VARIOUS

NEW YORK TIMES CURRENT HISTORY: THE EUROPEAN WAR, VOL 1, NO. 1

Various

New York Times Current History: The European War, Vol 1, No. 1

http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio_book/?art=35493383
New York Times Current History: The European War, Vol 1, No. 1 / From the Beginning to March, 1915:

Содержание

NUMBER I. 4
"Common Sense About the War" 4
I 4
II 56
III 71
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента. 119

Various
New York Times Current History: The European War, Vol 1, No. 1 / From the Beginning to March, 1915

NUMBER I.
WHAT MEN OF LETTERS SAY

"Common Sense About the War"

By George Bernard Shaw

I

"*Let a European war break out—the war, perhaps, between the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente, which so*

many journalists and politicians in England and Germany contemplate with criminal levity. If the combatants prove to be equally balanced, it may, after the first battles, smoulder on for thirty years. What will be the population of London, or Manchester, or Chemnitz, or Bremen, or Milan, at the end of it?" ("The Great Society," by Graham Wallas. June, 1914.)

(*Copyright, 1914, By The New York Times Company.*)

The time has now come to pluck up courage and begin to talk and write soberly about the war. At first the mere horror of it stunned the more thoughtful of us; and even now only those who are not in actual contact with or bereaved relation to its heartbreaking wreckage can think sanely about it, or endure to hear others discuss it coolly. As to the thoughtless, well, not for a moment dare I suggest that for the first few weeks they were all scared out of their wits; for I know too well that the British civilian does not allow his perfect courage to be questioned; only experienced soldiers and foreigners are allowed the infirmity of fear. But they certainly were—shall I say a little upset? They felt in that solemn hour that England was lost if only one single traitor in their midst let slip the truth about anything in the universe. It was a perilous time for me. I do not hold my tongue easily; and my inborn dramatic faculty and professional habit as a playwright prevent me from taking a one-sided view even when the most probable result of taking a many-sided one is prompt lynching. Besides, until Home Rule emerges from its present suspended animation, I shall retain my Irish capacity for criticising England

with something of the detachment of a foreigner, and perhaps with a certain slightly malicious taste for taking the conceit out of her. Lord Kitchener made a mistake the other day in rebuking the Irish volunteers for not rallying faster to the defense of "their country." They do not regard it as their country yet. He should have asked them to come forward as usual and help poor old England through a stiff fight. Then it would have been all right.

Having thus frankly confessed my bias, which you can allow for as a rifleman allows for the wind, I give my views for what they are worth. They will be of some use; because, however blinded I may be by prejudice or perversity, my prejudices in this matter are not those which blind the British patriot, and therefore I am fairly sure to see some things that have not yet struck him.

And first, I do not see this war as one which has welded Governments and peoples into complete and sympathetic solidarity as against the common enemy. I see the people of England united in a fierce detestation and defiance of the views and acts of Prussian Junkerism. And I see the German people stirred to the depths by a similar antipathy to English Junkerism, and anger at the apparent treachery and duplicity of the attack made on them by us in their extremest peril from France and Russia. I see both nations duped, but alas! not quite unwillingly duped, by their Junkers and Militarists into wreaking on one another the wrath they should have spent in destroying Junkerism and Militarism in their own country. And I see the Junkers and Militarists of England and Germany jumping at the chance

they have longed for in vain for many years of smashing one another and establishing their own oligarchy as the dominant military power in the world. No doubt the heroic remedy for this tragic misunderstanding is that both armies should shoot their officers and go home to gather in their harvests in the villages and make a revolution in the towns; and though this is not at present a practicable solution, it must be frankly mentioned, because it or something like it is always a possibility in a defeated conscript army if its commanders push it beyond human endurance when its eyes are opening to the fact that in murdering its neighbours it is biting off its nose to vex its face, besides riveting the intolerable yoke of Militarism and Junkerism more tightly than ever on its own neck. But there is no chance—or, as our Junkers would put it, no danger—of our soldiers yielding to such an ecstasy of common sense. They have enlisted voluntarily; they are not defeated nor likely to be; their communications are intact and their meals reasonably punctual; they are as pugnacious as their officers; and in fighting Prussia they are fighting a more deliberate, conscious, tyrannical, personally insolent, and dangerous Militarism than their own. Still, even for a voluntary professional army, that possibility exists, just as for the civilian there is a limit beyond which taxation, bankruptcy, privation, terror, and inconvenience cannot be pushed without revolution or a social dissolution more ruinous than submission to conquest. I mention all this, not to make myself wantonly disagreeable, but because military persons, thinking naturally

that there is nothing like leather, are now talking of this war as likely to become a permanent institution like the Chamber of Horrors at Madame Tussaud's, forgetting, I think, that the rate of consumption maintained by modern military operations is much greater relatively to the highest possible rate of production maintainable under the restrictions of war time than it has ever been before.

The Day of Judgment.

The European settlement at the end of the war will be effected, let us hope, not by a regimental mess of fire-eaters sitting around an up-ended drum in a vanquished Berlin or Vienna, but by some sort of Congress in which all the Powers (including, very importantly, the United States of America) will be represented. Now I foresee a certain danger of our being taken by surprise at that Congress, and making ourselves unnecessarily difficult and unreasonable, by presenting ourselves to it in the character of Injured Innocence. We shall not be accepted in that character. Such a Congress will most certainly regard us as being, next to the Prussians (if it makes even that exception), the most quarrelsome people in the universe. I am quite conscious of the surprise and scandal this anticipation may cause among my more highminded (*hochnaesig*, the Germans call it) readers. Let me therefore break it gently by expatiating for a while on the subject of Junkerism and Militarism generally, and on the history of the literary propaganda of war between England and Potsdam which has been going on openly for the last forty years on both sides.

I beg the patience of my readers during this painful operation. If it becomes unbearable, they can always put the paper down and relieve themselves by calling the Kaiser Attila and Mr. Keir Hardie a traitor twenty times or so. Then they will feel, I hope, refreshed enough to resume. For, after all, abusing the Kaiser or Keir Hardie or me will not hurt the Germans, whereas a clearer view of the political situation will certainly help us. Besides, I do not believe that the trueborn Englishman in his secret soul relishes the pose of Injured Innocence any more than I do myself. He puts it on only because he is told that it is respectable.

Junkers All.

What is a Junker? Is it a German officer of twenty-three, with offensive manners, and a habit of cutting down innocent civilians with his sabre? Sometimes; but not at all exclusively that or anything like that. Let us resort to the dictionary. I turn to the *Encyclopaedisches Woerterbuch* of Muret Sanders. Excuse its quaint German-English.

Junker = Young nobleman, younker, lording, country squire, country gentleman, squirearch. **Junkerberrschaft** = squirearchy, landocracy. **Junkerleben** = life of a country gentleman, (*figuratively*) a jolly life. **Junkerpartei** = country party. **Junkerwirtschaft** = doings of the country party.

Thus we see that the Junker is by no means peculiar to Prussia. We may claim to produce the article in a perfection that may well make Germany despair of ever surpassing us in that line. Sir Edward Grey is a Junker from his topmost hair

to the tips of his toes; and Sir Edward is a charming man, incapable of cutting down even an Opposition front bencher, or of telling a German he intends to have him shot. Lord Cromer is a Junker. Mr. Winston Churchill is an odd and not disagreeable compound of Junker and Yankee: his frank anti-German pugnacity is enormously more popular than the moral babble (Milton's phrase) of his sanctimonious colleagues. He is a bumptious and jolly Junker, just as Lord Curzon is an uppish Junker. I need not string out the list. In these islands the Junker is literally all over the shop.

It is very difficult for anyone who is not either a Junker or a successful barrister to get into an English Cabinet, no matter which party is in power, or to avoid resigning when we strike up the drum. The Foreign Office is a Junker Club. Our governing classes are overwhelmingly Junker: all who are not Junkers are riff-raff whose only claim to their position is the possession of ability of some sort: mostly ability to make money. And, of course, the Kaiser is a Junker, though less true-blue than the Crown Prince, and much less autocratic than Sir Edward Grey, who, without consulting us, sends us to war by a word to an ambassador and pledges all our wealth to his foreign allies by a stroke of his pen.

What Is a Militarist?

Now that we know what a Junker is, let us have a look at the Militarists. A Militarist is a person who believes that all real power is the power to kill, and that Providence is on the side of

the big battalions. The most famous Militarist at present, thanks to the zeal with which we have bought and quoted his book, is General Friedrich von Bernhardi. But we cannot allow the General to take precedence of our own writers as a Militarist propagandist. I am old enough to remember the beginning of the anti-German phase of that very ancient propaganda in England. The Franco-Prussian war of 1870-1871 left Europe very much taken aback. Up to that date nobody was afraid of Prussia, though everybody was a little afraid of France; and we were keeping "buffer States" between ourselves and Russia in the east. Germany had indeed beaten Denmark; but then Denmark was a little State, and was abandoned in her hour of need by those who should have helped her, to the great indignation of Ibsen. Germany had also beaten Austria; but somehow everybody seems able to beat Austria, though nobody seems able to draw the moral that defeats do not matter as much as the Militarists think, Austria being as important as ever. Suddenly Germany beat France right down into the dust, by the exercise of an organized efficiency in war of which nobody up to then had any conception. There was not a State in Europe that did not say to itself: "Good Heavens! what would happen if she attacked *us*?" We in England thought of our old-fashioned army and our old-fashioned commander George Ranger (of Cambridge), and our War Office with its Crimean tradition of imbecility; and we shook in our shoes. But we were not such fools as to leave it at that. We soon produced the first page of the Bernhardian

literature: an anonymous booklet entitled *The Battle of Dorking*. It was not the first page of English Militarist literature: you have only to turn back to the burst of glorification of war which heralded the silly Crimean campaign (Tennyson's *Maud* is a surviving sample) to find paeans to Mars which would have made Treitschke blush (perhaps they did); but it was the first page in which it was assumed as a matter of course that Germany and not France or Russia was England's natural enemy. *The Battle of Dorking* had an enormous sale; and the wildest guesses were current as to its authorship. And its moral was "To arms; or the Germans will besiege London as they besieged Paris." From that time until the present, the British propaganda of war with Germany has never ceased. The lead given by *The Battle of Dorking* was taken up by articles in the daily press and the magazines. Later on came the Jingo fever (anti-Russian, by the way; but let us not mention that just now), Stead's *Truth About the Navy*, Mr. Spenser Wilkinson, the suppression of the Channel Tunnel, Mr. Robert Blatchford, Mr. Garvin, Admiral Maxse, Mr. Newbolt, Mr. Rudyard Kipling, *The National Review*, Lord Roberts, the Navy League, the imposition of an Imperialist Foreign Secretary on the Liberal Cabinet, Mr. Wells's *War in the Air* (well worth re-reading just now), and the Dreadnoughts. Throughout all these agitations the enemy, the villain of the piece, the White Peril, was Prussia and her millions of German conscripts. At first, in *The Battle of Dorking* phase, the note was mainly defensive. But from the moment when the Kaiser

