

Requisiten <sup>to</sup> September 1914.

## GERMAN-AUSTRALIANS.

To the Editor.

Sir—Mr. Elkan asserts that he would put a bullet through his own head before he would take up arms against the land of his birth—Germany. This, notwithstanding the fact that he admits having taken the oath of allegiance to the British Crown, and that beneath the benign conditions of British rule and the protection of the grand old flag he has for many years made his living, reared his family, and been a partaker in all the rights and privileges which have been won by Britons in the never-ending warfare against tyranny and oppression. In no other country but ours, save possibly America, can the alien find so safe a haven of refuge from the demands made upon his national, civil, and religious liberty, and after all this we have one at least who declares in effect that he would remain neutral when the iron heel of German aggression threatens the very existence of the sanctuary, the blessings of which he has so gladly availed himself. Why, a dog may be safely relied upon to resist any attack upon the person or property of the hand which feeds him. The saving grace in this instance is that Mr. Elkan shows clearly just where he is at the present time, for he who is not for us must certainly be regarded as against us. It is a thousand pities that others of his kidney who may feel the same way as he does about our enemy do not as publicly state their feelings. I believe that there are some who sport a patriotic emblem publicly, but in their hearts and in their homes condemn the British and the Union Jack and all that it stands for. For many years Mr. Elkan has taken full advantage of your open columns to express his opinions, and in so doing has frequently adversely criticised the British institutions, customs, and so on, either directly or by odious comparison with those of Germany, his allegiance to which de facto one might imagine he had entirely forsworn. As an instance of the character of his arguments witness a letter upon the European outlook published just after the declaration of war by Austria on Servia. In his letter he lauded the German Kaiser, as only a hot partisan of the ultra-military German party should be expected to do, and described him as the European Angel of Peace! He quoted many alleged instances of how, had the Kaiser desired, he could have waged an annihilating war on England during the last decade or so. He inferred from the loud "Hochs" of the excited mob before the British Embassy at Berlin that England had nothing to fear from Germany; but within a few days on German treaty obligations with regard to Belgium neutrality had been ruthlessly broken; the German war party, with the Kaiser at its head, had shown itself in its true colours; and England had no alternative but to follow her ancient custom of ranging herself on the side of the weak against the aggressor. Thank God that there is no dearth of volunteers when Britain calls. No compulsion is required, and however dreadful the picture which

may be painted of the horrors of this war, let me tell Mr. Elkan that these horrors are not of British making or seeking; neither will such pictures deter even the humblest true Briton from showing his mettle.

I am, Sir, &c.,

CIVIS BRITANNIARUM SUM.

Sir—I note in The Register Mr. Elkan's kindly reference to the treatment he and fellow-Germans receive under the British flag. He says—"We came out here to better our positions—not so much from a financial point of view as from the point of freedom; the trammels and social grooves had become irksome to us." Mr. Elkan winds up his letter—"I wish to God it were all over and peace—everlasting peace—established once more for good and all." Very good sentiments, and we appreciate them; but what Britons, especially those in Australia, want to know is—as they consider that Britain is not fighting against the German people, but assisting their allies to defend the freedom of Europe from the military despotism and treachery of the Kaiser's iron heel—whether German-Australians prefer Germany coming out on top, and they (with us) to go back to the conditions he refers to, or as German-Australians to defend their adopted land against this military despotism and retain the freedom and comforts they now profess to appreciate? There is an ancient game—"Heads I win, and tails you lose." Who are playing it?

I am, Sir, &c., FIDELITY.

Sir—Mr. Elkan's letter states plainly that, to use his own words "before he would take up arms against the country of his birth, he would rather put a bullet through his head, and so would many more." A statement like this is frank, and requires no qualification owing to the plain English used. I wonder how many German-Australians Mr. Elkan speaks for,

and also what German members of Australian Parliaments will say to the indiscreet utterances of Mr. Elkan. Will the editor of The Register give us the full text of the oath of allegiance as signed by the German naturalized British subject, and let the public know the responsibility the taking of the oath demands from the person who signs it? Mr. Elkan evidently does not regard Australia as a British possession, discovered by an intrepid British explorer, and settled in the first instance by some of Britain's best. Germany has always lacked the men capable of going into unknown regions and planting the German flag, but now wants to get certain territories (peopled and made prosperous by other nations after years of struggle, industry, and thrift) at the point of the bayonet. Be loyal, you English-speaking people, to yourselves, your mother tongue, and your commerce. Sink your petty differences, and remember the dollar is mightier than the sword. Keep your trade as far as possible within English-speaking countries. Even if you pay a little more you are only helping your fellow-countrymen to live.

I am, Sir. &c., BRITISH AUSTRALIAN.

[The oath of allegiance provided for in the schedule to the Constitution states:—"I, A.B., do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Victoria, her heirs and successors, according to law. So help me God!" The name of the King or Queen for the time being is, of course, substituted as necessary.—Ed.]

