

England and Germany

*Their Relations in the Great Crises of
European History
1500-1900*

BY

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PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH EDITION.

It will easily be seen that the original Preface is addressed to my German readers. But as the two German editions of my pamphlet are followed, to my great delight, by an English edition, I gladly add a few words for my English readers. In preparing my lecture, I had Germany especially in my mind; but from the nature of the subject it was inevitable that my remarks should concern both the nations that are so near akin. In Germany my conclusions have evoked, in private and in public, much kind acquiescence, and naturally some opposition. To some of my compatriots my opinions seem to be too English. Many of my English critics will doubtless regard them as too German. But I must resign myself to that fate. It was my intention from the first, as far as I could, to stand by and over both parties. I naturally feel and judge and write as a German. But it is felt in Germany that the tendency of my essay is towards agreement and shows a friendly spirit towards England, a more friendly spirit indeed than at present prevails in wide circles of German

public opinion. My desire is, as a German, but even more as a scholar, with honest aspirations after truth and justice, to demonstrate that there exists a certain historical and intellectual, and perhaps also a political community between the two nations that is too easily overlooked. In this way I hope to do my small share towards removing some of the misconceptions and the ill-humour that appear to exist between the two peoples. It is well, with calm self-criticism, to submit on both sides those misunderstandings to an unprejudiced examination. I do not for a moment imagine myself capable of exercising any direct influence on practical politics: my ambition does not reach so far, and therefore I have only touched on general questions. I shall be satisfied if I succeed in urging cultivated readers of both nations to reconsider some questions, and again to survey the facts of past and present history, and in honestly indicating the strained feelings that are mutually harmful. I may thereby help a little towards the examination and the understanding that seem to me to be both a necessity and an advantage for the two nations. From that point of view alone am I to be understood or criticised.

LEIPZIG, *September 24, 1900.*

PREFACE TO THE GERMAN EDITION.

EARLY this month I gave a lecture on the subject of this pamphlet at the 'German Athenæum' in London. My audience and hosts asked me to print my lecture, suggesting that it might fulfil a useful purpose on both sides of the North Sea. With my notes as a basis, except for a few slight changes and additions, I have written it down exactly as I delivered it. I have intentionally preserved in it the character of a lecture, of a spoken essay, in which, perforce, the matter must be closely condensed, and in which, in order to avoid ambiguity, the lines must occasionally be drawn rather too deep and too straight. It is not my purpose to write a book. I do not flatter myself that I have anything new to communicate to the initiated, although so comprehensive a survey may not be altogether valueless even for them. I am not capable of dealing with the present situation from the point of view of a political expert; I speak as an historian, and desire as an historian to connect the past and present, and to illuminate the one