began to copy our Armada policy by building a big fleet, the anti-German agitation became openly aggressive; and the cry that the German fleet or ours must sink, and that a war between England and Germany was bound to come some day, speedily ceased to be merely a cry with our Militarists and became an axiom with them. And what our Militarists said our Junkers echoed; and our Junker diplomatists played for. The story of how they manoeuvred to hem Germany and Austria in with an Anglo-Franco-Russian combination will be found told with soldierly directness and with the proud candor of a man who can see things from his own side only in the article by Lord Roberts in the current number of *The Hibbert Journal* (October, 1914). There you shall see also, after the usual nonsense about Nietzsche, the vision of "British administrators bearing the White Man's Burden," of "young men, fresh from the public schools of Britain, coming eagerly forward to carry on the high traditions of Imperial Britain in each new dependency which comes under our care," of "our fitness as an Imperial race," of "a great task committed to us by Providence," of "the will to conquer that has never failed us," of our task of "assuming control of one-fifth of the earth's surface and the care of one in five of all the inhabitants of the world." Not a suggestion that the inhabitants of the world are perhaps able to take care of themselves. Not even a passing recollection when that White Man's Burden is in question that the men outside the British Empire, and even inside the German Empire, are by no means exclusively black. Only the *sancta*

simplicitas that glories in "the proud position of England," the "sympathy, tolerance, prudence and benevolence of our rule" in the east (as shown, the Kaiser is no doubt sarcastically remarking, in the Delhi sedition trial), the chivalrous feeling that it is our highest duty to save the world from the horrible misfortune of being governed by anybody but those young men fresh from the public schools of Britain. Change the words Britain and British to Germany and German, and the Kaiser will sign the article with enthusiasm. *His* opinion, *his* attitude (subject to that merely verbal change) word for word.

Six of One: Half-a-Dozen of The Other.

Now, please observe that I do not say that the agitation was unreasonable. I myself steadily advocated the formation of a formidable armament, and ridiculed the notion that, we, who are wasting hundreds of millions annually on idlers and wasters, could not easily afford double, treble, quadruple our military and naval expenditure. I advocated the compulsion of every man to serve his country, both in war and peace. The idlers and wasters perceiving dimly that I meant the cost to come out of their pockets and meant to use the admission that riches should not exempt a man from military service as an illustration of how absurd it is to allow them to exempt him from civil service, did not embrace my advocacy with enthusiasm; so I must reaffirm it now lest it should be supposed that I am condemning those whose proceedings I am describing. Though often horribly wrong in principle, they were quite right in practice as far as they went.

But they must stand to their guns now that the guns are going off. They must not pretend that they were harmless Radical lovers of peace, and that the propaganda of Militarism and of inevitable war between England and Germany is a Prussian infamy for which the Kaiser must be severely punished. That is not fair, not true, not gentlemanly. We began it; and if they met us half-way, as they certainly did, it is not for us to reproach them. When the German fire-eaters drank to The Day (of Armageddon) they were drinking to the day of which our Navy League fire-eaters had first said "It's bound to come." Therefore, let us have no more nonsense about the Prussian Wolf and the British Lamb, the Prussian Machiavelli and the English Evangelist. We cannot shout for years that we are boys of the bulldog breed, and then suddenly pose as gazelles. No. When Europe and America come to settle the treaty that will end this business (for America is concerned in it as much as we are), they will not deal with us as the lovable and innocent victims of a treacherous tyrant and a savage soldiery. They will have to consider how these two incorrigibly pugnacious and inveterately snobbish peoples, who have snarled at one another for forty years with bristling hair and grinning fangs, and are now rolling over with their teeth in one another's throats, are to be tamed into trusty watch-dogs of the peace of the world. I am sorry to spoil the saintly image with a halo which the British Jingo journalist sees just now when he looks in the glass; but it must be done if we are to behave reasonably in the imminent day of reckoning.

And now back to Friedrich von Bernhardi.

General Von Bernhardi.

Like many soldier-authors, Friedrich is very readable; and he maintains the good and formidable part of the Bismarck tradition: that is, he is not a humbug. He looks facts in the face; he deceives neither himself nor his readers; and if he were to tell lies—as he would no doubt do as stoutly as any British, French, or Russian officer if his country's safety were at stake—he would know that he was telling them. Which last we think very bad taste on his part, if not downright wickedness.

It is true that he cites Frederick the Great as an exemplary master of war and of *Weltpolitik*. But his chief praise in this department is reserved for England. It is from our foreign policy, he says, that he has learnt what our journalists denounce as "the doctrine of the bully, of the materialist, of the man with gross ideals: a doctrine of diabolical evil." He frankly accepts that doctrine from us (as if our poor, honest muddle-heads had ever formulated anything so intellectual as a doctrine), and blames us for nothing but for allowing the United States to achieve their solidarity and become formidable to us when we might have divided them by backing up the South in the Civil War. He shows in the clearest way that if Germany does not smash England, England will smash Germany by springing at her the moment she can catch her at a disadvantage. In a word he prophesies that we, his great masters in *Realpolitik*, will do precisely what our Junkers have just made us do, It is we who have carried

out the Bernhardi programme: it is Germany who has neglected it. He warned Germany to make an alliance with Italy, Austria, Turkey, and America, before undertaking the subjugation, first of France, then of England. But a prophet is not without honour save in his own country; and Germany has allowed herself to be caught with no ally but Austria between France and Russia, and thereby given the English Junkers their opportunity. They have seized it with a punctuality that must flatter Von Bernhardi, even though the compliment be at the expense of his own country. The Kaiser did not give them credit for being keener Junkers than his own. It was an unpleasant, indeed an infuriating surprise. All that a Kaiser could do without unbearable ignominy to induce them to keep their bulldogs off and give him fair play with his two redoubtable foes, he did. But they laughed Frederick the Great's laugh and hurled all our forces at him, as he might have done to us, on Bernhardian principles, if he had caught us at the same disadvantage. Officially, the war is Junker-cut-Junker, militarist-cut-Militarist; and we must fight it out, not *Heuchler*-cut-Hypocrite, but hammer and tongs.

Militarist Myopia.

Unofficially, it is quite another matter. Democracy, even Social-Democracy, though as hostile to British Junkers as to German ones, and under no illusion as to the obsolescence and colossal stupidity of modern war, need not lack enthusiasm for the combat, which may serve their own ends better than those of their political opponents. For Bernhardi the Brilliant and our

own very dull Militarists are alike mad: the war will not do any of the things for which they rushed into it. It is much more likely to do the things they most dread and deprecate: in fact, it has already swept them into the very kind of organization they founded an Anti-Socialist League to suppress. To shew how mad they are, let us suppose the war carries out their western program to the last item. Suppose France rises from the war victorious, happy and glorious, with Alsace and Lorraine regained, Rheims cathedral repaired in the best modern trade style, and a prodigious indemnity in her pocket! Suppose we tow the German fleet into Portsmouth, and leave Hohenzollern metaphorically under the heel of Romanoff and actually in a comfortable villa in Chislehurst, the hero of all its tea parties and the judge of all its gymkhanas! Well, cry the Militarists, suppose it by all means: could we desire anything better? Now I happen to have a somewhat active imagination; and it flatly refuses to stop at this convenient point. I must go on supposing. Suppose France, with its military prestige raised once more to the Napoleonic point, spends its indemnity in building an invincible Armada, stronger and nearer to us than the German one we are now out to destroy! Suppose Sir Edward Grey remonstrates, and Monsieur Delcasse replies, "Russia and France have humbled one Imperial Bully, and are prepared to humble another. I have not forgotten Fashoda. Stop us if you can; or turn, if you like, for help to the Germany we have smashed and disarmed!" Of what use will all this bloodshed be then, with the old situation reproduced in an

aggravated form, the enemy closer to our shores, a raid far more feasible, the tradition of "natural enmity" to steel the foe, and Waterloo to be wiped out like Sedan? A child in arms should be able to see that this idiotic notion of relaxing the military pressure on us by smashing this or that particular Power is like trying to alter the pressure of the ocean by dipping up a bucket of water from the North Sea and pouring it into the Bay of Biscay.

I purposely omit more easterly supposings as to what victorious Russia might do. But a noble emancipation of Poland and Finland at her own expense, and of Bosnia and Harzegovina at Austria's, might easily suggest to our nervous Militarists that a passion for the freedom of Egypt and India might seize her, and remind her that we were Japan's ally in the day of Russia's humiliation in Manchuria. So there at once is your Balance of Power problem in Asia enormously aggravated by throwing Germany out of the anti-Russian scale and grinding her to powder. Even in North Africa—but enough is enough. You can *durchhauen* your way out of the frying pan, but only into the fire. Better take Nietzsche's brave advice, and make it your point of honour to "live dangerously." History shews that it is often the way to live long.

Learning Nothing: Forgetting Everything.

But let me test the Militarist theory, not by a hypothetical future, but by the accomplished and irrevocable past. Is it true that nations must conquer or go under, and that military conquest means prosperity and power for the victor and annihilation for

the vanquished? I have already alluded in passing to the fact that Austria has been beaten repeatedly: by France, by Italy, by Germany, almost by everybody who has thought it worth while to have a whack at her; and yet she is one of the Great Powers; and her alliance has been sought by invincible Germany. France was beaten by Germany in 1870 with a completeness that seemed impossible; yet France has since enlarged her territory whilst Germany is still pleading in vain for a place in the sun. Russia was beaten by the Japanese in Manchuria on a scale that made an end forever of the old notion that the West is the natural military superior of the East; yet it is the terror of Russia that has driven Germany into her present desperate onslaught on France; and it is the Russian alliance on which France and England are depending for their assurance of ultimate success. We ourselves confess that the military efficiency with which we have so astonished the Germans is the effect, not of Waterloo and Inkerman, but of the drubbing we got from the Boers, who we aid probably have beaten us if we had been anything like their own size. Greece has lately distinguished herself in war within a few years by a most disgraceful beating of the Turks. It would be easy to multiply instances from remoter history: for example, the effect on England's position of the repeated defeats of our troops by the French under Luxembourg in the Balance of Power War at the end of the seventeenth century differed surprisingly little, if at all, from the effect of our subsequent victories under Marlborough. And the inference from the Militarist theory that the States which

at present count for nothing as military Powers necessarily count for nothing at all is absurd on the face of it. Monaco seems to be, on the whole, the most prosperous and comfortable State in Europe.

In short, Militarism must be classed as one of the most inconsiderately foolish of the bogus "sciences" which the last half century has produced in such profusion, and which have the common characteristic of revolting all sane souls, and being stared out of countenance by the broad facts of human experience. The only rule of thumb that can be hazarded on the strength of actual practice is that wars to maintain or upset the Balance of Power between States, called by inaccurate people Balance of Power wars, and by accurate people Jealousy of Power wars, never establish the desired peaceful and secure equilibrium. They may exercise pugnacity, gratify spite, assuage a wound to national pride, or enhance or dim a military reputation; but that is all. And the reason is, as I shall shew very conclusively later on, that there is only one way in which one nation can really disable another, and that is a way which no civilized nation dare even discuss.