Sir—I am not going to enter into any correspondence on this matter. I thought I made my position perfectly clear, and also that of others, in the same situation. I am asked publicly for a further explanation with regard to my oath of allegiance. An oath is an oath, and as such is binding. There can be no question on that head. I cheerfully submit to its conditions. Concerning taking up arms, I am past that age, even under German military law; I explained before about the age limit. May I ask Mr. Scott a question too, in answer to his, although I do not want a public one? What would he do, if he had been a resident of Berlin for 30 years, and an English army threatened invasion of Berlin? Would he pull trigger against his own countrymen, his own flesh and blood? He would not be compelled to do so, as long as he declared himself and remained neutral, and I am sure no man, only a renegade, would volunteer to take up arms against the sons of his birthplace and erstwhile country. In closing this correspondence, I want you to publish a copy of a document belonging to me:—

By His Britannic Majesty's Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to His Majesty the

German Emperor, King of Prussia, &c. These are to request and require in the name of His Majesty all those whom it may concern, to allow Mr. E. Elkan, accompanied by his wife and daughter, &c., &c., to pass freely without let or hindrance and to afford every assistance and protection of which they may stand in need. Signed, Frank C. Lascelles.

This speaks for itself. It is a request made by the English Ambassador, acting for H.M. the King of England, to protect and assist me and mine. In Australia the good sense of its citizens is the only and all-sufficient protection required for the sons and daughters of all nations, as long as they behave themselves decently.

I am, Sir, &c., E. ELKAN.

Sir—If the loyalty of the Germans is more than lip-service, let them subscribe as a body according to their means, to help us in our difficulties, and to show their gratitude for the protection afforded.

I am, Sir, &c., "WATCHER."

Sir—A number of readers of The Register are interested in the voluminous letters Mr. Elkan supplies. It is remembered that a few years ago Mr. Elkan was elevated to the "Order of the Bear" by the Kaiser, a distinction said at the time to be equivalent to a knighthood in Great Britain; and people wondered then why this honour should have been conferred. It must, of course, have been for some meritorious service to the German Empire, otherwise why should high officials such as their consular agent been overlooked?

I am, Sir, &c., BRITISHER.

Sir—Mr. Eikan “lets the cat out of the bag” when he defines the true position of many Germans in Australia; for he says in effect that, so long as England retains her grand colony—Australia—we Germans are loyal British subjects; but if Germany invaded Australia we then become practically Germans again, by declining to defend the country against them. And not with the said bullet through their heads; I refuse to believe that. Does this verse from that old seventeenth century song, “The Vicar of Bray,” apply to the position?—

The illustrious House of Hanover,  
And Protestant succession,  
To these I do allegiance swear—  
While they can keep possession;  
For in my faith and loyalty  
I never more will falter,  
And George my lawful King shall be  
Until the times do alter.  
And this is law, I will maintain  
Until my dying day, sir—  
That whatsoever King may reign,  
Still I'll be the Vicar of Bray, Sir.

I am, Sir, &c., PRO PATRIA.

Sir—In The Register of September 4 appears a report of an extraordinary speech delivered by Mr. F. W. Lehmann, a native-born Australian, and a selected Labour candidate, in which he stated that it was not a pleasant thing to think of fighting against their own flesh and blood (referring to the Germans in Australia). How long has Mr. Lehmann been seized with such “humanitarian” views? Is he not a member of the party which stands for “preference to unionists,” and defends this policy by stating that the man who is not contributing to the funds of a union is not entitled to share in the benefits obtained by the union in its fights against employers? Is he not a member of the party of which one member said:—“If you see a non-unionist drowning, let him drown;” and have not he and the Germans in Australia reaped enormous benefits through living under the British flag? Has he not enjoyed the fruits of the British union? And, if so, is he not bound, by his own doctrine, to advocate that they who have benefited from the work of the British union should take their share of the responsibilities, and help to keep the union on a sound financial and fighting basis, ready for all emergencies? But while Mr. Lehmann is ready to fight his fellow-Australians—his brothers and sisters—who may not be members of an industrial union, is it possible that he is not prepared to fight the enemies of his country who threaten to extinguish the British race as a first-class Power—which dire calamity would quickly bring home to him, and those who think with him, the lack of freedom which would prevail if Germany should win the war. Mr. Lehmann stated that the British Labour Party was opposed to the war, and he bases his assertion on the action of one man, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald. To be logical, he should also condemn preference to unionists, because one member of the party, Mr. Donald Campbell, condemned it. But when Mr. Lehmann made that incorrect statement, and said that the coalminers of South Wales refused to work to fill the bunkers of our warships, he ignored the important

facts that the same coalminers have since worked every Sunday, and nine hours a day, to fill the bunkers. He need not, however, have gone 14,000 miles away to show what the Labour Party is doing; for the unionists at Cockatoo Island, Sydney, have suspended the working hours agreement to enable the ironworkers and engineers to work extra hours to fit the Australian warships for active service in the cause of the Empire, and to fight for Mr. Lehmann and me, among others. And at the very moment when Mr. Lehmann was making his indiscreet speech, every member of the Labour Party in England was touring the country recruiting for Kitchener's army! If he and others of his kind think that they should not fight for the Empire, they ought to take the advice which they so often give to non-unionists, "Either contribute to the union or get out!"

I am, Sir, &c., F. H. PROVIS,  
Murray Bridge, September 8.