





# The King, the Kaiser and the Tsar:

## Royal Families, "Relativity" and the Coming of World War 1

by Richard C. Ryder

**L**ondon: August 4th, 1914. Inside the War Office, the members of Prime Minister Herbert Asquith's cabinet watch as the hands of the clock tick off the final minutes to 11 PM (midnight, German time). As the fatal moment approaches, the room falls silent. England's ultimatum to Germany over the latter's invasion of neutral Belgium has expired without reply and as a result England is now at war. What had begun five weeks earlier with a politically-motivated assassination in the

Balkans had mushroomed beyond anyone's imagining and now all of Europe was engulfed in what would soon become a long and bitter war. In response to the murder of Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo on June 28th, the huge but antiquated empire of Austria-Hungary had declared war on tiny Serbia exactly one month later.

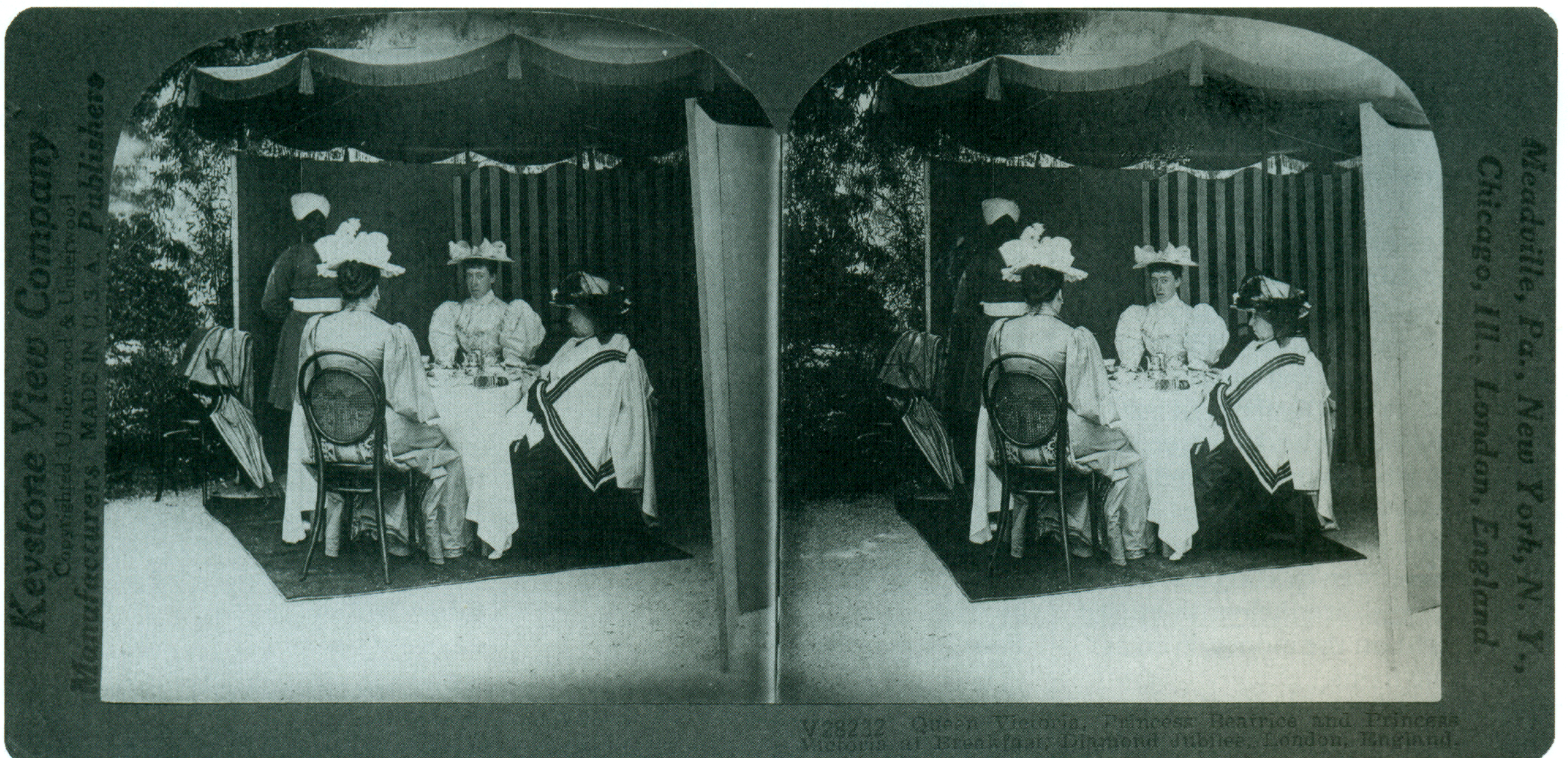
Thereupon all hell had broken loose. Russia, allied with Serbia, announced that it was mobilizing its forces, prompting Germany, Austria's

ally, to declare war on Russia on August 1st and on Russia's ally, France, two days later. The four largest powers on the continent were now at war.

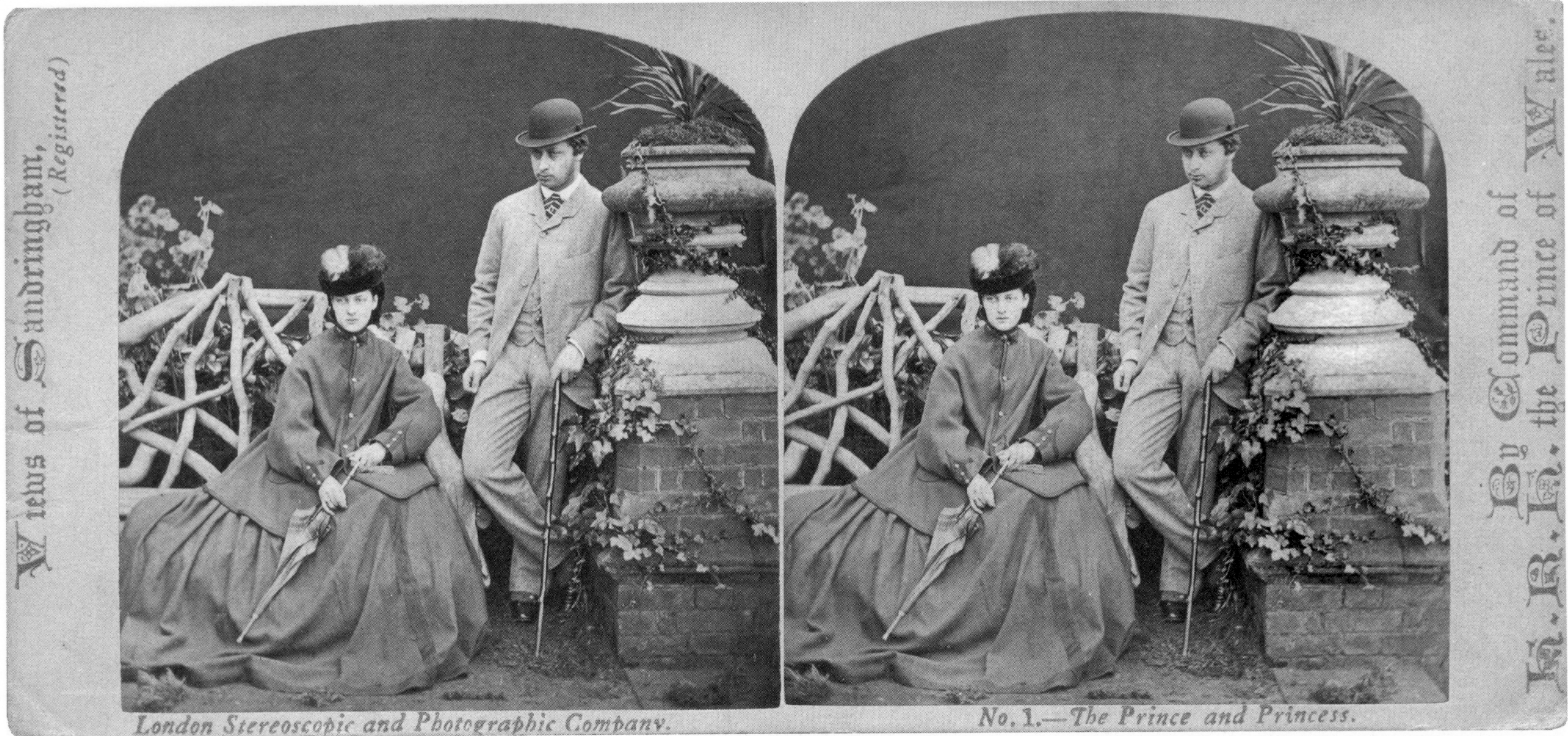
Up until now, England had steered clear of the madness, had in fact tried to intercede diplomatically. The problem was Germany:

Squeezed between France and Russia (with the latter possessing the largest army in Europe), Germany faced the terrifying prospect of a two-front war with possible invasion from both east and west. The Kaiser's government could not afford to wait upon events but must strike first, crippling one enemy before the other could advance. Correctly assessing that Russia, with its great distances and poor transportation

*"Queen Victoria, Princess Beatrice, and Princess Victoria at Breakfast, Diamond Jubilee, London, England," No. V-28232 by Keystone View Co. (ex-Underwood negative). The Diamond Jubilee was held in 1897 to mark the 60th Anniversary of the Queen's rule. Beatrice was the youngest of Victoria's children; once rumored as the intended of the Prince Imperial of France before his death in the Zulu War, she had gone on to marry Prince Henry of Battenberg, a minor German princeling. The younger Victoria referred to is likely the Queen's eldest daughter, the former Princess Royal, and mother of the German Kaiser, Wilhelm II.*







W. Julius of Sandringham,  
(Registered)

By Command of H.M. the Prince of Wales.

London Stereoscopic and Photographic Company.

No. 1.—The Prince and Princess.

"The Prince and Princess," taken at the royal estate of Sandringham in Norfolk by the London Stereoscopic and Photographic Co. (yellow mount), likely in 1863, shortly after the couple's wedding. Edward, Prince of Wales, "Bertie," would eventually succeed his mother as King Edward VII in 1901. He and his young bride, the former Princess Alexandra of Denmark, would become the parents of the future King George V; her younger sister Dagmar would marry into the Russian royal family and become the mother of the ill-fated Tsar Nicholas II, who was thus George's cousin.

Germany required if she was to survive.

But there was another possibility, one that the German General von Schlieffen had long espoused. To the north of France lay the small country of Belgium, neutral and supposedly insulated from the madness sweeping Europe by solemn treaty, a treaty Germany had herself signed.

network, would be slow to react, the Germans opted for a quick, devastating blow against the French. There would be time to deal with the Russians later.

with Germany. Any German attack there would likely bog down well short of Paris and the quick victory

But how to get at France? With memories of the humiliating Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71 uppermost in Parisian minds, the French would undoubtedly concentrate their forces well to the east, along the borders

"From cares of Empire to the joys of Home - Edward VII and his grandchildren, Balmoral Castle, Scotland," 1902, by Underwood & Underwood. Already showing the ill effects of a lifetime of overeating, heavy drinking, and compulsive womanizing, Edward, shown here shortly after his coronation, would last a mere nine years on the throne. At left is the future Edward VIII, who would "give up the throne for love" and spend his remaining days as the Duke of Windsor, while at right is his younger brother who, despite an embarrassing speech impediment, would go on to become the beloved King George VI and father of Elizabeth II.

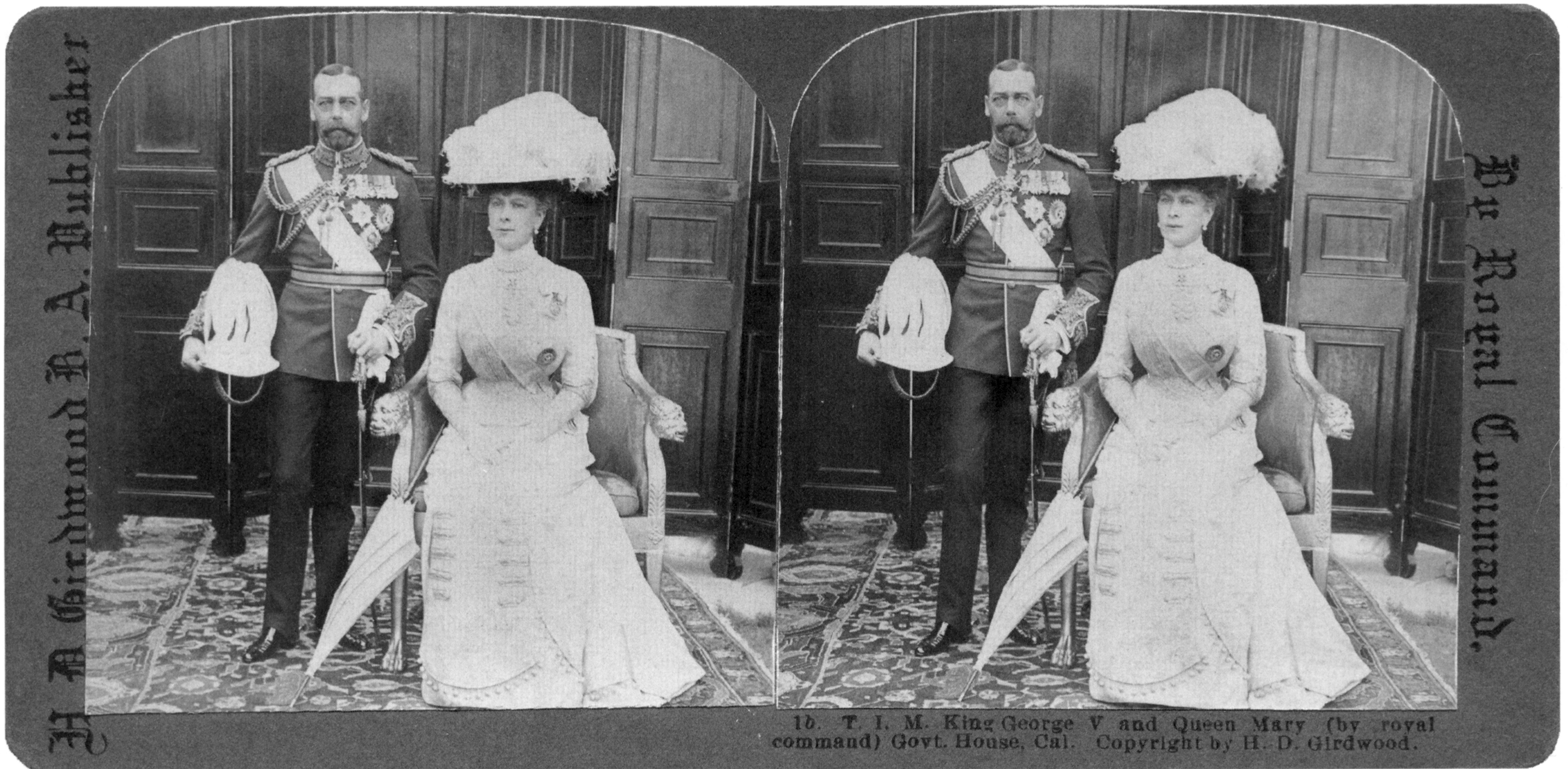


Underwood & Underwood, Publishers,  
New York, London, Toronto-Canada, Ottawa-Kansas

Works and Interior Art Studios  
Washington D.C.

From cares of Empire to the joys of Home—Edward VII. and his grandchildren, Balmoral Castle, Scotland. Copyright 1902 by Underwood & Underwood.





If the Belgians could be coerced into allowing the passage of German troops through their country, the Kaiser's forces could circle the French lines and sweep down on Paris from the north, long before the Russians had time to react. If not, well then, Belgium would just have to be invaded. The entire world was shocked when the German Foreign Minister dismissed the Belgian treaty as a mere "scrap of paper."

England had been another guarantor of Belgian neutrality. Not without a certain amount of self-interest. The island nation had always been leery of any major power (especially one with a large navy) gaining possession of the "Low Countries"—Belgium and the Netherlands—and thus obtaining a foothold right on England's doorstep.

Hence, the late night vigil in London. While many on both sides optimistically predicted that the war would be over by Christmas, Foreign Minister Sir Edward Grey had a clearer vision. "The lamps are going out all over Europe," he said. "We shall not see them lit again in our lifetime." Ironically, Grey himself was slowly going blind.<sup>1</sup>

Curiously, of the four great powers involved in this new war, only France was a republic, while the other three, Germany, Russia, and England, were all monarchies. What was *really* odd was that the three monarchs in question, England's King George V, Germany's Kaiser

Wilhelm, and Russia's Tsar Nicholas were all *cousins*, the first two being grandsons of England's Queen Victoria, while Nicholas was her grandson-in-law. On one level, World War I would be nothing more than a very extended, and very bloody, "family feud."