Are We Hypocrites?

And now I proceed from general considerations to the diplomatic history of the present case, as I must in order to make our moral position clear. But first, lest I should lose all credit by the startling incompatibility between the familiar personal character of our statesmen and the proceedings for which they

are officially responsible, I must say a word about the peculiar psychology of English statesmanship, not only for the benefit of my English readers (who do not know that it is peculiar just as they do not know that water has any taste because it is always in their mouths), but as a plea for a more charitable construction from the wider world.

We know by report, however unjust it may seem to us, that there is an opinion abroad, even in the quarters most friendly to us, that our excellent qualities are marred by an incorrigible hypocrisy. To France we have always been Perfidious Albion. In Germany, at this moment, that epithet would be scorned as far too flattering to us. Victor Hugo explained the relative unpopularity of *Measure for Measure* among Shakespeare's plays on the ground that the character of the hypocrite Angelo was a too faithful dramatization of our national character. Pecksniff is not considered so exceptional an English gentleman in America as he is in England.

Now we have not acquired this reputation for nothing. The world has no greater interest in branding England with this particular vice of hypocrisy than in branding France with it; yet the world does not cite Tartuffe as a typical Frenchman as it cites Angelo and Pecksniff as typical Englishmen. We may protest against it as indignantly as the Prussian soldiers protest against their equally universal reputation for ferocity in plunder and pillage, sack and rapine; but there is something in it. If you judge an English statesman, by his conscious intentions,

his professions, and his personal charm, you will often find him an amiable, upright, humane, anxiously truthful man. If you judge him, as a foreigner must, solely on the official acts for which he is responsible, and which he has to defend in the House of Commons for the sake of his party, you will often be driven to conclude that this estimable gentleman is, in point of being an unscrupulous superprig and fool, worse than Caesar Borgia and General Von Bernhardi rolled into one, and in foreign affairs a Bismarck in everything except commanding ability, blunt common sense, and freedom from illusion as to the nature and object of his own diplomacy. And the permanent officials in whose hands he is will probably deserve all that and something to spare. Thus you will get that amazing contrast that confronts us now between the Machiavellian Sir Edward Grey of the Berlin newspapers and the amiable and popular Sir Edward Grey we know in England. In England we are all prepared to face any World Congress and say, "We know that Sir Edward Grey is an honest English gentleman, who meant well as a true patriot and friend of peace; we are quite sure that what he did was fair and right; and we will not listen to any nonsense to the contrary." The Congress will reply, "We know nothing about Sir Edward Grey except what he did; and as there is no secret and no question as to what he did, the whole story being recorded by himself, we must hold England responsible for his conduct, whilst taking your word for the fact, which has no importance for us, that his conduct has nothing to do with his character."

Our Intellectual Laziness.

The general truth of the situation is, as I have spent so much of my life in trying to make the English understand, that we are cursed with a fatal intellectual laziness, an evil inheritance from the time when our monopoly of coal and iron made it possible for us to become rich and powerful without thinking or knowing how; a laziness which is becoming highly dangerous to us now that our monopoly is gone or superseded by new sources of mechanical energy. We got rich by pursuing our own immediate advantage instinctively; that is, with a natural childish selfishness; and when any question of our justification arose, we found it easy to silence it with any sort of plausible twaddle (provided it flattered us, and did not imply any trouble or sacrifice) provided by our curates at £70 a year, or our journalists at a penny a line, or commercial moralists with axes to grind. In the end we became fatheaded, and not only lost all intellectual consciousness of what we were doing, and with it all power of objective self-criticism, but stacked up a lumber of pious praises for ourselves which not only satisfied our corrupted and half atrophied consciences, but gave us a sense that there is something extraordinarily ungentlemanly and politically dangerous in bringing these pious phrases to the test of conduct. We carried Luther's doctrine of Justification by Faith to the insane point of believing that as long as a man says what we have agreed to accept as the right thing it does not matter in the least what he actually does. In fact, we do not clearly see why a man need introduce the subject of morals

at all, unless there is something questionable to be whitewashed. The unprejudiced foreigner calls this hypocrisy: that is why we call him prejudiced. But I, who have been a poor man in a poor country, understand the foreigner better.

Now from the general to the particular. In describing the course of the diplomatic negotiations by which our Foreign Office achieved its design of at last settling accounts with Germany at the most favourable moment from the Militarist point of view, I shall have to exhibit our Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs as behaving almost exactly as we have accused the Kaiser of behaving. Yet I see him throughout as an honest gentleman, "perplexed in the extreme," meaning well, revolted at the last moment by the horror of war, clinging to the hope that in some vague way he could persuade everybody to be reasonable if they would only come and talk to him as they did when the big Powers were kept out of the Balkan war, but hopelessly destitute of a positive policy of any kind, and therefore unable to resist those who had positive business in hand. And do not for a moment imagine that I think that the conscious Sir Edward Grey was Othello, and the subconscious, Iago. I do think that the Foreign Office, of which Sir Edward is merely the figure head, was as deliberately and consciously bent on a long deferred Militarist war with Germany as the Admiralty was; and that is saying a good deal. If Sir Edward Grey did not know what he wanted, Mr. Winston Churchill was in no such perplexity. He was not an "ist" of any sort, but a straightforward holder

of the popular opinion that if you are threatened you should hit out, unless you are afraid to. Had he had the conduct of the affair he might quite possibly have averted the war (and thereby greatly disappointed himself and the British public) by simply frightening the Kaiser. As it was, he had arranged for the co-operation of the French and British fleets; was spoiling for the fight; and must have restrained himself with great difficulty from taking off his coat in public whilst Mr. Asquith and Sir Edward Grey were giving the country the assurances which were misunderstood to mean that we were not bound to go to war, and not more likely to do so than usual. But though Sir Edward did not clear up the misunderstanding, I think he went to war with the heavy heart of a Junker Liberal (such centaurs exist) and not with the exultation of a Junker Jingo.

I may now, without more than the irreducible minimum of injustice to Sir Edward Grey, proceed to tell the story of the diplomatic negotiations as they will appear to the Congress which, I am assuming, will settle the terms on which Europe is to live more or less happily ever after.

Diplomatic History of the War.

The evidence of how the Junker diplomatists of our Foreign Office let us in for the war is in the White Paper, Miscellaneous No. 6 (1914), containing correspondence respecting the European crisis, and since reissued, with a later White Paper and some extra matter, as a penny bluebook in miniature. In these much-cited and little-read documents we see the Junkers of all

the nations, the men who have been saying for years "It's bound to come," and clamouring in England for compulsory military service and expeditionary forces, momentarily staggered and not a little frightened by the sudden realization that it has come at last. They rush round from foreign office to embassy, and from embassy to palace, twittering "This is awful. Can't you stop it? Won't you be reasonable? Think of the consequences," etc., etc. One man among them keeps his head and looks the facts in the face. That man is Sazonoff, the Russian Secretary for Foreign Affairs. He keeps steadily trying to make Sir Edward Grey face the inevitable. He says and reiterates, in effect, "You know very well that you cannot keep out of a European war. You know you are pledged to fight Germany if Germany attacks France. You know that your arrangments for the fight are actually made; that already the British army is commanded by a Franco-British Council of War; that there is no possible honourable retreat for you. You know that this old man in Austria, who would have been superannuated years ago if he had been an exciseman, is resolved to make war on Servia, and sent that silly forty-eight hours ultimatum when we were all out of town so that he could begin fighting before we could get back to sit on his head. You know that he has the Jingo mob of Vienna behind him. You know that if he makes war, Russia must mobilize. You know that France is bound to come in with us as you are with France. You know that the moment we mobilize, Germany, the old man's ally, will have only one desperate chance of victory, and that

is to overwhelm our ally, France, with one superb rush of her millions, and then sweep back and meet us on the Vistula. You know that nothing can stop this except Germany remonstrating with Austria, and insisting on the Servian case being dealt with by an international tribunal and not by war. You know that Germany dares not do this, because her alliance with Austria is her defence against the Franco-Russian alliance, and that she does not want to do it in any case, because the Kaiser naturally has a strong class prejudice against the blowing up of Royal personages by irresponsible revolutionists, and thinks nothing too bad for Servia after the assassination of the Archduke. There is just one chance of avoiding Armageddon: a slender one, but worth trying. You averted war in the Algeciras crisis, and again in the Agadir crisis, by saying you would fight. Try it again. The Kaiser is stiffnecked because he does not believe you are going to fight this time. Well, convince him that you are. The odds against him will then be so terrible that he may not dare to support the Austrian ultimatum to Servia at such a price. And if Austria is thus forced to proceed judicially against Servia, we Russians will be satisfied; and there will be no war."

Sir Edward could not see it. He is a member of a Liberal Government, in a country where there is no political career for the man who does not put his party's tenure of office before every other consideration. What would *The Daily News* and *The Manchester Guardian* have said had he, Bismarck-like, said bluntly: "If war once breaks out, the old score between England

and Prussia will be settled, not by ambassadors' tea parties and Areopaguses, but by blood and iron?" In vain did Sazonoff repeat, "But if you are going to fight, as you know you are, why not say so?" Sir Edward, being Sir Edward and not Winston Churchill or Lloyd George, could not admit that he was going to fight. He might have forestalled the dying Pope and his noble Christian "I bless peace" by a noble, if heathen, "I fight war." Instead, he persuaded us all that he was under no obligation whatever to fight. He persuaded Germany that he had not the slightest serious intention of fighting. Sir Owen Seaman wrote in *Punch* an amusing and witty No-Intervention poem. Sporting Liberals offered any odds that there would be no war for England. And Germany, confident that with Austria's help she could break France with one hand and Russia with the other if England held aloof, let Austria throw the match into the magazine.

The Battery Unmasked.

Then the Foreign Office, always acting through its amiable and popular but confused instrument Sir Edward, unmasked the Junker-Militarist battery. He suddenly announced that England must take a hand in the war, though he did not yet tell the English people so, it being against the diplomatic tradition to tell them anything until it is too late for them to object. But he told the German Ambassador, Prince Lichnowsky, caught in a death trap, pleaded desperately for peace with Great Britain. Would we promise to spare Germany if Belgium were left untouched? No. Would we say on what conditions we would spare Germany? No.

Not if the Germans promised not to annex French territory? No. Not even if they promised not to touch the French colonies? No. Was there no way out? Sir Edward Grey was frank. He admitted there was just one chance; that Liberal opinion might not stand the war if the neutrality of Belgium were not violated. And he provided against that chance by committing England to the war the day before he let the cat out of the bag in Parliament.

