a German subject! And the Chinese rose to the bait to the extent of 50,000 ticals (nearly £4,000).

But if the Chinese are credulous, what are we to think of Markwald & Co. who, on the strength of a whispered hint from heaven knows where, as far back as the spring of 1916 purchased enormous stocks of "padi" for early shipment of rice to Europe in view of the imminent declaration of peace? Exactly how much they bought it is difficult to estimate, but it was said to have cost them over 3,000,000 ticals (more than £230,000), and as peace was not declared and the firm was unable to export at all, the result was disastrous. A certain amount was, no doubt, sold locally, but none of the larger mills were able to touch it through fear of the consequences to themselves, and although Markwald & Co. were constantly remilling and rebagging the rice to keep the weevils out, a large amount must have been irretrievably lost. The usable stocks that remained in July last were sold by public auction, and realised a sum of about 1,000,000 ticals, from which figure the probable loss to the firm may be readily gauged.

As all the German ships trading with Siam took

refuge in the river Menam in August, 1914, and did not move again, the North German Lloyd had perforce to go out of business in Siam ; and the captains of the various steamers, with their families, have been living in Bangkok for the last three years on the most meagre of allowances. Windsor & Co. have done no insurance or piece-goods business since the war began, and the staff are said to have spent their time in studying the war-map.

But Grimm & Co., whose business had grown enormously since it passed from Austrian into German hands, and who employed a large staff, have occupied themselves the most assiduously of all in their endeavours to import goods through seemingly innocent media, and to keep a show of goods in their store windows. They seemed to attach great importance to this display, and rightly, too, for from this fact the Siamese have commented often upon the ability of Grimm's to keep their trade alive in spite of the rigorous restrictions imposed.

Yet their display has cost them dear, and it is certain that the firm has been running at a severe annual loss since 1914. Possibly they have been able to import from elsewhere than Europe a certain quantity of drugs and medicines for their dispensary and cloth for their outfit department, but the straits to which they were reduced may be imagined from the fact that one of their principal methods of obtain-

ing goods was to send a number of women into the market to buy for cash what they could of a certain article, say, red paint, at retail prices. If each purchased four or five tins without exciting suspicion, and ten women were employed, Grimm's obtained a stock of fifty tins of red paint—but at what a cost!

One of Grimm's staff has shown himself in particular to be a veritable arch-conspirator in getting into touch with correspondents both in Europe and in China; and it is almost a pity to think that so much ingenuity has been largely wasted, since his bogus addresses and his seemingly innocent letters to friends and relations in Switzerland have been discovered sooner or later, and due precautions taken to make his scheming of none effect.

Enough has now, it is hoped, been said to show the extent of German trade in Siam which has disappeared, and the plight which has overtaken it since 1914. Let us return to the social side and consider for a moment what part the Germans have ever played in the life of the very cosmopolitan community which resides in Bangkok. This part can be described in one word—none; and in this fact can, we believe, be seen the root of the whole matter. There are many people who explain this lack of participation in the social life of the community by the Germans by saying that the standard of Germans who come to the Far East, or at any rate to Siam,

is a poor one, and that they are not suited to take a proper place among the different nationalities which subscribe to the common fund of hospitality.

But although there is a certain degree of truth in this explanation, I am inclined to think the matter goes much deeper, and that if we had been clever judges we could have read our warning in their actions. I believe that they knew what was coming, and that they either felt themselves to be conspirators against the general commonweal, or else had received definite instructions from Berlin not to mingle freely with the other nationalities, for fear that they might reveal too many secrets in their bursts of conviviality. There is nothing inherently improbable in this latter theory, since we know well that *every German* is under discipline from the moment he can speak until he is sent to the *Kadaver-Anstalt*.

We know from a neutral eye-witness that a German civilian, a business man of some standing, summoned to his Legation for some affair or other, had to stand at the salute the whole time that he was being addressed by the Chargé d'Affaires, and that even since the war began Germans in Bangkok have been heard to say that they would much prefer to visit the British Legation than their own, as they were sure of being offered a seat!

There is little doubt that the Germans kept

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themselves apart from the general community, not from any decently inimical feelings, but because they were afraid of betraying their designs. But this need not detract from the truth of the statement that the majority were not fitted to take any part in the social life of the foreign community in Bangkok, and were not over-sensitive to the more refining influences which civilization has implanted in the minds of the leading nations of the world.

British commercial men in the East who, we are proud to think, are almost a picked class of men, will readily admit that the Germans possess in some respects material advantages over them in their business dealings, since they are ready at all times to mix in the affairs of the native dealer, *and to descend to his level*, if they can reap some gain thereby, and this the Englishman will not do. Let us be thankful for it, for if he did, the British would soon lose that priceless possession, their prestige, which the native, even if he is not regardful of his own, recognises in the white man and respects.