At the time World War I broke out in the late summer of 1914, Europe had not experienced the turmoil of a general continent-wide war for almost exactly a century, not since the downfall of Napoleon in 1814-15. The intervening century had been a time known as the "Pax Britannica," an age when Britain's Empire spanned the globe and the Royal Navy ruled the seas. The bulk of that time had been marked by the reign of one individual and the period was already acquiring the semi-legendary aura of hindsight, being fondly remembered as the "Victorian Age."

When Napoleon had died in lonely exile on the remote Atlantic island of St. Helena in May of 1821, the young Victoria was already a toddler just a fortnight short of her second birthday. She would become Queen some sixteen years later upon the death of her uncle, William IV, in 1837, around the time Daguerre introduced his photographic process,

and the first few years of her reign would be largely occupied with the search for a suitable husband. All this ended in February of 1840 when Victoria married her cousin, Albert, whose family ruled the tiny Germany principality of Saxe-Coburg. Despite the well-known Victorian reticence to discuss matters of a sexual nature, Victorian families were often quite prolific and the royal family was no exception, going on to produce some nine children over the next several years.

Albert himself died in 1861 and the focus now shifted to making suitably advantageous dynastic marriages for the children. In this, Victoria and her advisors were so successful in courting the various European royal families that their efforts in time earned for the aging Queen the sobriquet "Grandmother of Europe." Eventually, all of this diplomatic matrimony would lead to familial alliances with the royal houses of Germany, Denmark, Greece, Norway, Russia, Romania, Yugoslavia, Sweden, and Spain.

But it is Victoria's first three children that are most pertinent to our story here. These began with a daughter, Victoria, the Princess Royal, "Vicky" as she was popularly known,



who was born in November of 1840. Any thought that she might ultimately succeed her mother on the British throne was quickly dispelled with the arrival of a second child, a son, Albert Edward or "Bertie" (the future King Edward VII) the following November. As Prince of Wales, Edward would have to wait impatiently, and rarely with good grace, for nearly sixty years before he would finally inherit the throne.

Meanwhile, for Victoria, a second daughter, Princess Alice, followed in April of 1843. It is these three with whom we are concerned here.

In due course, "Vicky" was married to Prince Frederick William of Prussia in January of 1858, when the bride was but seventeen. Despite the fact that the couple had been engaged since Vicky was fourteen, it was in fact a love match. Precisely one year and two days later, Vicky gave birth to the couple's first child (and Victoria's first grandchild), a son, Prince Frederick William Albert Victor, affectionately known in the family as "Willy." The boy was third in line, after his grandfather and father, to the crown of Prussia, already the most important and powerful of the German states. History would know the lad better as Kaiser Wilhelm II.

Back in England, the Prince of Wales was also in search of a bride.

This time the lucky contestant was Princess Alexandra of Denmark, called "Alix," and the couple were duly married in March of 1863. Alix's younger sister, Dagmar, would also marry well, wedding Russia's Tsar Alexander III and ultimately becoming the mother of future Tsar Nicholas II. Hence, the future tsar would be the nephew (by marriage) of England's Edward VII.

Meanwhile Edward, still waiting in the wings as Prince of Wales, had become a father, with two sons, Albert Victor, Duke of Clarence and Avondale, followed by George, and then three younger sisters. Albert Victor, "Prince Eddy," in time proved every bit as dissolute as his father, whose marriage to Alix had not tamed his ways, and many in England no doubt secretly heaved a sigh of relief when Eddy died in 1892, leaving the more stable George as heir presumptive.<sup>2</sup> That wasn't the only thing George inherited from his brother, his having gone on to marry Eddy's fiancée, Princess Victoria Mary of Teck, known as "May," with the couple ultimately becoming the grandparents of the future Queen Elizabeth II.

All of that was well in the future as Edward welcomed his children in the 1860s. On the continent, these years saw the explosive growth of

German Prussia, both as an industrial power and militarily, as Chancellor Otto von Bismarck sought to expand his country's influence through a policy of "blut und isen"—blood and iron. It began with a trumped-up conflict with tiny Denmark over the border provinces of Schleswig and Holstein. Then Bismarck went looking for bigger game—and found it in Austria, which was vanquished in the unimaginatively named Seven Weeks' War in 1866.

All of this was just a rehearsal for the main event, the Franco-Prussian War, which saw the French utterly devastated in short order. In the wake of this third victory, Bismarck forced through a reorganization of the various German states into a single German Empire, with the royal family of Prussia at its head. Willy's grandfather, the like-named William (or Wilhelm) was proclaimed Germany's first Kaiser—or Emperor.

This was the world in which the future Wilhelm II grew up. It wasn't always easy. His birth had been a difficult one and he had emerged with a badly malformed left arm, of which he was to remain extremely sensitive and which he constantly tried to conceal.

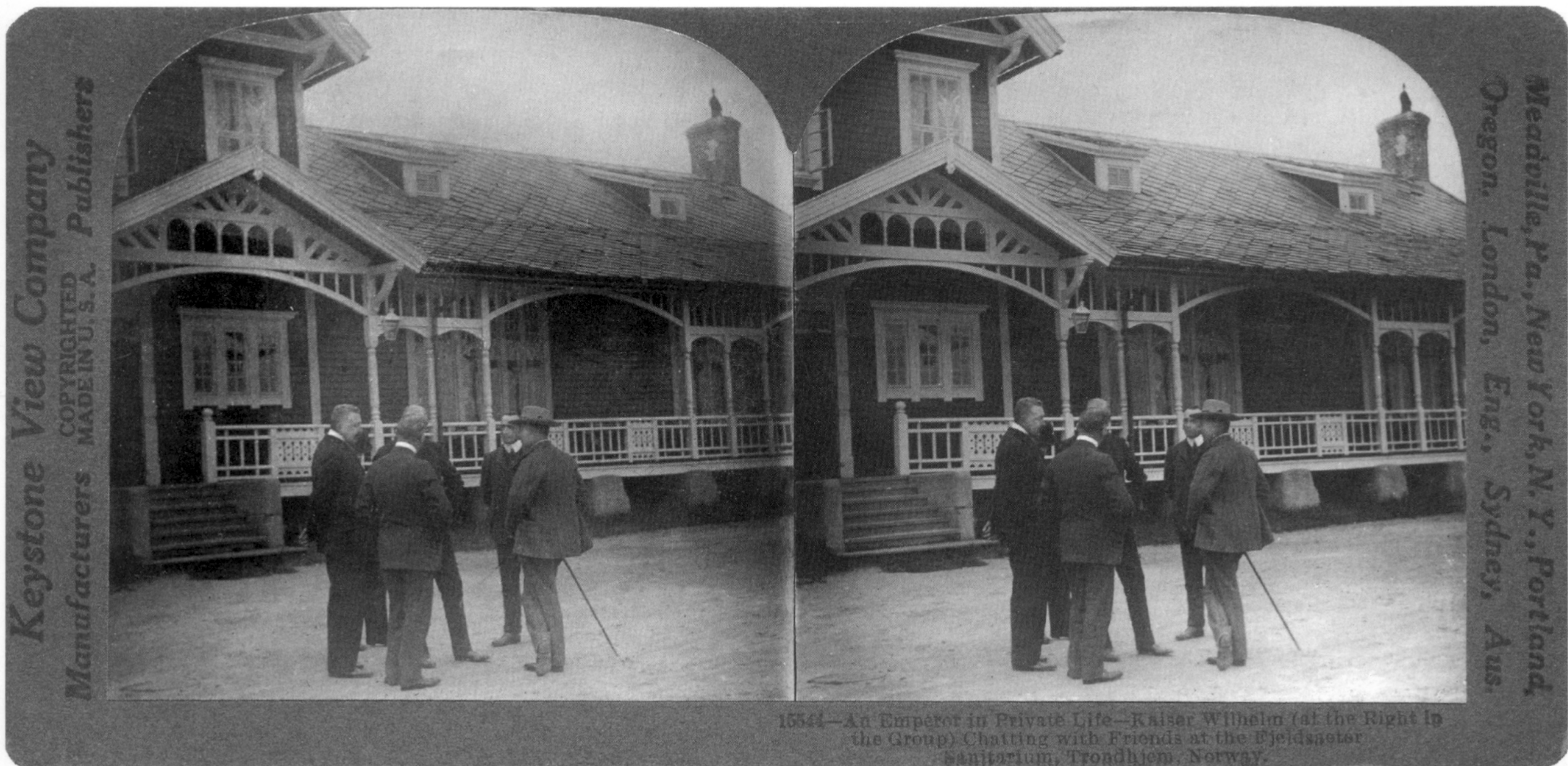
In March of 1888, the old Kaiser died, and Willy's father succeeded him as Frederick III. Queen Victoria's daughter Vicky was now Empress of Germany, at least by marriage.