All this is recorded in the language of diplomacy in the White Paper on or between the lines. That language is not so straightforward as my language; but at the crucial points it is clear enough. Sazonoff's tone is politely diplomatic in No. 6; but in No. 17 he lets himself go. "I do not believe that Germany really wants war; but her attitude is decided by yours. If you take your stand firmly with France and Russia there will be no war. If you fail them now, rivers of blood will flow, and you will in the end be dragged into war." He was precisely right; but he did not realize that war was exactly what our Junkers wanted. They did not dare to tell themselves so; and naturally they did not dare to tell him so. And perhaps his own interest in war was too strong to make him regret the rejection of his honest advice. To break up the Austrian Empire and achieve for Russia the Slav Caliphate of South-East Europe whilst defeating Prussia with the help of France and of Russia's old enemy and Prussia's old ally England, was a temptation so enormous that Sazonoff, in resisting it so far as to shew Sir Edward Grey frankly the only chance of preventing it, proved himself the most genuine

humanitarian in the diplomatic world.

Number 123.

The decisive communication between Sir Edward Grey and Prince Lichnowsky is recorded in the famous No. 123. With the rather childish subsequent attempt to minimize No. 123 on the ground that the Prince was merely an amiable nincompoop who did not really represent his fiendish sovereign, neither I nor any other serious person need be concerned. What is beyond all controversy is that after that conversation Prince Lichnowsky could do nothing but tell the Kaiser that the *Entente*, having at last got his imperial head in chancery, was not going to let him off on any terms, and that it was now a fight to a finish between the British and German empires. Then the Kaiser said: "We are Germans. God help us!" When a crowd of foolish students came cheering for the war under his windows, he bade them go to the churches and pray. His telegrams to the Tsar (the omission of which from the penny bluebook is, to say the least, not chivalrous) were dignified and pathetic. And when the Germans, taking a line from the poet they call "unser Shakespeare," said: "Come the four quarters of the world in arms and we shall shock them," it was, from the romantic militarist point of view, fine. What Junker-led men could do they have since done to make that thrasonical brag good. But there is no getting over the fact that, in Tommy Atkins's phrase, they had asked for it. Their Junkers, like ours, had drunk to The Day; and they should not have let us choose it after riling us for so many years. And that is why

Sir Edward had a great surprise when he at last owned up in Parliament.

How the Nation Took It.

The moment he said that we could not "stand aside with our arms folded" and see our friend and neighbour France "bombarded and battered," the whole nation rose to applaud him. All the Foreign Office distrust of public opinion, the concealment of the Anglo-French plan of campaign, the disguise of the *Entente* in a quaker's hat, the duping of the British public and the Kaiser with one and the same prevarication, had been totally unnecessary and unpopular, like most of these ingenuities which diplomatists think subtle and Machiavellian. The British Public had all along been behind Mr. Winston Churchill. It had wanted Sir Edward to do just what Sazonoff wanted him to do, and what I, in the columns of *The Daily News* proposed he should do nine months ago (I must really be allowed to claim that I am not merely wise after the event), which was to arm to the teeth regardless of an expense which to us would have been a mere fleabite, and tell Germany that if she, laid a finger on France we would unite with France to defeat her, offering her at the same time as consolation for that threat, the assurance that we would do as much to France if she wantonly broke the peace in the like fashion by attacking Germany. No unofficial Englishman worth his salt wanted to snivel hypocritically about our love of peace and our respect for treaties and our solemn acceptance of a painful duty, and all the rest of the nauseous

mixture of school-master's twaddle, parish magazine cant, and cinematograph melodrama with which we were deluged. We were perfectly ready to knock the Kaiser's head off just to teach him that if he thought he was going to ride roughshod over Europe, including our new friends the French, and the plucky little Belgians, he was reckoning without old England. And in this pugnacious but perfectly straightforward and human attitude the nation needed no excuses because the nation honestly did not know that we were taking the Kaiser at a disadvantage, or that the Franco-Russian alliance had been just as much a menace to peace as the Austro-German one. But the Foreign Office knew that very well, and therefore began to manufacture superfluous, disingenuous, and rather sickening excuses at a great rate. The nation had a clean conscience, and was really innocent of any aggressive strategy: the Foreign Office was redhanded, and did not want to be found out. Hence its sermons.

Mr. H.G. Wells Hoists the Country's Flag.

It was Mr. H.G. Wells who at the critical moment spoke with the nation's voice. When he uttered his electric outburst of wrath against "this drilling, trampling foolery in the heart of Europe" he gave expression to the pent-up exasperation of years of smouldering revolt against swank and domineer, guff and bugaboo, calling itself blood and iron, and mailed fist, and God and conscience and anything else that sounded superb. Like Nietzsche, we were "fed up" with the Kaiser's imprisonments of democratic journalists for *Majestaetsbeleidigung* (monarch

disparagement), with his ancestors, and his mission, and his gospel of submission and obedience for poor men, and of authority, tempered by duelling, for rich men. The world had become sore-headed, and desired intensely that they who clatter the sword shall perish by the sword. Nobody cared twopence about treaties: indeed, it was not for us, who had seen the treaty of Berlin torn up by the brazen seizure of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria in 1909, and taken that lying down, as Russia did, to talk about the sacredness of treaties, even if the wastepaper baskets of the Foreign Offices were not full of torn up "scraps of paper," and a very good thing too; for General von Bernhardi's assumption that circumstances alter treaties is not a page from Machiavelli: it is a platitude from the law books. The man in the street understood little or nothing about Servia or Russia or any of the cards with which the diplomatists were playing their perpetual game of Beggar my Neighbour. We were rasped beyond endurance by Prussian Militarism and its contempt for us and for human happiness and common sense; and we just rose at it and went for it. We have set out to smash the Kaiser exactly as we set out to smash the Mahdi. Mr. Wells never mentioned a treaty. He said, in effect: "There stands the monster all freedom-loving men hate; and at last we are going to fight it." And the public, bored by the diplomatists, said: "Now you're talking!" We did not stop to ask our consciences whether the Prussian assumption that the dominion of the civilized earth belongs to German culture is really any more bumptious than

the English assumption that the dominion of the sea belongs to British commerce. And in our island security we were as little able as ever to realize the terrible military danger of Germany's geographical position between France and England on her west flank and Russia on her east: all three leagued for her destruction; and how unreasonable it was to ask Germany to lose the fraction of a second (much less Sir Maurice de Runsen's naïve "a few days' delay") in dashing at her Western foe when she could obtain no pledge as to Western intentions. "We are now in a state of necessity; and Necessity knows no law," said the Imperial Chancellor in the Reichstag. "It is a matter of life and death to us," said the German Minister for Foreign Affairs to our Ambassador in Berlin, who had suddenly developed an extraordinary sense of the sacredness of the Treaty of London, dated 1839, and still, as it happened, inviolate among the torn fragments of many subsequent and similar "scraps of paper." Our Ambassador seems to have been of Sir Maurice's opinion that there could be no such tearing hurry. The Germans could enter France through the line of forts between Verdun and Toul if they were really too flustered to wait a few days on the chance of Sir Edward Grey's persuasive conversation and charming character softening Russia and bringing Austria to conviction of sin. Thereupon the Imperial Chancellor, not being quite an angel, asked whether we had counted the cost of crossing the path of an Empire fighting for its life (for these Militarist statesmen do really believe that nations can be killed by cannon shot). That

was a threat; and as we cared nothing about Germany's peril, and wouldn't stand being threatened any more by a Power of which we now had the inside grip, the fat remained in the fire, blazing more fiercely than ever. There was only one end possible to such a clash of high tempers, national egotisms, and reciprocal ignorances.

Delicate Position of Mr. Asquith.

It seemed a splendid chance for the Government to place itself at the head of the nation. But no British Government within my recollection has ever understood the nation. Mr. Asquith, true to the Gladstonian tradition (hardly just to Gladstone, by the way) that a Liberal Prime Minister should know nothing concerning foreign politics and care less, and calmly insensible to the real nature of the popular explosion, fell back on 1839, picking up the obvious barrister's point about the violation of the neutrality of Belgium, and tried the equally obvious barrister's claptrap about "an infamous proposal" on the jury. He assured us that nobody could have done more for peace than Sir Edward Grey, though the rush to smash the Kaiser was the most popular thing Sir Edward had ever done.

Besides, there was another difficulty. Mr. Asquith himself, though serenely persuaded that he is a Liberal statesman, is, in effect, very much what the Kaiser would have been if he had been a Yorkshireman and a lawyer, instead of being only half English and the other half Hohenzollern, and an anointed emperor to boot. As far as popular liberties are concerned, history will make

no distinction between Mr. Asquith and Metternich. He is forced to keep on the safe academic ground of Belgium by the very obvious consideration that if he began to talk of the Kaiser's imprisonments of editors and democratic agitators and so forth, a Homeric laughter, punctuated with cries of, "How about Denshawai?" "What price Tom Mann?" "Votes for women!" "Been in India lately?" "Make McKenna Kaiser," "Or dear old Herbert Gladstone," etc., etc., would promptly spoil that pose. The plain fact is that, Militarism apart, Germany is in many ways more democratic in practice than England; indeed the Kaiser has been openly reviled as a coward by his Junkers because he falls short of Mr. Asquith in calm indifference to Liberal principles and blank ignorance of working-class sympathies, opinions, and interests.

Mr. Asquith had also to distract public attention from the fact that three official members of his Government, all men of unquestioned and conspicuous patriotism and intellectual honesty, walked straight out into private life on the declaration of war. One of them, Mr. John Burns, did so at an enormous personal sacrifice, and has since maintained a grim silence far more eloquent than the famous speech Germany invented for him. It is not generally believed that these three statesmen were actuated by a passion for the violation of Belgian neutrality.

On the whole, it was impossible for the Government to seize its grand chance and put itself at the head of the popular movement that responded to Sir Edward Grey's declaration: the

very simple reason being that the Government does not represent the nation, and is in its sympathies just as much a Junker government as the Kaiser's. And so, what the Government cannot do has to be done by unofficial persons with clean and brilliant anti-Junker records like Mr. Wells, Mr. Arnold Bennett, Mr. Neil Lyons, and Mr. Jerome K. Jerome. Neither Mr. Asquith nor Sir Edward Grey can grasp, as these real spokesmen of their time do, the fact that we just simply want to put an end to Potsdamnation, both at home and abroad. Both of them probably think Potsdam a very fine and enviable institution, and want England to out-Potsdam Potsdam and to monopolize the command of the seas; a monstrous aspiration. We, I take it, want to guarantee that command of the sea which is the common heritage of mankind to the tiniest State and the humblest fisherman that depends on the sea for a livelihood. We want the North Sea to be as safe for everybody, English or German, as Portland Place.

The Need for Recrimination.

