

BRAVE BELGIUM

DEAN BURKE'S EULOGY.

At an Irish national concert in aid of the Belgian fund, held at Invercargill on November 25, and referred to by our Invercargill correspondent in this issue, the Very Rev. Dean Burke spoke as follows:—

The organisers have asked me to speak at this concert on some appropriate topic, and I gladly comply with their request. You saw in a cablegram in yesterday's papers that Mr. Asquith, Mr. Balfour, and Lord Rosebery have published an appeal to patriotic organisations throughout the Empire to use favorable occasions to educate public opinion as to the causes and issues of the present war and as to the aims of the Allies in carrying it on. This appeal supplies me with my theme. The subject is a wide one—one demanding a long lecture for anything like adequate treatment. In the 20 minutes allotted to me I shall try to touch as clearly as may be on the causes and issues of the war. The immediate causes of the war were the quarrel between Serbia and Austria, the murder of the Crown Prince, Francis Ferdinand, the exacting demands made by Austria on Serbia, the pressure of the Austrian war party on the Austrian Emperor and of the German war party on the Kaiser, and the readiness of, you may say, the whole German people for war on any pretext. They wanted 'their place in the sun,' as the Kaiser put it, and the last shining button had been sewed on the last coat of the last man in an army which, the Germans firmly believed, was able to gain that place in defiance of the world.

Well, what led up to this state of things? What were the more remote or general causes of the war? What had brought the Germanic peoples up to the point when they were eagerly looking for and toasting 'der Tag' (the Day)? You must remember the German Empire is quite an upstart in the circle of the great Powers: it was only in 1871 that the Prussianised little kingdoms, duchies, and electorates of the Germanic peoples assumed the name of the German Empire. It was only in 1701 that a Prussian Duke ventured to call himself king. But those Prussian kings were men of blood and iron. They were 'recruiting sergeants' mostly; war was their trade, and preparation of war the principal industry of their little kingdom. They succeeded, naturally, in adding province to province, until they became the most powerful rulers among the Teutonic peoples of the continent. In 1785 Frederick the Great formed a Bund with himself as the centre or rallying point for princes and peoples from the Baltic to the Danube. Napoleon, see-

ing a danger for France in this Germanic confederacy, broke it up in 1808, at the same time smashing the power of the Prussians. Then for 50 years the House of Brandenburg declined and the House of Austria, the Hapsburgs, was in the ascendant. However, about 1860 there came to the front in Berlin a man who inherited the spirit of the old rulers of blood and iron, a man of great ability, of wide political experience, of strong will, of unbounded ambition, and without a scrap of conscience—Otto von Bismarck. He formed the plan to again unite the kingdoms and principalities of the German-speaking peoples into a great confederacy under the leadership of Prussia. His aim was to unite Germany and to Prussianise it, and in 10 years he had, in great measure, reached his aim. At the battle of Sadowa in 1866 he drove out the Austrians from interference in German affairs. He then appropriated the Danish provinces of Schleswig and Holstein. In 1870 he attacked France, beat her, and annexed Alsace and Lorraine. He had reached his goal; he had formed a German empire; had made the King of Prussia Emperor of Germany and dictator or war lord of Europe. Apparently he desired no more; his scheme was completed.

But was Germany to stop here? Would the successors of Bismarck rest content with the limits he apparently had set? After 1870 Germany made huge strides forward. Trade and industries rapidly advanced; the population increased; the cities increased; wealth and luxury increased; Berlin rivalled Paris. The hosts of professors, schoolmasters, preachers, journalists, generals, and members of Parliament, began to drum into the people's ear that they were the choice production, the highest evolution of the human race; the superman of the earth—first in industries and inventions, first in learning and culture, first in morals and religion. Then such men as Haeckel, Nietzsche, Treitschke, and Bernhardt taught the doctrines of a bestial materialism and the direct inferences from these doctrines. The basic germ of their teaching was force. Force! The survival of the strongest; might was right; ends were to be reached by fraud, by deceit, by cruelty, by violence. War, cruelty, and fraud are the means to all true progress for our race. They taught that the state as being the strongest combination was supreme, was to be worshipped; the individual belonged to it—not it to him. They taught that the Emperor and his military staff, as holding most power in the State, could command all, make peace and war; and that every faithful German was bound to obey or be shot. For the past 30 years, and with more emphasis for the past 15 years, these doctrines have been preached in Germany until all, from the military courtier at Potsdam to the ragged urchin in the streets

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