She had precious little time to enjoy her new role. Within three

*"Kaiser and Family," by Keystone View Co. (Assembled from a flat photo and not numbered.) With him is his wife, the former Princess Augusta Victoria of Schleswig-Holstein, called "Dona," whom he married in 1881. He would remarry a year and a half after her 1921 death; his second wife would ultimately outlive him. The most militant and provocative of the three cousins, Wilhelm survived the longest, well into World War II.*







15544—An Emperor in Private Life—Kaiser Wilhelm (at the Right in the Group) Chatting with Friends at the Fjeldsaeter Sanitarium, Trondhjem, Norway.

months, Frederick was dead and little Willy, Queen Victoria's eldest grandson, was now, at the age of twenty-nine, Emperor of the most powerful nation in Europe.

Vicky's younger sister, Alice, had also married into the ranks of German royalty, to Louis, Grand Duke of Hesse, but had died early, in 1878, leaving seven small children, includ-

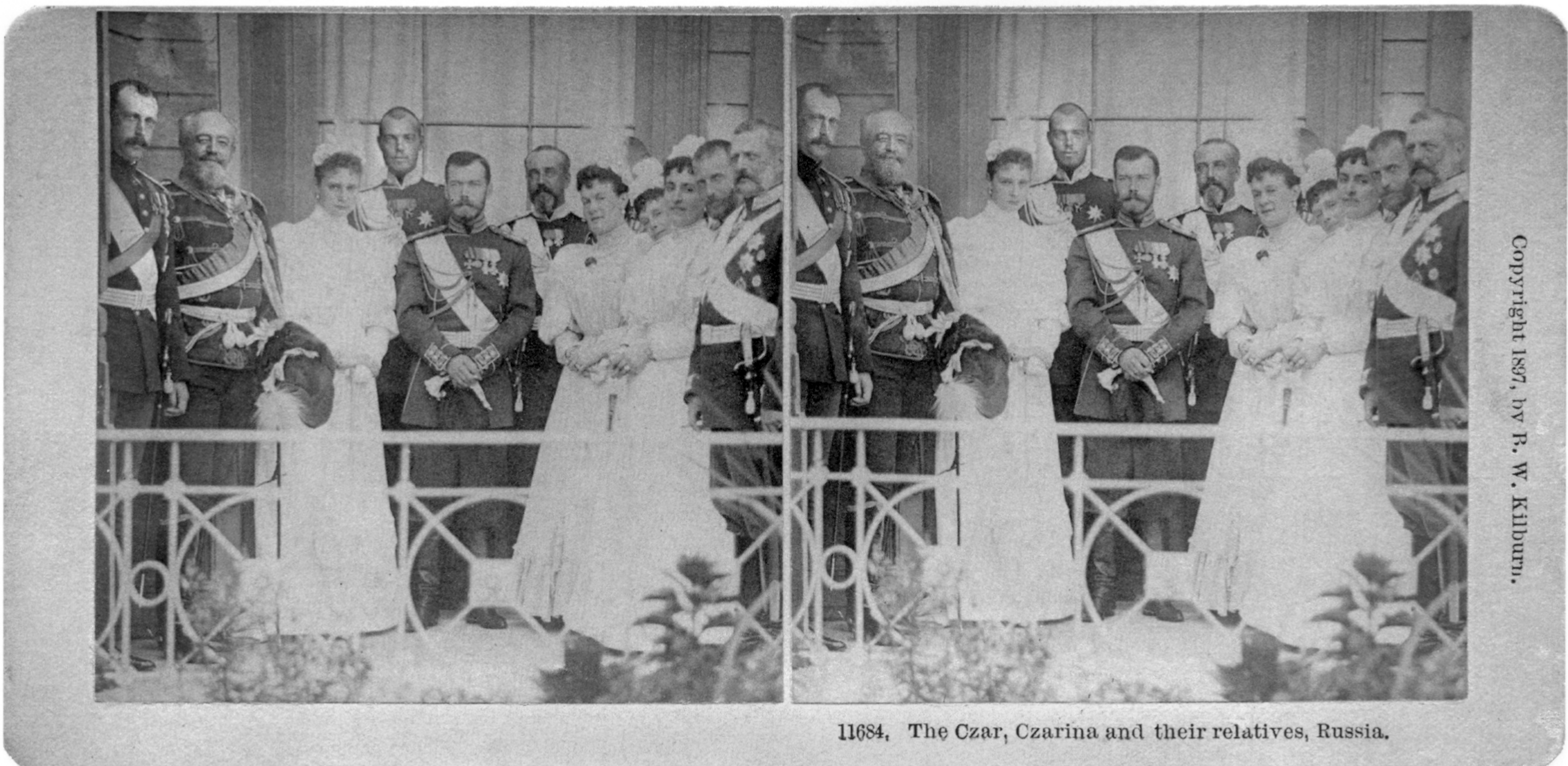
*"An Emperor in Private Life - Kaiser Wilhelm (at the right in the Group) Chatting with Friends at the Fjeldsaeter Sanitarium, Trondhjem, Norway," No. 15544 by Keystone. Note how awkwardly Wilhelm holds his left arm and its concealment in the previous view. Badly injured at his birth, the misshapen limb was a source of continual embarrassment for him.*

ing one daughter, another Alexandra or Alix, then but eight. She would go on in time to marry the heir to the Russian throne, Tsar Nicholas II. The marriage actually took place some

ten days after the funeral of the old Tsar, "Nicky's" father, in the midst of a period of national mourning. But then, Nicky's sense of timing (or luck) was never what one could call the best.

By 1894, Wilhelm II was on the German throne, Nicholas and Alexandra were on that of the Russian Empire, while back home in England, their *uncle*, Bertie, the Prince of Wales, was still waiting in the wings. His chance would finally come on

*"The Czar, Czarina and their relatives, Russia," No. 11684 by B.W. Kilburn, 1897 (cream mount). The Czar [Tsar], Nicholas II, stands at center, some three years after his accession to the troubled throne. His grandfather, the much-respected Alexander II, who had freed the serfs, had been blown up by an anarchist bomb in 1881. His own reign would be marked by the humiliating Russo-Japanese War, the tragedy of "Bloody Sunday," his son's painful hemophilia, and the sinister influence of Gregori Rasputin, the so-called "mad monk." Nicholas was the nephew of King Edward VII's wife; his own wife, the Czarina, Alexandra, here standing just left of center, was Edward's niece.*



Copyright 1897, by R. W. Kilburn.

11684, The Czar, Czarina and their relatives, Russia.



January 22nd, 1901, as the new century began and the old Queen finally expired after a reign of more than 63 years.

He had been forced to wait almost too long. In little over nine years, he too was dead, and the last of the three cousins, the boy who had not expected to be king at all, came to the throne as George V.

In the long-established tradition of second sons of British monarchs, George had spent much of his life serving in the Navy.<sup>3</sup> Though possessing only very limited powers himself, George would quickly become a source of great strength and stability in turbulent times, a focal point for unity and patriotism in a Britain rent by political unrest, troubles in Ireland, and increasingly militant suffrage protests. The latter culminated horrifyingly for the new King in 1913 when one of the more extreme suffragettes, Emily Davidson, threw herself in front of the King's horse during the running of the Derby and was trampled to death.<sup>4</sup> The King himself would soon get a sense of what that must have been like for, on a visit to the front in the early days of the war, he himself would be thrown by his startled

horse and badly trampled, resulting in serious and painful (though non-life-threatening) injuries.

The reign itself had begun with a constitutional crisis of the first magnitude, inherited from his father. In Parliament, the hereditary House of Lords was repeatedly blocking important measures passed by the popularly elected Commons. It was the "twilight of the aristocracy" and the traditionalists weren't about to give up without a fight. George had to threaten to create enough new Peers to swamp the Lords to force the obstructionists to knuckle under. He and England would soon face an even more substantive challenge.