And now somebody who would rather I had not said all this (having probably talked dreadful nonsense about Belgium and so forth for a month past) is sure to ask: "Why all this recrimination? What is done is done. Is it not now the duty of every Englishman to sink all differences in the face of the common peril?" etc., etc. To all such prayers to be shielded from that terrible thing, the truth, I must reply that history consists mainly of recrimination, and that I am writing history because an accurate knowledge of what has occurred is not only indispensable to any sort of

reasonable behaviour on our part in the face of Europe when the inevitable day of settlement comes, but because it has a practical bearing on the most perilously urgent and immediate business before us: the business of the appeal to the nation for recruits and for enormous sums of money. It has to decide the question whether that appeal shall be addressed frankly to our love of freedom, and our tradition (none the less noble and moving because it is so hard to reconcile with the diplomatic facts) that England is a guardian of the world's liberty, and not to bad law about an obsolete treaty, and cant about the diabolical personal disposition of the Kaiser, and the wounded propriety of a peace-loving England, and all the rest of the slosh and tosh that has been making John Bull sick for months past. No doubt at first, when we were all clasping one another's hands very hard and begging one another not to be afraid, almost anything was excusable. Even the war notes of Mr. Garvin, which stood out as the notes of a gentleman amid a welter of scurrilous rubbish and a rather blackguardly *Punch* cartoon mocking the agony of Berlin (*Punch* having turned its non-interventionist coat very promptly), had sometimes to run: "We know absolutely nothing of what is happening at the front, except that the heroism of the British troops will thrill the ages to the last syllable of recorded time," or words to that effect. But now it is time to pull ourselves together; to feel our muscle; to realize the value of our strength and pluck; and to tell the truth unashamed like men of courage and character, not to shirk it like the official apologists of a

Foreign Office plot.

What Germany Should Have Done.

And first, as I despise critics who put people in the wrong without being able to set them right, I shall, before I go any further with my criticism of our official position, do the Government and the Foreign Office the service of finding a correct official position for them; for I admit that the popular position, though sound as far as it goes, is too crude for official use. This correct official position can be found only by considering what Germany should have done, and might have done had she not been, like our own Junkers, so fascinated by the Militarist craze, and obsessed by the chronic Militarist panic, that she was "in too great hurry to bid the devil good morning." The matter is simple enough: she should have entrusted the security of her western frontier to the public opinion of the west of Europe and to America, and fought Russia, if attacked, with her rear not otherwise defended. The Militarist theory is that we, France and England, would have immediately sprung at her from behind; but that is just how the Militarist theory gets its votaries into trouble by assuming that Europe is a chess board. Europe is not a chess board; but a populous continent in which only a very few people are engaged in military chess; and even those few have many other things to consider besides capturing their adversary's king. Not only would it have been impossible for England to have attacked Germany under such circumstances; but if France had done so England could not have assisted her, and might even

have been compelled by public opinion to intervene by way of a joint protest from England and America, or even by arms, on her behalf if she were murderously pressed on both flanks. Even our Militarists and diplomatists would have had reasons for such an intervention. An aggressive Franco-Russian hegemony, if it crushed Germany, would be quite as disagreeable to us as a German one. Thus Germany would at worst have been fighting Russia and France with the sympathy of all the other Powers, and a chance of active assistance from some of them, especially those who share her hostility to the Russian Government. Had France not attacked her—and though I am as ignorant of the terms of the Franco-Russian alliance as Sir Edward Grey is strangely content to be, I cannot see how the French Government could have justified to its own people a fearfully dangerous attack on Germany had Russia been the aggressor—Germany would have secured fair play for her fight with Russia. But even the fight with Russia was not inevitable. The ultimatum to Servia was the escapade of a dotard: a worse crime than the assassination that provoked it. There is no reason to doubt the conclusion in Sir Maurice de Bunsen's despatch (No. 161) that it could have been got over, and that Russia and Austria would have thought better of fighting and come to terms. Peace was really on the cards; and the sane game was to play for it.

The Achilles Heel of Militarism.

Instead, Germany flew at France's throat, and by incidentally invading Belgium gave us the excuse our Militarists wanted to

attack her with the full sympathy of the nation. Why did she do this stupid thing? Not because of the counsels of General von Bernhardi. On the contrary, he had warned her expressly against allowing herself to be caught between Russia and a Franco-British combination until she had formed a counterbalancing alliance with America, Italy, and Turkey. And he had most certainly not encouraged her to depend on England sparing her: on the contrary, he could not sufficiently admire the wily ruthlessness with which England watches her opportunity and springs at her foe when the foe is down. (He little knew, poor man, how much he was flattering our capacity for Realpolitik!) But he had reckoned without his creed's fatal and fundamental weakness, which is, that as Junker-Militarism promotes only stupid people and snobs, and suppresses genuine realists as if they were snakes, it always turns out when a crisis arrives that "the silly people don't know their own silly business." The Kaiser and his ministers made an appalling mess of their job. They were inflamed by Bernhardi; but they did not understand him. They swallowed his flattery, but did not take in his strategy or his warnings. They knew that when the moment came to face the Franco-Russian alliance, they were to make a magnificient dash at France and sweep her pieces off the great chess board before the Russians had time to mobilize; and then return and crush Russia, leaving the conquest of England for another day. This was honestly as much as their heads could hold at one time; and they were helplessly unable to consider whether the other

conditions postulated by Bernhardi were present, or indeed, in the excitement of their schoolboyish imaginations, to remember whether he had postulated any at all. And so they made their dash and put themselves in the wrong at every point morally, besides making victory humanly impossible for themselves militarily. That is the nemesis of Militarism: the Militarist is thrown into a big game which he is too stupid to be able to play successfully. Philip of Spain tried it 300 years ago; and the ruin he brought on his empire has lasted to this day. He was so stupid that though he believed himself to be the chosen instrument of God (as sure a sign of a hopeless fool in a man who cannot see that every other man is equally an instrument of that Power as it is a guarantee of wisdom and goodwill in the man who respects his neighbor as himself) he attempted to fight Drake on the assumption that a cannon was a weapon that no real gentleman and good Catholic would condescend to handle. Louis XIV. tried again two centuries ago, and, being a more frivolous fool, got beaten by Marlborough and sent his great-grandson from the throne to the guillotine. Napoleon tried it 100 years ago. He was more dangerous, because he had prodigious personal ability and technical military skill; and he started with the magnificent credential of the French Revolution. All that carried him farther than the Spanish bigot or the French fop; but he, too, accreted fools and knaves, and ended defeated in St. Helena after pandering for twenty years to the appetite of idiots for glory and bloodshed; waging war as "a great game"; and finding in a field

strewn with corpses "un beau spectacle." In short, as strong a magnet to fools as the others, though so much abler.

Our Own True Position.

Now comes the question, in what position did this result of a mad theory and a hopelessly incompetent application of it on the part of Potsdam place our own Government? It left us quite clearly in the position of the responsible policeman of the west. There was nobody else in Europe strong enough to chain "the mad dog." Belgium and Holland, Norway and Sweden, Denmark and Switzerland could hardly have been expected to take that duty on themselves, even if Norway and Sweden had not good reason to be anti-Russian, and the Dutch capitalists were not half convinced that their commercial prosperity would be greater under German than under native rule. It will not be contended that Spain could have done anything; and as to Italy, it was doubtful whether she did not consider herself still a member of the Triple Alliance. It was evidently England or nobody. For England to have refrained, from hurling herself into the fray, horse, foot, and artillery, was impossible from every point of view. From the democratic point of view it would have meant an acceptance of the pretension of which Potsdam, by attacking the French Republic, had made itself the champion: that is, the pretension of the Junker class to dispose of the world on Militarist lines at the expense of the lives and limbs of the masses. From the international Socialist point of view, it would have been the acceptance of the extreme nationalist view that

the people of other countries are foreigners, and that it does not concern us if they choose to cut one another's throats. Our Militarist Junkers cried "If we let Germany conquer France it will be our turn next." Our romantic Junkers added "and serve us right too: what man will pity us when the hour strikes for us, if we skulk now?" Even the wise, who loathe war, and regard it as such a dishonour and disgrace in itself that all its laurels cannot hide its brand of Cain, had to admit that police duty is necessary and that war must be made on such war as the Germans had made by attacking France in an avowed attempt to substitute a hegemony of cannon for the comity of nations. There was no alternative. Had the Foreign Office been the International Socialist Bureau, had Sir Edward Grey been Jaures, had Mr. Ramsay MacDonald been Prime Minister, had Russia been Germany's ally instead of ours, the result would still have been the same: we must have drawn the sword to save France and smash Potsdam as we smashed and always must smash Philip, Louis, Napoleon, *et hoc genus omne*.

The case for our action is thus as complete as any *casus belli* is ever likely to be. In fact its double character as both a democratic and military (if not Militarist) case makes it too complete; for it enables our Junkers to claim it entirely for themselves, and to fake it with pseudo-legal justifications which destroy nine-tenths of our credit, the military and legal cases being hardly a tenth of the whole: indeed, they would not by themselves justify the slaughter of a single Pomeranian grenadier. For instance, take the

Militarist view that we must fight Potsdam because if the Kaiser is victorious, it will be our turn next! Well: are we not prepared to fight always when our turn comes? Why should not we also depend on our navy, on the extreme improbability of Germany, however triumphant, making two such terrible calls on her people in the same generation as a war involves, on the sympathy of the defeated, and on the support of American and European public opinion when our turn comes, if there is nothing at stake now but the difference between defeat and victory in an otherwise indifferent military campaign? If the welfare of the world does not suffer any more by an English than by a German defeat who cares whether we are defeated or not? As mere competitors in a race of armaments and an Olympic game conducted with ball cartridge, or as plaintiffs in a technical case of international law (already decided against us in 1870, by the way, when Gladstone had to resort to a new treaty made *ad hoc* and lapsing at the end of the war) we might as well be beaten as not, for all the harm that will ensue to anyone but ourselves, or even to ourselves apart from our national vanity. It is as the special constables of European life that we are important, and can send our men to the trenches with the assurance that they are fighting in a worthy cause. In short, the Junker case is not worth twopence: the Democratic case, the Socialist case, the International case is worth all it threatens to cost.

The German Defence to Our Indictment.

What is the German reply to this case? Or rather, how would

the Germans reply to it if their official Militarist and Kaiserist panjandrums had the wit to find the effective reply? Undoubtedly they would say that our Social-Democratic professions are all very fine, but that our conversion to them is suspiciously sudden and recent. They would remark that it is a little difficult for a nation in deadly peril to trust its existence to a foreign public opinion which has not only never been expressed by the people who really control England's foreign policy, but is flatly opposed to all their known views and prejudices. They would ask why, instead of making an *Entente* with France and Russia and refusing to give Germany any assurance concerning its object except that we would not pledge ourselves to remain neutral if the Franco-Russian *Entente* fell on Germany, we did not say straight out in 1912 (when they put the question flatly to us), and again last July when Sazonoff urged us so strongly to shew our hand, that if Germany attacked France we should fight her, Russia or no Russia (a far less irritating and provocative attitude), although we knew full well that an attack on France through Belgium would be part of the German program if the Russian peril became acute. They would point out that if our own Secretary for Foreign Affairs openly disclaimed any knowledge of the terms of the Franco-Russian alliance, it was hard for a German to believe that they were wholly fit for publication. In short, they would say "If you were so jolly wise and well intentioned before the event, why did not your Foreign Minister and your ambassadors in Berlin and Vienna and St. Petersburg

—we beg pardon, Petrograd—invite us to keep the peace and rely on western public opinion instead of refusing us every pledge except the hostile one to co-operate with France against us in the North Sea, and making it only too plain to us that your policy was a Junker policy as much as ours, and that we had nothing to hope from your goodwill? What evidence had we that you were playing any other game than this Militarist chess of our own, which you now so piously renounce, but which none of you except a handful of Socialists whom you despise and Syndicalists whom you imprison on Militarist pretexts has opposed for years past, though it has been all over your Militarist anti-German platforms and papers and magazines? Are your Social-Democratic principles sincere, or are they only a dagger you keep up your sleeve to stab us in the back when our two most formidable foes are trying to garotte us? If so, where does your moral superiority come in, hypocrites that you are? If not, why, we repeat, did you not make them known to all the world, instead of making an ambush for us by your senseless silence?"