In any case, whatever the motive may have been, the Germans in Siam, and in Bangkok particularly, held themselves almost entirely aloof from the other nationalities. We do not suppose that a dozen out of the whole three hundred were seen regularly at the Sports Club, which is a cosmopolitan club of nearly five hundred members. The main reason for this

was the fact that the Germans are as a general rule not men of sport—if they were, they might have a chance of becoming “sportsmen”—but this does not answer the question fully, since the Sports Club was the common meeting ground of all the foreigners in Bangkok, whether players of games or not.

There was, of course, as in most of the larger cities of the Far East, a large and roomy German Club, built, we believe, with financial assistance from the Fatherland, and with illimitable cellar space for the supply of *Fass-Bier*. Here the softening influence of many a *Kneipe* has made itself felt—and as you may imagine, many a noisy midnight carouse has been held to celebrate the glorious German victories of the past three years. But Ichabod! the glory has departed! The sound of revel is no longer heard.

Possibly the surest indication of the class of German that went to Bangkok is seen in the fact that many of the men have taken unto themselves native wives and have gone to live in secluded houses, shunning the city's social life and cutting themselves off from the society of their fellow Europeans. Perfectly happy and contented, they have shown themselves good husbands, kind to their wives and fond of their children.

But from the European standpoint this was, of course, a descent, and it never seems to have occurred to the German community generally that it was their

duty to discourage this. It seems as if the whole mentality of the German race was debased, and that no spiritual ideal was ever likely to cause anxiety to the German conscience in its attitude towards the things of this world. One wonders which question is uppermost in the modern German's mind—"May I do this without loss of my own self respect?" or "Can I do this without loss of this world's comforts and the respect of *my own* countrymen?"

The being we call "a clean Englishman" is not a saint: moreover he is endowed with all the senses common to other races: but there are some things he will not do, and it is precisely these things that a German takes a delight in doing. An Englishman may be immoral, but he will seldom exhibit bestial instincts: and this a German will do on occasion, and mistake it for pleasure! What it is exactly in the national culture, or in the training of the German that brings out, instead of stifling, these lowest instincts of man, is hard to say; but we are sure that one of the chief factors has been the decay of religious feeling in Germany.

After all, three hundred men and women drawn from all parts of Germany, most of them chosen for their ability in some profession or in commerce, must be fairly representative of their race, and yet, as far as the outer world knows, never has it been suggested by the Germans that they should build a

church in Bangkok. Don't think it was for want of money—the British erected a tin chapel in the early fifties as soon as they came. Perhaps the Germans in Siam were heartily glad to be rid of all necessity of conforming to a custom which respectability still demanded of many of them in the Fatherland—namely, of going to church. How else can the fact be explained that, during sixty years of German residence in Siam, there has never been a German church or a German pastor? It is this lack of all spiritual ideal—this utter inward contempt for the teachings of Christianity as being only food for babies (and not even for German babies) and fools, that has turned the German into what he is to-day—an outcast and more!

Any man who has come much in contact with Germans will have in mind stories regarding them—shameful, brutalising stories—which he would not repeat to his club friends. In Siam they have differed but little from their brethren elsewhere, but have indeed added one accomplishment unknown outside that country, and which may be placed on record, namely the systematic filching of images of the Buddha from provincial temples, for the purpose of a *wholesale export trade*. Did you want a concrete example of the absence of religious feeling in them? Here you have one ready made.

It is necessarily difficult for an Eastern race to

appreciate the subtle distinctions which have always existed between the various European nationalities—probably for many years a white man was just “a white man,” whether Dutch, or French, or English. But it is probable that this wholesale exportation of Buddha’s images for the purposes of sale has done more than many of the oft-told German outrages on the high seas and on land to awaken the Siamese to a perception of what manner of man the German is. Needless to say, this disgraceful proceeding has deeply wounded their susceptibilities. As “The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table” has truly said, the individual dramas that one has personally seen or experienced leave a stronger and more lasting influence upon one than the great tragic disasters that overtake the world.

It is possible that at the beginning of the war there was in Siam a certain amount of admiration for the Germans, who were looked upon by many as the one strong efficient race fit to govern the universe. There was sympathy, too, with a race that declared they were hemmed in on all sides by jealous enemies who refused to allow them their rightful place in the sun. Add to this the fact that a good few Siamese officers, both of the Army and the Navy, had been trained and educated in Germany, and there are probably many Englishmen to-day who can remember with pleasure their student days at Heidelberg or Bonn.