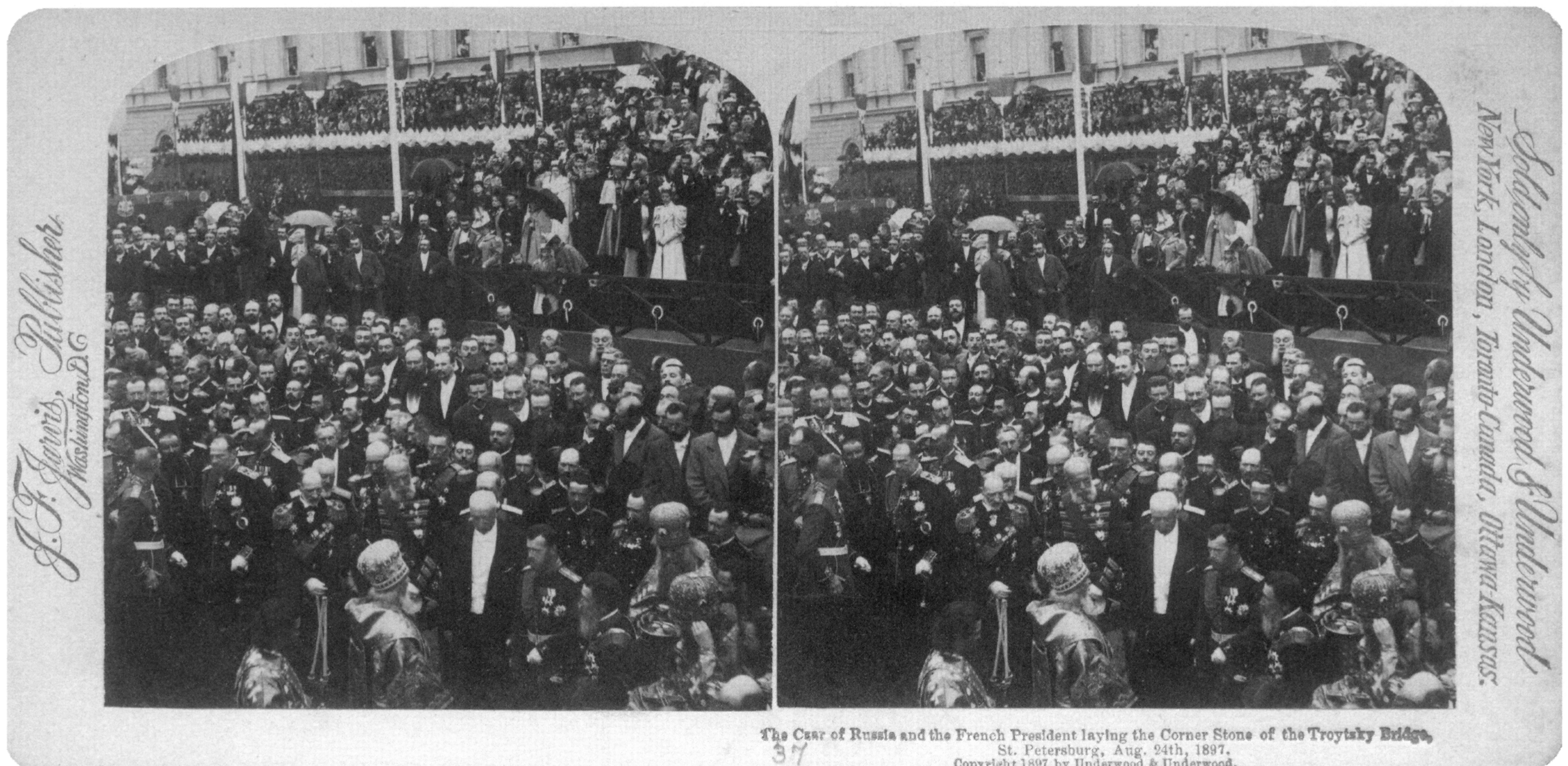
King Edward's funeral in London in May of 1910 had seen a great gathering of the crowned heads of Europe, the last such gathering on this scale before it all came crashing down in the great cataclysm now just four short years away. All three cousins had been there among the mourners, the new English King, the German Kaiser, and the Russian Tsar.<sup>5</sup> In years to come, the funeral would assume an almost epochal status, its symbolism only growing over time. The Edwardian Age was over; a

new, more terrifying and dangerous 20th Century was about to begin.

In a Europe beset by exploding arms budgets and increasingly militant rhetoric, the three cousins might well have used their family connections to defuse the potentially explosive situation; they did not and the eldest among them in fact only made matters incalculably worse. Bismarck was long gone but Germany had a new champion of "blut und isen," a man whose rabidly militant speeches unnerved all of Europe—the German Kaiser.

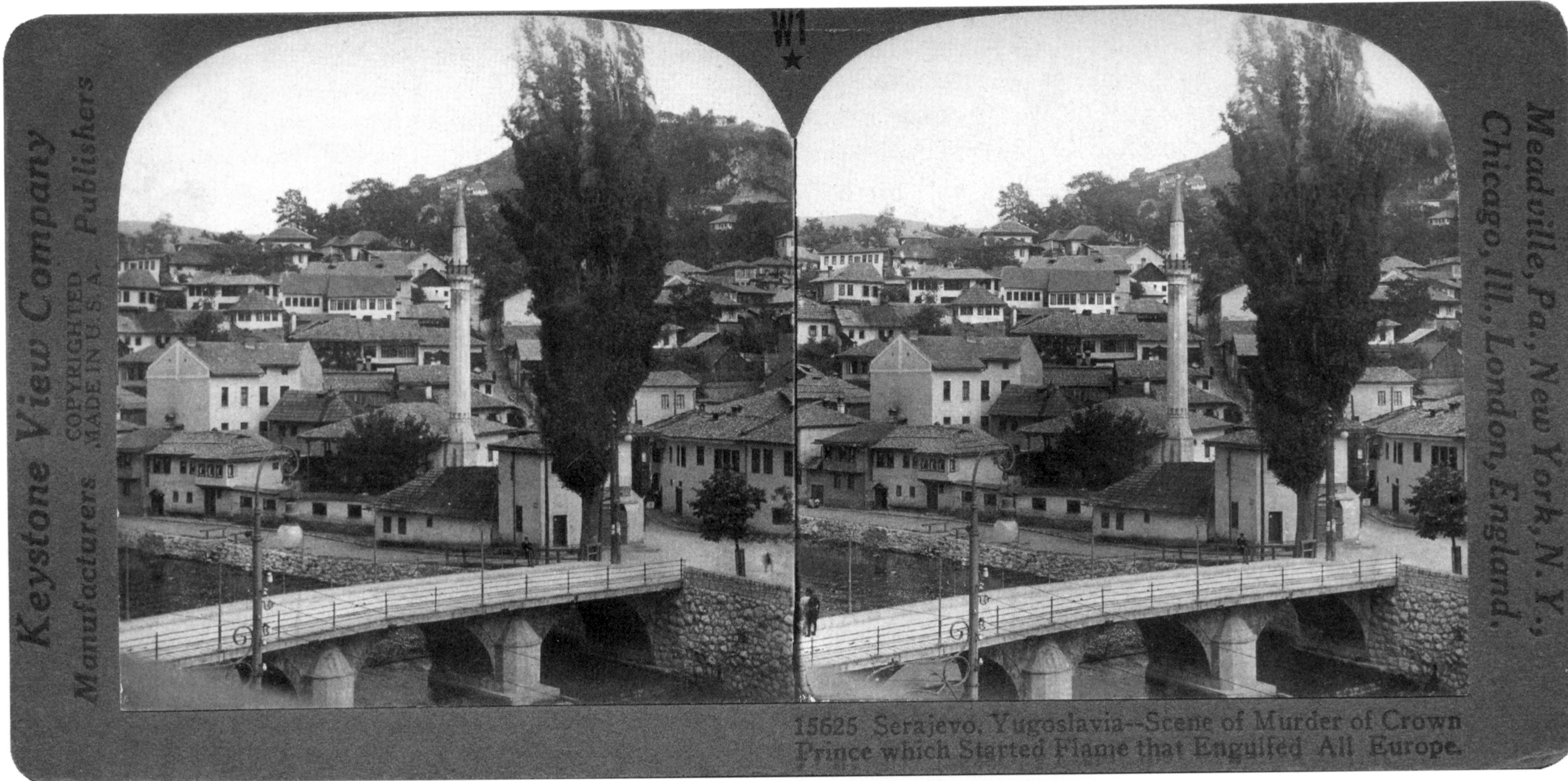
And so, the European nations had long ago begun to form alliances. By 1914, the Continent was largely divided into two armed camps, known respectively as the Triple Entente and the Triple Alliance. Each was designed to assure safety against attack by the other. The former was made up of Russia and France, together with England which was informally aligned with France but not with Russia (hence, *entente* or "understanding"), while the latter was made up of Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy—which in the event would weasel out of its commitment on a technicality. (Making matters more confusing, it is the Entente *not* the Alliance that, during the war, would become known as the "Allies," while the latter would simply be known as the "Central Powers.") Like the post-WWII Western and Soviet alliances, they were designed to prevent war by making the

