

THE WAR AND THE ROYAL FAMILIES

By Ard Choille

THE present war has done more than anything ever did to knock the bottom out of the Dynasty, or Lord's anointed, idea in Europe. It is a struggle between certain races, threatened by other races, leagued together by the belief in what they consider mainly as, in each case, a national danger. Their sovereigns are of mixed blood. Royal family ties have been forgotten.

Thus, nothing would please Cousin William more than to hear that a Zeppelin had succeeded in dropping a few bombs into the castle at Windsor, the residence of Cousin George, while Cousin George would like nothing better than to hear that a British flying machine had blown up the Berlin palace of Cousin William.

At the present moment the people of the British Empire are more concerned about the health of Mr. Asquith and Lord Kitchener than they are about the health of King George; the Russians are more anxious about Grand Duke Nicholas than about the Czar, while—this must be whispered—the Germans would hardly hesitate between the Kaiser and von Hindenberg, the adored "Old man of the lakes."

Until the outbreak of war the royal families of the various nations made up a wonderful club, the like of which had never been known before. They married each other, and gave each other in marriage; they visited together, took tea, hunted, shot and sailed yachts together. Judging from the society papers most of Europe existed for their convenience, and even the variety in military uniforms was kept up in order that royalty, while at home or abroad, might have the opportunity to change its clothes as often as possible.

But whereas the war has destroyed the solidarity of the royal families, as far as England, Germany, Russia, Belgium, Montenegro, and even Italy, Rumania, Bulgaria and Greece are concerned, it has had the very opposite effect in the case of Scandinavia. The reigning houses of Norway and Sweden have ceased to hate each other, and the latter country has even forgiven the Danish dynasty for having supplied one of its Princes to fill the throne of the other when the late secession took place.

Queen Victoria was an amazing influence on the side of German *Kultur*. The familiar language of her court was German. King Edward spoke English like a well-educated, linguistic stock broker from Frankfort, much to the surprise of those who heard him for the first time. This was the result of a childhood spent almost exclusively with Prussian governesses. On the other hand the language of the nursery of the Empress Frederick was English. Hence the complete absence of foreign accent, or intonation, in the case of the English of the Kaiser. Unlike his father, King George, largely owing to his naval training, has always impressed people as pure British. Having an older brother he was left to himself and his friends as a more or less negligible quantity.

The last great demonstration of the close relation of the British royal family to Germany occurred on the occasion of Queen Victoria's first jubilee. The big squadron of Teutonic reigning princes that pranced through the streets of London in the great procession to St. Paul's Cathedral saddened some spectators as an intimation that blood was thicker than water in the royal family.

Then came the Boer War.

The Kaiser's encouraging message to Paul Kruger infuriated Englishmen. So, when the old Queen died and the Kaiser rode beside King Edward and behind the gun carriage with its squat little coffin on the way to Windsor, all that the most sentimental Britishers could say was: "Well, he liked the old lady after all, in spite of the fact that she never forgot to lay down the law to him whenever she had a mind to." Queen Victoria was the only human being whom the Kaiser feared.