I see no reply to that except a frank confession that we did not know our own minds; that we came to a knowledge of them only when Germany's attack on France forced us to make them up at last; that though doubtless a chronic state of perfect lucidity and long prevision on our part would have been highly convenient, yet there is a good deal to be said for the policy of not fording a stream until you come to it; and that in any case we must entirely decline to admit that we are more likely than other people

to do the wrong thing when circumstances at last oblige us to think and act. Also that the discussion is idle on the shewing of the German case itself; for whether the Germans assumed us to be unscrupulous Militarists or conscientious Democrats they were bound to come to the same conclusion: namely, that we should attack them if they attacked France; consequently their assumption that we would not interfere must have been based on the belief that we are simply "contemptible," which is the sort of mistake people have to pay for in this wicked world.

On the whole, we can hector our way in the Prussian manner out of that discussion well enough, provided we hold our own in the field. But the Prussian manner hardly satisfies the conscience. True, the fact that our diplomatists were not able to discover the right course for Germany does not excuse Germany for being unable to find it for herself. Not that it was more her business than ours: it was a European question, and should have been solved by the united counsels of all the ambassadors and Foreign Offices and chanceries. Indeed it could not have been stably solved without certain assurances from them. But it was, to say the least, as much Germany's business as anyone else's, and terribly urgent for her: "a matter of life and death," the Imperial Chancellor thought. Still, it is not for us to claim moral superiority to Germany. It was for us a matter of the life and death of many Englishmen; and these Englishmen are dead because our diplomatists were as blind as the Prussians. The war is a failure for secret Junker diplomacy, ours no less than the

enemy's. Those of us who have still to die must be inspired, not by devotion to the diplomatists, but, like the Socialist hero of old on the barricade, by the vision of "human solidarity." And if he purchases victory for that holy cause with his blood, I submit that we cannot decently allow the Foreign Office to hang up his martyr's palm over the War Office Mantelpiece.

The First Penalty of Disingenuousness.

The Foreign Office, however, can at lease shift its ground, and declare for the good cause instead of belittling it with quibbling excuses. For see what the first effect of the nonsense about Belgium has been! It carried with it the inevitable conclusion that when the last German was cleared off Belgian soil, peace-loving England, her reluctant work in this shocking war done, would calmly retire from the conflict, and leave her Allies to finish the deal with Potsdam. Accordingly, after Mr. Asquith's oration at the Mansion House, the Allies very properly insisted on our signing a solemn treaty between the parties that they must all stand together to the very end. A pitifully thin attempt has been made to represent that the mistrusted party was France, and that the Kaiser was trying to buy her off. All one can say to that is that the people who believe that any French Government dare face the French people now with anything less than Alsace and Lorraine as the price of peace, or that an undefeated and indeed masterfully advancing German Kaiser (as he seemed then) dare offer France such a price, would believe anything. Of course we had to sign; but if the Prime Minister had not been prevented by

his own past from taking the popular line, we should not have been suspected of a possible backing-out when the demands of our sanctimoniousness were satisfied. He would have known that we are not vindicating a treaty which by accident remains among the fragments of treaties of Paris, of Prague, of Berlin, of all sorts of places and dates, as the only European treaty that has hitherto escaped flat violation: we are supporting the war as a war on war, on military coercion, on domineering, on bullying, on brute force, on military law, on caste insolence, on what Mrs. Fawcett called insensable deviltry (only to find the papers explaining apologetically that she, as a lady, had of course been alluding to war made by foreigners, not by England). Some of us, remembering the things we have ourselves said and done, may doubt whether Satan can cast out Satan; but as the job is not exactly one for an unfallen angel, we may as well let him have a try.

The Blank Cheque.

In the meantime behold us again hopelessly outwitted by Eastern diplomacy as a direct consequence of this ill-starred outburst of hypocrisy about treaties! Everybody has said over and over again that this war is the most tremendous war ever waged. Nobody has said that this new treaty is the most tremendous blank cheque we have ever been forced to sign by our Parliamentary party trick of striking moral attitudes. It is true that Mr. J.A. Hobson realised the situation at once, and was allowed to utter a little croak in a corner; but where was

the trumpet note of warning that should have rung throughout the whole Press? Just consider what the blank cheque means. France's draft on it may stop at the cost of recovering Alsace and Lorraine. We shall have to be content with a few scraps of German colony and the heavy-weight championship. But Russia? When will she say "Hold! Enough!" Suppose she wants not only Poland, but Baltic Prussia? Suppose she wants Constantinople as her port of access to the unfrozen seas, in addition to the dismemberment of Austria? Suppose she has the brilliant idea of annexing all Prussia, for which there is really something to be said by ethnographical map-makers, Militarist madmen, and Pan-Slavist megalomaniacs? It may be a reasonable order; but it is a large one; and the fact that we should have been committed to it without the knowledge of Parliament, without discussion, without warning, without any sort of appeal to public opinion or democratic sanction, by a stroke of Sir Edward Grey's pen within five weeks of his having committed us in the same fashion to an appalling European war, shews how completely the Foreign Office has thrown away all pretence of being any less absolute than the Kaiser himself. It simply offers *carte blanche* to the armies of the Allies without a word to the nation until the cheque is signed. The only limit there is to the obligation is the certainty that the cheque will be dishonoured the moment the draft on it becomes too heavy. And that may furnish a virtuous pretext for another war between the Allies themselves. In any case no treaty can save each Ally from the brute necessity of surrendering and

paying up if beaten, whether the defeat is shared by the others or not. Did I not say that the sooner we made up our minds to the terms of the treaty of peace, so that we might know what we were fighting for, and how far we were bound to go, the better? Instead of which we sign a ridiculous "scrap of paper" to save ourselves the intolerable fatigue of thought.

Belgium Crucified Between the European Powers.

And now, before I leave the subject of Belgium, what have we done for Belgium? Have we saved her soil from invasion? Were we at her side with half a million men when the avalanche fell on her? Or were we safe in our own country praising her heroism in paragraphs which all contrived to convey an idea that the Belgian soldier is about four feet high, but immensely plucky for his size? Alas, when the Belgian soldier cried: "Where are the English?" the reply was "a mass of concrete as large as a big room," blown into the air by a German siege gun, falling back and crushing him into the earth we had not succeeded in saving from the worst of the horrors of war. We have not protected Belgium: Belgium has protected us at the cost of being conquered by Germany. It is now our sacred duty to drive the Germans out of Belgium. Meanwhile we might at least rescue her refugees by a generous grant of public money from the caprices of private charity. We need not press our offer to lend her money: German capitalists will do that for her with the greatest pleasure when the war is over. I think the Government realizes that now; for I note the after-thought that a loan from us need not bear interest.

Now that we begin to see where we really are, what practical morals can we draw?

Unpreparedness the Price of Secrecy.

First, that our autocratic foreign policy, in which the Secretary for Foreign Affairs is always a Junker, and makes war and concludes war without consulting the nation, or confiding in it, or even refraining from deceiving it as to his intentions, leads inevitably to a disastrous combination of war and unpreparedness for war. Wars are planned which require huge expeditionary armies trained and equipped for war. But as such preparation could not be concealed from the public, it is simply deferred until the war is actually declared and begun, at the most frightful risk of such an annihilation of our little peace army as we escaped by the skin of our teeth at Mons and Cambrai. The military experts tell us that it takes four months to make an infantry and six to make a cavalry soldier. And our way of getting an army able to fight the German army is to declare war on Germany just as if we had such an army, and then trust to the appalling resultant peril and disaster to drive us into wholesale enlistment, voluntary or (better still from the Junker point of view) compulsory. It seems to me that a nation which tolerates such insensate methods and outrageous risks must shortly perish from sheer lunacy. And it is all pure superstition: the retaining of the methods of Edward the First in the reign of George the Fifth. I therefore suggest that the first lesson of the war is that the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs be reduced to the level of a simple Prime Minister, or

even of a constitutional monarch, powerless to fire a single shot or sign a treaty without the authority of the House of Commons, all diplomatic business being conducted in a blaze of publicity, and the present regulation which exacts the qualification of a private income of at least £400 a year for a position in the Diplomatic Service replaced by a new regulation that at least half the staff shall consist of persons who have never dined out at the houses of hosts of higher rank than unfashionable solicitors or doctors.

In these recommendations I am not forgetting that an effective check on diplomacy is not easy to devise, and that high personal character and class disinterestedness (the latter at present unattainable) on the part of our diplomatists will be as vital as ever. I well know that diplomacy is carried on at present not only by official correspondence meant for possible publication and subject to an inspection which is in some degree a responsible inspection, but by private letters which the King himself has no right to read. I know that even in the United States, where treaties and declarations of war must be made by Parliament, it is nevertheless possible for the President to bring about a situation in which Congress, like our House of Commons in the present instance, has no alternative but to declare war. But though complete security is impracticable, it does not follow that no precautions should be taken, or that a democratic tradition is no safer than a feudal tradition. A far graver doubt is raised by the susceptibility of the masses to war fever, and the appalling

danger of a daily deluge of cheap newspapers written by nameless men and women whose scandalously low payment is a guarantee of their ignorance and their servility to the financial department, controlled by a moneyed class which not only curries favour with the military caste for social reasons, but has large direct interests in war as a method of raising the price of money, the only commodity the moneyed class has to sell. But I am quite unable to see that our Junkers are less susceptible to the influence of the Press than the people educated by public elementary schools. On the contrary, our Democrats are more fool-proof than our Plutocrats; and the ravings our Junkers send to the papers for nothing in war time would be dear at a halfpenny a line. Plutocracy makes for war because it offers prizes to Plutocrats: Socialism makes for peace because the interests it serves are international. So, as the Socialist side is the democratic side, we had better democratize our diplomacy if we desire peace.