*"The Czar of Russia and the French President laying the Corner Stone of the Troytzky Bridge, St. Petersburg, Aug. 24th, 1897," by Underwood (cream mount). Of all the great European powers at the start of World War I, France was the only one that was not a monarchy. French President Faure stands next to the bemedalled Nicholas at lower right center; Faure's time in office (1895-99) was marred by fallout from the notorious Dreyfus affair, the sad business of a Jewish officer in the French Army falsely convicted of spying for the Germans and sentenced to Devil's Island despite the fact that several government officials knew him to be innocent.*



The Czar of Russia and the French President laying the Corner Stone of the Troytzky Bridge, St. Petersburg, Aug. 24th, 1897. Copyright 1897 by Underwood & Underwood.





*"Sarajevo, Yugoslavia - Scene of Murder of Crown Prince which started Flame that Engulfed All Europe," No. 15625 by Keystone (No. 1 in the 300-card World War set). It was here that Princip's assassination of Austro-Hungarian Archduke Franz Ferdinand set in motion the domino effect that led to World War I. The region had been annexed by Austria in 1908, leading to much unrest among the Bosnian Serb population; ironically, Ferdinand favored better, more equal treatment for the Serbs within the Empire. Sarajevo became part of Yugoslavia (an expanded Serbia) at the end of the war.*

prospect appallingly daunting for their rival but each held a fatal trap; they virtually ensured that even the smallest armed clash would rapidly escalate into a full-blown continent-wide catastrophe.

Making matters worse were two wild cards, the explosive ethnic mix that was the Austro-Hungarian Empire, where any one of a number of nationalistic grievances, real or imagined, might boil up into an international crisis at any time, and the Russian policy of "Pan-Slavism," support for the fellow slavic peoples of Eastern Europe, which might well embolden tiny countries like Serbia to take a more aggressive posture.

Enter Gavrilo Princip. As the heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary motored through the southern imperial town of Sarajevo on June 28th, Princip was one of a number of young ethnic Serbs determined to wreak vengeance for wrongs suffered by their fellows at the hands of what they saw as a cruel and heartless dynasty. For a time, luck was on the side of the Archduke as his car whizzed past all but one of the would-be assassins. Then the driver took a wrong turn and was forced to back up, coming to a halt right in front of Gavrilo Princip. The Arch-

duke and his wife were both promptly shot to death.

Though Princip and his fellow gunmen were Austro-Hungarian nationals, Empire officials believed they had been aided by their ethnic compatriots in Serbia and made a number of severe demands on the tiny country. In the event, the Serbs proved quite accommodating, agreeing to most of the Austrian demands and offering to negotiate the rest. It wasn't enough. And so it began.

In the event, nothing worked out the way it was supposed to. The German drive through neutral Belgium was halted, barely, along the Marne River at the start of September and the Kaiser's forces never did get to Paris. All they had achieved was to bring a new country, England, with its powerful Navy, into the fray.

Meanwhile, on the Eastern Front, when the long-delayed Russian drive finally got underway, the Germans quickly smashed the offensive at Tannenberg and the Masurian Lakes. On both fronts, soldiers soon put aside their rifles for shovels, and four years of bloody and unproductive trench fighting ensued. By the start of 1918, both sides had been bled dry, and it was only the arrival of tens of thousands of fresh, untested

American troops that turned the tide and led to German collapse.

And so, at 11AM on November 11th, 1918, the war of the three cousins came to an end with the great Armistice. It had been a war with few winners, mostly losers. Chief among the latter were the great monarchies of Europe.

In Russia, the long-established Romanov dynasty had already come to a bloody end. In a country convulsed by violent revolution, the entire royal family, Nicholas II, Alexandra, and their five children were all placed under house arrest at Ekaterinburg by Lenin's forces, then, in mid-July of 1918, unceremoniously shot. Their captors were alarmed at the approach of White Russian forces and feared the royals might somehow escape. The Bolsheviks were nothing if not efficient; they even shot the servants.<sup>6</sup>

In retrospect it had been an inauspicious reign right from the start when a crowd's panic had led to thousands of casualties and marred the coronation festivities. Then had come the appalling business of the Russo-Japanese War in 1904-05, when the Tsar's forces in Manchuria had been brutally mauled on both land and sea by the supposedly inferior, upstart Japanese. To retrieve what it could from a bad situation, the Baltic Fleet had sailed halfway around the world only to be obliterated by the Japanese at Tsushima. It was the final straw.



For an autocratic regime to remain in power in a land seething with unrest, it must maintain at least the illusion of military prowess and the war had dispelled even that. Popular agitation increased, culminating in the dreadful business of "Bloody Sunday" when government troops attacked a crowd of peaceful protesters led by a priest, resulting in hundreds of casualties. This led to a number of reforms, including establishment of a representative assembly, the Duma, admittedly largely window-dressing. Nevertheless, it might have led to a more moderate, constitutional monarchy in time, had it not been for the radical, Marxist revolutionaries known as the Bolsheviks. That and the war. World War I had brought not redemption of Russia's military reputation but only appalling casualties, hardships on the home front, and further humiliation on the battlefield.

On a more personal level, Nicholas yearned, like England's Henry VIII of old, for a male heir to extend the line, and, like Henry, Nicholas experienced a series of frustrations. Year after year, Alexandra had produced a series of daughters, four in all, before fate finally relented and gave the Tsar a son.

Nicholas' joy was short-lived, however, for the boy, the Czarevich or Crown Prince, Alexis, was soon found to be afflicted by the painful, terrifying, and potentially lethal condition of hemophilia, a hereditary malady that inhibits the clotting of

the blood, and which he likely acquired from his mother's family line. Nothing seemed to work on the massive, subcutaneous bruises and excruciating pain. Nothing that is until the arrival of a most disreputable figure from the wilds of Siberia.

His name was Gredori Rasputin and he was an unkempt, even filthy, wilderness monk or "starets" with the morals of an alley cat. He did, however, have an uncanny power to ease the boy's condition through hypnosis and thus acquired an unseemly influence over the royal family, where he remained, a malevolent shadow hovering in the background until his murder in December of 1916. Even then his ominous presence seemed to linger, for he had predicted that his own demise would lead to that of the royal family "within a year." All of which came true.

As the war continued to spiral out of control, the Army mutinied, a moderate, Alexander Kerensky, came to power, and in March of 1917 Nicholas was forced to abdicate in favor of his brother. Any hopes of a quiet retirement were quickly dashed, however, when the leader of the Bolsheviks, Lenin, returned from exile, spirited across the border in a sealed railway car, courtesy of the Germans.

Lenin was demanding a government based on workers' councils or "soviets." Russia withdrew from the war but was soon convulsed by bloody revolution as the various factions struggled for power. The royal family were soon sequestered, under humiliating and deteriorating conditions. And hence, a year later, to Ekaterinburg.

All of the other powerful, absolutist monarchies of Europe suffered similar, though non-lethal, fates. As the military collapsed, the German people rose up, the Kaiser fled to exile in Holland, and, with the monarchy abolished, the Hohenzollern royal line ended, if not literally at least as rulers. Austria-Hungary was itself dismembered into its various ethnic components, and the ancient Hapsburg monarchy was dissolved. Even on the southeastern border, the old Ottoman Empire gave way to modern Turkey and a whole slew of European-administered "protectorates" throughout the Mideast region (much to the annoyance of the local Arab population).

Only the more moderate, constitutional monarchies escaped the carnage, England being chief among them. Here, where the royal family had adopted the less Germanic sounding surname of Windsor, George V ruled on for two more

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*"Mur Tschoffen," Wall in Dinant before which Germans Shot Many Loyal Belgians," No. 18768 by Keystone, No. 12 in the World War set. It was not just the violation of Belgian neutrality but atrocities against the civilian population that first helped to solidify American public opinion against the German cause. The U-boats came later.*



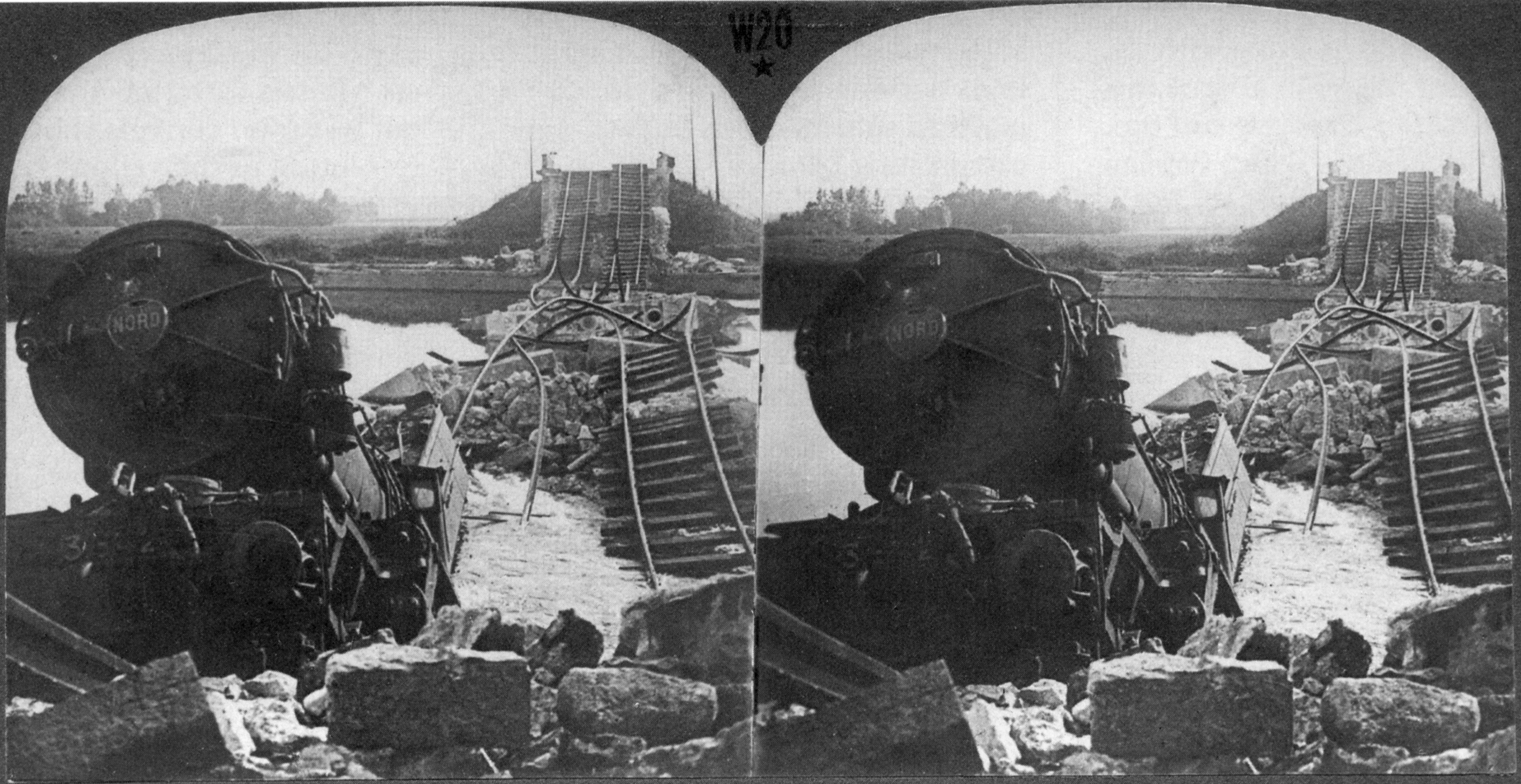
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18769 "Mur Tschoffen," Wall in Dinant before which Germans Shot Many Loyal Belgians.



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V18825 Tangled Ruins of Marne Bridge Blown Up by Germans and Red Cross Train Wreck.

*"Tangled Ruins of Marne Bridge Blown Up by Germans and Red Cross Train Wreck," No. V18825 (ex-Underwood) by Keystone, No. 20 in the World War set. It was here along this northern French river that the German advance was halted just short of Paris in September 1914 and the war began to morph into a more static trench-based conflict. Ironically, most of the Marne bridges were destroyed by the French to hamper the German advance.*

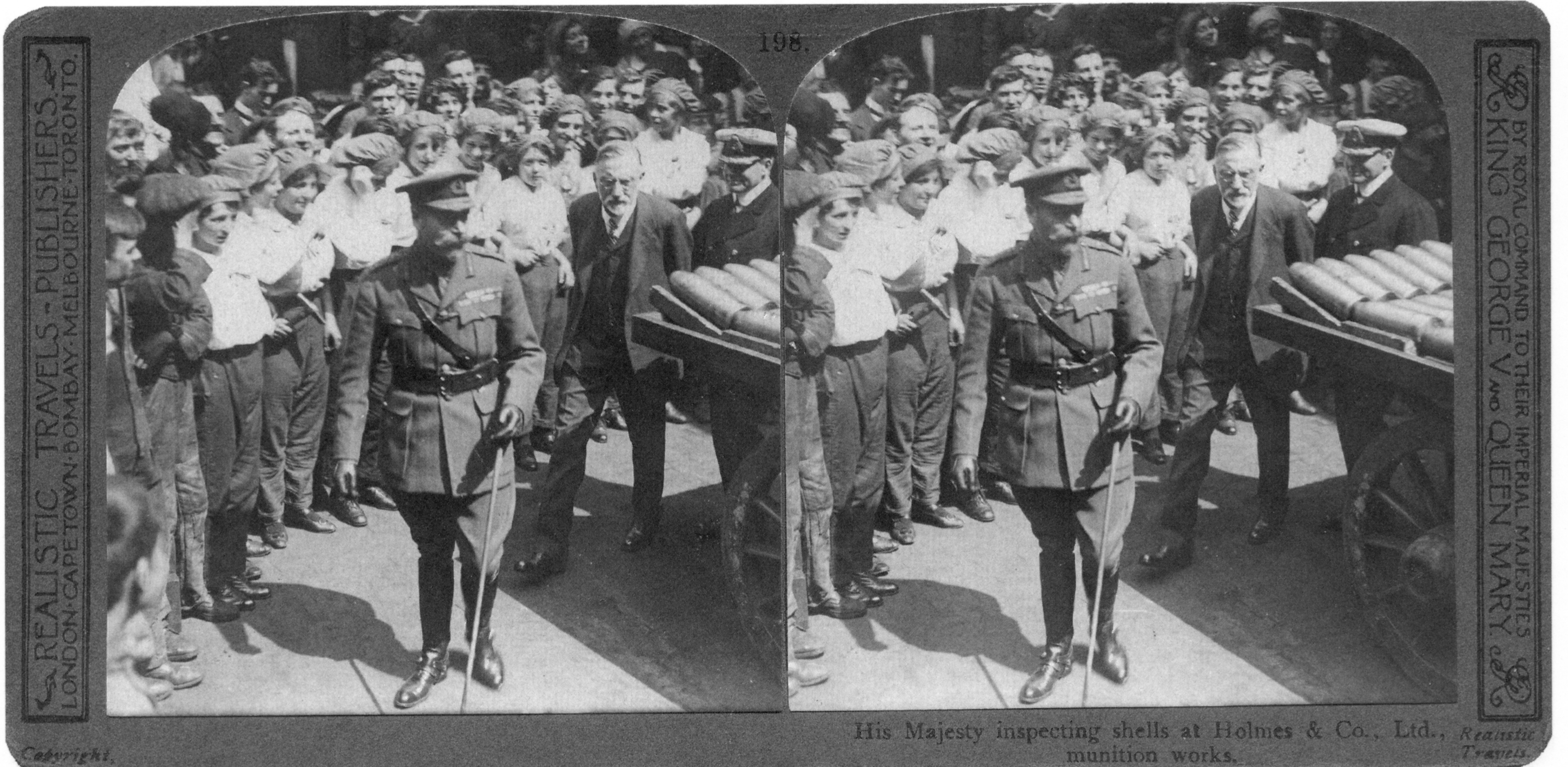
decades before succumbing in 1936.<sup>7</sup> Yet here too, history would repeat itself, as his eldest son, Edward VIII, would abdicate the throne in little over a year to marry an American divorcee, leaving his younger brother, "Bertie," who suffered from an embarrassing speech impediment and had never dreamed of becoming king, to ascend the throne as George VI. Like his father, he too would lead his country through a devastating world

war, with Germany as the principal opponent, and live on through the immediate post-war years before passing the crown to his daughter, Elizabeth II, who would go on to rival Victoria in longevity.