II

RECRUITING

And now as to the question of recruiting. This is pressing, because it is not enough for the Allies to win: we and not Russia must be the decisive factor in the victory, or Germany will

not be fairly beaten, and we shall be only rescued *proteges* of Russia instead of the saviours of Western Europe. We must have the best army in Europe; and we shall not get it under existing arrangements. We are passing out of the first phase of the war fever, in which men flock to the colours by instinct, by romantic desire for adventure, by the determination not, as Wagner put it, "to let their lives be governed by fear of the end," by simple destitution through unemployment, by rancour and pugnacity excited by the inventions of the Press, by a sense of duty inculcated in platform orations which would not stand half an hour's discussion, by the incitements and taunts of elderly non-combatants and maidens with a taste for mischief, and by the verses of poets jumping at the cheapest chance in their underpaid profession. The difficulty begins when all the men susceptible to these inducements are enlisted, and we have to draw on the solid, sceptical, sensible residuum who know the value of their lives and services and liberties, and will not give them except on substantial and honourable conditions. These Ironsides know that it is one thing to fight for your country, and quite another to let your wife and children starve to save our rich idlers from a rise in the supertax. They also know that it is one thing to wipe out the Prussian drill sergeant and snob officer as the enemies of manhood and honour, and another to let that sacred mission be made an excuse for subjecting us to exactly the same tyranny in England. They have not forgotten the "On the knee" episode, nor the floggings in our military prisons, nor the scandalous

imprisonment of Tom Mann, nor the warnings as to military law and barrack life contained even in Robert Blatchford's testimony that the army made a man of him.

What the Labour Party Owes to the Army.

And here is where the Labour Party should come in. The Labour Party's business is to abolish the Militarist soldier, who is only a quaint survival of the King's footman (himself a still quainter survival of the medieval baron's retainer), and substitute for him a trained combatant with full civil rights, receiving the Trade Union rate of wages proper to a skilled worker at a dangerous trade. It must co-operate with the Trade Unions in fixing this moral minimum wage for the citizen soldier, and in obtaining for him a guarantee that the wage shall continue until he obtains civil employment on standard terms at the conclusion of the war. It must make impossible the scandal of a monstrously rich peer (his riches, the automatic result of ground land-landlordism, having "no damned nonsense of merit about them") proclaiming the official weekly allowance for the child of the British soldier in the trenches. That allowance is eighteenpence, being less than one third of the standard allowance for an illegitimate child under an affiliation order. And the Labour Party must deprive the German bullet of its present double effect in killing an Englishman in France and simultaneously reducing his widow's subsistence from a guinea a week to five shillings. Until this is done we are simply provoking Providence to destroy us.

I wish I could say that it is hardly necessary to add that Trade Unionism must be instituted in the Army, so that there shall be accredited secretaries in the field to act as a competent medium of communication between the men on service and the political representatives of their class at the War Office (for I shall propose this representative innovation presently). It will shock our colonels; but I know of no bodies of men for whom repeated and violent shocking is more needed and more likely to prove salutary than the regimental masses of the British army. One rather pleasant shock in store for them is the discovery that an officer and a gentleman, whose sole professional interest is the honour and welfare of his country, and who is bound to the mystical equality of life-and-death duty for all alike, will get on much more easily with a Trade Union secretary than a commercial employer whose aim is simply private profit and who regards every penny added to the wages of his employees as a penny taken off his own income. Howbeit, whether the colonels like it or not—that is, whether they have become accustomed to it or not—it has to come, and its protection from Junker prejudice is another duty of the Labour Party. The Party as a purely political body must demand that the defender of his country shall retain his full civil rights unimpaired; that, the unnecessary, mischievous, dishonourable and tyrannical slave code called military law, which at its most savagely stern point produced only Wellington's complaint that "it is impossible to get a command obeyed in the British Army," be carted away to the

rubbish heap of exploded superstitions; and that if Englishmen are not to be allowed to serve their country in the field as freely as they do in the numerous civil industries in which neglect and indiscipline are as dangerous as they are in war, their leaders and Parliamentary representatives will not recommend them to serve at all. In wartime these things may not matter: discipline either goes by the board or keeps itself under the pressure of the enemy's cannon; and bullying sergeants and insolent officers have something else to do than to provoke men they dislike into striking them and then reporting them for two years' hard labour without trial by jury. In battle such officers are between two fires. But soldiers are not always, or even often, at war; and the dishonour of abdicating dearly-bought rights and liberties is a stain both on war and peace. Now is the time to get rid of that stain. If any officer cannot command men without it, as civilians and police inspectors do, that officer has mistaken his profession and had better come home.

Obsolete Tests in the Army.

Another matter needs to be dealt with at the same time. There are immense numbers of atheists in this country; and though most of them, like the Kaiser, regard themselves as devout Christians, the best are intellectually honest enough to object to profess beliefs they do not hold, especially in the solemn act of dedicating themselves to death in the service of their country. Army form E 501 A (September, 1912) secured to these the benefit of the Bradlaugh Affirmation Act of 1888,

as the enlisting soldier said simply "I, So and So, do make Oath, &c." But recruits are now confronted with another form (E 501, June, 1914) running "I, So and So, swear by Almighty God, &c." On September 1st, at Lord Kitchener's call, a civil servant obtained leave to enlist and had the oath put to him, in this form by the attesting officer. He offered to swear in the 1912 form. This was refused; and we accordingly lost a recruit of just that sturdily conscientious temper which has made the most formidable soldiers known to history. I am bound to add, however, that the attesting officer, on being told that the oath would be a blasphemous farce to the conscience of the recruit, made no difficulty about that, and was quite willing to accept him if he, on his part, would oblige by professing what he did not believe. Thus a Ghoorka's religious conscience is respected: an Englishman's is insulted and outraged.

But, indeed, all these oaths are obstructive and useless superstitions. No recruit will hesitate to pledge his word of honour to fight to the death for his country or for a cause with which he sympathizes; and that is all we require. There is no need to drag in Almighty God and no need to drag in the King. Many an Irishman, many a colonial Republican, many an American volunteer who would fight against the Prussian monarchy shoulder to shoulder with the French Republicans with a will, would rather not pretend to do it out of devotion to the British throne. To vanquish Prussia in this war we need the active aid or the sympathy of every Republican in the world. America,

for instance, sympathizes with England, but classes the King with the Kaiser as an obsolete institution. Besides, even from the courtly point of view the situation is a delicate one. Why emphasize the fact that, formally speaking, the war is between two grandsons of Albert the Good, that thoroughbred German whose London monument is so much grander than Cromwell's?

The Labour Party should also set its face firmly against the abandonment of Red Cross work and finance, or the support of soldiers' families, or the patrolling of the streets, to amateurs who regard the war as a wholesome patriotic exercise, or as the latest amusement in the way of charity bazaars, or as a fountain of self-righteousness. Civil volunteering is needed urgently enough: one of the difficulties of war is that it creates in certain departments a demand so abnormal that no peace establishment can cope with it. But the volunteers should be disciplined and paid: we are not so poor that we need spunge on anyone. And in hospital and medical service war ought not at present to cost more than peace would if the victims of our commercial system were properly tended, and our Public Health service adequately extended and manned. We should therefore treat our Red Cross department as if it were destined to become a permanent service. No charity and no amateur anarchy and incompetence should be tolerated. As to allowing that admirable detective agency for the defence of the West End against begging letter writers, the Charity Organization Society to touch the soldier's home, the very suggestion is an outrage. The C.O.S., the Poor Law, and

the charitable amateur, whether of the patronizing or prying or gushing variety, must be kept as far from the army and its folk as if they were German spies. The business of our fashionable amateurs is to pay Income Tax and Supertax. This time they will have to pay through the nose, vigorously wrung for that purpose by the House of Commons; so they had better set their own houses in order and leave the business of the war to be officially and responsibly dealt with and paid for at full standard rates.

Wanted: Labour Representation in the War Office.

But parliamentary activity is not sufficient. There must be a more direct contact between representative Labour and the Army, because Parliament can only remedy grievances, and that not before years of delay and agitation elapse. Even then the grievances are not dealt with on their merits; for under our party system, which is the most abominable engine for the perversion and final destruction of all political conscience ever devized by man, the House of Commons never votes on any question but whether the Government shall remain in office or give the Opposition a turn, no matter what the pretext for the division may be. Only in such emergencies as the present, when the Government is forced to beg the Labour members to help them to recruit, is there a chance of making reasonable conditions for the soldier.

The Four Inoculations.

It is therefore necessary that the War Office should have working class representatives on all committees and councils

which issue notices to the public. There is at present, it would seem, not a single person in authority there who has the faintest notion of what the immense majority of possible British recruits are thinking about. The results have been beyond description ludicrous and dangerous. Every proclamation is urgently worded so as to reassure recruits with £5,000 a year and repel recruits with a pound a week. On the very day when the popular Lord Kitchener, dropping even the *et rex meus* of Wolsey, frankly asked the nation for 100,000 men for his army, and when it was a matter of life and death that every encouragement should be held out to working men to enlist, the War Office decided that this was the psychological moment to remind everybody that soldiers on active service often die of typhoid fever, and to press inoculation on the recruits pending the officially longed-for hour when Sir Almroth Wright's demand for compulsion can be complied with. I say nothing here about the efficacy of inoculation. Efficacious or not, Sir Almroth Wright himself bases his demand for compulsion on the ground that it is hopeless to expect the whole army to submit to it voluntarily. That being so, it seems to me that when men are hesitating on the threshold of the recruiting station, only a German spy or our War Office (always worth ten thousand men to our enemies) would seize that moment to catch the nervous postulant by the sleeve and say, "Have you thought of the danger of dysentery?" The fact that the working class forced the Government, very much against its doctor-ridden will, to abolish compulsory vaccination,

shews the extent to which its households loathe and dread these vaccines (so called, but totally unconnected with cows or Jenner) which, as they are continually reminded by energetic anti-inoculation propagandists in largely circulated journals and pamphlets, not to mention ghastly photographs of disfigured children, sometimes produce worse effects than the diseases they are supposed to prevent. Indifferent or careless recruits are easily induced to submit to inoculation by little privileges during the ensuing indisposition or by small money bribes; and careful ones are proselytized by Sir Almroth's statistics; but on the whole both inoculation and amateur medical statistics are regarded with suspicion by the poor; and the fact that revaccination is compulsory in the regular army, and that the moral pressure applied to secure both typhoid inoculation and vaccination both in the regular army and the Territorials is such as only a few stalwarts are able to resist, is deeply resented. At present the inoculation mania has reached the pitch of proposing no less than four separate inoculations: revaccination, typhoid, cholera, and—Sir Almroth's last staggerer—inoculation against wounds! When the War Office and its medical advisers have been successfully inoculated against political lunacy, it will be time enough to discuss such extravagances. Meanwhile, the sooner the War Office issues a proclamation that no recruit will be either compelled or importuned to submit to any sort of inoculation whatever against his will, the better for the recruiting, and the worse for the enemy.

The War Office Bait of Starvation.