The war of the three cousins, known at the time as the "Great War" and remembered today as World War I, would have a bitter and enduring legacy.

According to the Bible, "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord." Although in this case, it was more like "Vengeance is mine, saith the French." With Germany's economy in total collapse, her cities convulsed with unrest, and her people facing

*"His Majesty inspecting shells at Holmes & Co., Ltd., munition works," by the British-based Realistic Travels (grey mount). All three monarch-cousins played important though non-combat roles in the war. Nicholas in fact assumed personal command of the Russian armies toward the close, but to no avail. With most of the men in the trenches, much armaments production was in the hands of women, like those seen here with George V.*



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BY ROYAL COMMAND TO THEIR IMPERIAL MAJESTIES  
 KING GEORGE V AND QUEEN MARY

His Majesty inspecting shells at Holmes & Co., Ltd., munition works.





5116—Entrance to the Kaiser's Exile, Doorn, Holland

"Entrance to the Kaiser's Exile, Doorn, Holland," No. 5116 by W. E. Troutman (grey mount). It was here, at this fairly modest estate, that the former German emperor spent most of his remaining years.

the prospect of imminent famine as a result of the wartime blockade, the French were nevertheless poised to exact maximum retribution from their defeated foe. In the subsequent Treaty of Versailles, the Germans were forced to accept total responsibility for causing the war, were stripped of their arms, their colonies, and much of their European territory, which was used to establish weak new countries like Czechoslovakia and Poland, countries whose border regions contained large ethnic Ger-

man minorities. It was a recipe for disaster.

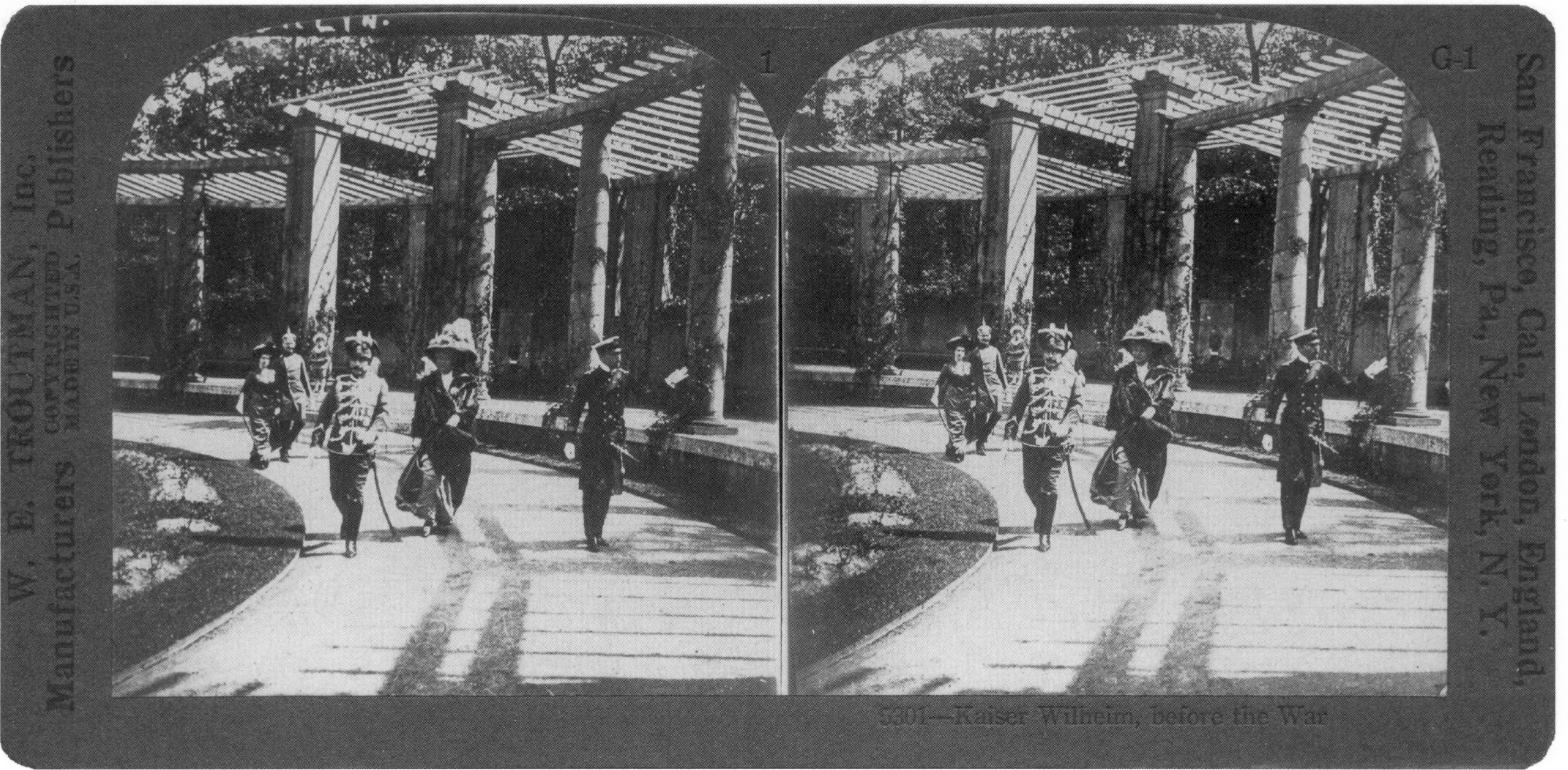
As if that weren't enough, Germany would be forced to pay huge monetary reparations (with the exact amount to be determined later) in compensation for all the damages caused by the war. The French even wanted to stick their defeated foe with the cost of pensions for war

veterans but were persuaded with some difficulty that *that* was a bit much.

The result was absolute chaos throughout Germany with money rendered worthless by hyperinflation of truly astronomical proportions (with prices rising at a rate of *several thousand percent* in just a few months). But the Germans have long memories and would not soon forgive and forget. None of which was lost on an Austrian-born former

(Continued on page 9)

"Kaiser Wilhelm before the War," No. 5301 by Troutman (grey mount). The Kaiser, just left of center, in happier days. Churchill spoke of the Emperor's "hundreds of glittering uniforms," certainly no exaggeration given the display seen here.



5301—Kaiser Wilhelm, before the War



.....  
"Trio" by  
George Sugarman.  
.....



.....  
"Lippincott I" by  
James Rosati.  
.....



## The King, the Kaiser and the Tsar (Continued from page 19)

corporal who had fought in the German Army in the late war. The experience only served to heighten both his bitterness and his political ambitions. His time—and Germany's—would come!

There were some among the Allies, of course, who saw the Versailles Treaty for exactly what it was. Among them was the former First Lord of the Admiralty, Winston Churchill, who memorably said that Versailles was not a peace at all, but only a twenty-year truce (although he may have been quoting a French general here). Nevertheless, as usual, he was right on the money, even as to the time frame.

In May of 1940, as Hitler's troops swept across the Low Countries on

their way to Paris (successfully this time), one who watched them pass was an elderly gentleman whom time had passed by. For years, he had largely remained at his spacious house at Doorn, puttering among his gardens, enjoying light fiction and mysteries, and delighting in the new sound motion pictures; he was particularly impressed by Anna Neagle's portrayal of the legendary English queen in *Victoria the Great*. But then, he was prejudiced. In January of 1939, when he turned eighty, he had been particularly delighted to receive a warm message of congratulations from England's new king, George VI.

This new war was not his war, although it was in a sense his legacy. He disapproved of much of the Nazi

program, including their blatant anti-Semitism. He did like some of the leaders, particularly Hermann Goering, who had visited him twice. The old man had not gone home to Germany, although now it seemed that Germany had come to him. The oldest and last surviving of the three royal cousins, the former Kaiser Wilhelm II would die in June of 1941, just weeks before Hitler unleashed his massive and ultimately suicidal attack upon the Soviet Union.

Attitudes toward the old Kaiser had much mellowed over the years, particularly in England, where his sons and grandchildren had long been welcomed, and Churchill's government had even offered the old

*(Continued on page 30)*