But this blunder was a joke compared to the next exploit of the War Office. It suddenly began to placard the country with frantic assurances to its five-thousand-a-year friends that they would be "discharged with all possible speed THE MINUTE THE WAR IS OVER." Only considerations of space restrained them, I presume, from adding "LAWN TENNIS, SHOOTING, AND ALL THE DELIGHTS OF FASHIONABLE LIFE CAN BE RESUMED IMMEDIATELY ON THE FIRING OF THE LAST SHOT." Now what does this mean to the wage worker? Simply that the moment he is no longer wanted in the trenches he will be flung back into the labour market to sink or swim without an hour's respite. If we had had a Labour representative or two to help in drawing up these silly placards—I am almost tempted to say if we had had any human being of any class with half the brains of a rabbit there—the placards would have contained a solemn promise that no single man should be discharged at the conclusion of the war, save at his own request, until a job had been found for him in civil life. I ask the heavens, with a shudder, do these class-blinded people in authority really intend to take a million men out of their employment; turn them into soldiers; and then at one blow hurl them back, utterly unprovided for, into the streets?

But a War Office capable of placarding Lord Roberts's declaration that the men who are enlisting are doing "what all able-bodied men in the kingdom should do" is clearly ignorant

enough for anything. I do not blame Lord Roberts for his oratorical flourish: we have all said things just as absurd on the platform in moments of enthusiasm. But the officials who reproduced it in cold blood would have us believe that soldiers live on air; that ammunition drops from heaven like manna; and that an army could hold the field for twenty-four hours without the support of a still more numerous body of civilians working hard to support it. Sane men gasp at such placards and ask angrily, "What sort of fools do you take us for?" I have in my hand a copy of *The Torquay Times* containing a hospitable invitation to soldiers' wives to call at the War Office, Whitehall, S.W., if they desire "assistance and explanation of their case." The return fare from Torquay to London is thirty shillings and sixpence third class; but the War Office no doubt assumes that all soldiers' wives keep motor cars. Still, let us be just even to the War Office. It did *not* ask the soldiers' wives for forms of authorization to pay the separation allowance to their bankers every six months. It actually offered the money monthly!

Delusive Promises.

The middle and upper classes are nearly as bad as the War Office. They talk of keeping every man's place open for him until the end of the war. Obviously this is flatly impossible. Some places can be kept, and no doubt are being kept. Some functions are suspended by the war and cannot be resumed until the troops return to civil life and resume them. Employers are so hardened to the daily commercial necessity for discharging men without a

thought as to what is to become of them that they are quite ready to undertake to sack the replacers when the troops come back. Also the return of peace may be followed by a revival of trade in which employment may not be hard to find, even by discharged soldiers, who are always passed over in the labour market in favour of civilians, as those well know who have the task of trying to find places for them. But these considerations do not justify an attempt to persuade recruits that they can go off soldiering for months—they are told by Lord Kitchener that it will probably be for years—and then come back and walk to their benches or into their offices and pick up their work as if they had left only the night before. The very people who are promising this are raising the cry "business as usual" in the same breath. How can business be carried on as usual, or carried on at all, on unoccupied office stools and at counters with no men behind them? Such rubbish is an insult to the recruit's intelligence. These promises of keeping places open were made to the men who enlisted for South Africa, and were of course broken, as a promise to supply green cheese by quarrying the moon would have been broken. New employees must be found to do the work of the men who are in the field; and these new ones will not all be thrown into the street when the war is over to make room for discharged soldiers, even if a good many of these soldiers are not disqualified by their new training and habits for their old employment. I repeat, there is only one assurance that can be given to the recruits without grossly and transparently deluding them; and that is that they shall not be

discharged, except at their own request, until civil employment is available for them.

Funking Controversy.

This is not the only instance of the way in which, under the first scare of the war, we shut our eyes and opened our mouths to every folly. For example, there was a cry for the suspension of all controversy in the face of the national danger. Now the only way to suspend controversial questions during a period of intense activity in the very departments in which the controversy has arisen is to allow them all to be begged. Perhaps I should not object if they were all begged in favour of my own side, as, for instance, the question of Socialism was begged in favour of Socialism when the Government took control of the railways; bought up all the raw sugar; regulated prices; guaranteed the banks; suspended the operation of private contracts; and did all the things it had been declaring utterly and eternally Utopian and imposible when Socialists advocated them. But it is now proposed to suspend all popular liberties and constitutional safeguards; to muzzle the Press, and actually to have no contests at bye-elections! This is more than a little too much. We have submitted to have our letters, our telegrams, our newspapers censored, our dividends delayed, our trains cut off, our horses and even our houses commandeered, our streets darkened, our restaurants closed, and ourselves shot dead on the public highways if we were slow to realize that some excited person bawling in the distance was a sentry challenging us. But

that we are to be politically gagged and enslaved as well; that the able-bodied soldier in the trenches, who depends on the able-minded civilian at home to guard the liberties of his country and protect him from carelesness or abuse of power by the authorities whom he must blindly and dumbly obey, is to be betrayed the moment his back is turned to his fellow-citizens and his face to the foe, is not patriotism: it is the paralysis of mortal funk: it is the worst kind of cowardice in the face of the enemy. Let us hear no more of it, but contest our elections like men, and regain the ancient political prestige of England at home as our expeditionary force has regained it abroad.

The Labour Party, then, need have no hesitation in raising all the standing controversies between Democracy and Junkerism in their acutest form, and taking advantage of the war emergency to press them to a series of parliamentary victories for Labour, whether in negotiations with the Government whips, in divisions on the floor of the House, or in strenuously contested bye-elections. No doubt our Junkers will try to disarm their opponents by representing that it would be in the last degree unfair, un-English, and ungentlemanly on the part of the Labour members to seize any tactical advantage in parliamentary warfare, and most treacherous and unpatriotic to attack their country (meaning the Junker Party) when it is at war. Some Labour members will be easily enough gulled in this way: it would be laughable, if the consequences were not so tragic, to see how our parliamentary beginners from the working

class succumb to the charm of the Junker appeal. The Junkers themselves are not to be coaxed in this manner: it is no use offering tracts to a missionary, as the poor Kaiser found when he tried it on. The Labour Party will soon learn the value of these polite demonstrations that it is always its duty not to hamper the governing classes in their very difficult and delicate and dangerous task of safeguarding the interests of this great empire: in short, to let itself be gammoned by elegant phrases and by adroit practisings on its personal good-nature, its inveterate proletarian sentimentality, and its secret misgivings as to the correctness of its manners. The Junkers have already taken the fullest advantage of the war to paralyze democracy. If the Labour members do not take a vigorous counter-offensive, and fight every parliamentary trench to the last division, the Labour Movement will be rushed back as precipitately as General von Kluck rushed the Allies back from Namur to the gates of Paris. In truth, the importance of the war to the immense majority of Englishmen, Frenchmen, and Germans lies in the possibility that when Junkers fall out common men may come by their own.

III

THE TERMS OF PEACE

Natural Limits to Duration of the War.

So much for the recruiting. Now for the terms of peace. It is time to take that subject in hand; for Lord Kitchener's notion that we are going to settle down to years of war as we did a century ago is soldierly, but not sensible. It is, of course, physically possible for us to continue for twenty years digging trenches and shelling German troops and shoving German armies back when they are not shoving us, whilst old women pull turnips and tend goats in the fire zones across which soldiers run to shelter. But we cannot afford to withdraw a million male adults who have passed a strictish health test from the work of parentage for several years unless we intend to breed our next generation from parents with short sight, varicose veins, rotten teeth, and deranged internal organs. Soldiers do not think of these things: "theirs not to reason why: theirs but to do and die"; but sensible civilians have to. And even soldiers know that you cannot make ammunition as fast as you can burn it, nor produce men and horses as instantaneously as you can kill them by machinery. It would be well, indeed, if our papers, instead of writing of ten-inch shells, would speak of £1,000 shells, and regimental bands occasionally finish the National Anthem and the Brabançonne and the Marseillaise with the old strain, "That's the way the money goes: Pop goes the Ten Inch." It is easy to rebuke Mr. Norman Angell and Herr Bloch for their sordid references to the cost of war; and Mr. H.G. Wells is profoundly right in pointing out that the fact that war does not pay commercially is greatly to its credit, as no high human activity ever does pay commercially. But modern war does not

even pay its way. Already our men have "pumped lead" into retreating Germans who had no lead left to pump back again; and sooner or later, if we go on indefinitely, we shall have to finish the job with our fists, and congratulate ourselves that both Georges Carpentier and Bombardier Wells are on our side. This war will stop when Germany throws up the sponge, which will happen long before she is utterly exhausted, but not before we ourselves shall be glad enough of a rest. Nations are like bees: they cannot kill except at the cost of their own lives.

The question of terms will raise a fierce controversy. At the extremes of our public opinion we have two temperaments, first, our gentlemen, our sportsmen, our daredevils, our *preux chevaliers*. To these the notion of reviling your enemy when he is up; kicking him when he is knocked down by somebody else; and gouging out his eyes, cutting out his tongue, hewing off his right arm, and stealing all his money, is abhorrent and cowardly. These gallants say, "It is not enough that we can fight Germany to-day. We can fight her any day and every day. Let her come again and again and yet again. We will fight her one to three; and if she comes on ten to one, as she did at Mons, we will mill on the retreat, and drive her back again when we have worn her down to our weight. If her fleet will not come out to fight us because we have too many ships, we will send all the odds in our favour back to Portsmouth and fight ship to ship in the North Sea, and let the bravest and best win." That is how gallant fighters talk, and how Drake is popularly (though erroneously) supposed to have

tackled the Armada.

The Ignoble Attitude of Cruel Panic.

But we are not all *preux chevaliers.* We have at the other extremity the people who are craving for loot and vengeance, who clamour for the humiliation and torture of the enemy, who rave against the village burnings and shootings by the Prussians in one column and exult in the same proceedings by the Russians in another, who demand that German prisoners of war shall be treated as criminals, who depict our Indian troops as savage cutthroats because they like to think of their enemies being mauled in the spirit of the Indian Mutiny, who shriek that the Kaiser must be sent to Devil's Island because St. Helena is too good for him, and who declare that Germany must be so maimed and trodden into the dust that she will not be able to raise her head again for a century. Let us call these people by their own favourite name, Huns, even at the risk of being unjust to the real Huns. And let us send as many of them to the trenches as we can possibly induce to go, in the hope that they may presently join the lists of the missing. Still, as they rather cling to our soil, they will have to be reckoned with when the settlement comes. But they will not count for much then. Most of them will be heartily ashamed of what they said in those first three or four weeks of blue funk (I am too timid myself not to make allowances for that most distressing and universal, but fortunately transient effect of war); and most of those who are not will be ashamed to bear malice publicly.

The Commercial Attitude.

Far more weighty in the matter will be the intermediate sections. First, our commercial main body, which thinks that chivalry is not business, and that rancour is childish, but cannot see why we should not make the Germans pay damages and supply us with some capital to set the City going again, forgetting that when France did that after 1871 for Berlin, Berlin was set going so effectually that it went headlong to a colossal financial smash, whilst the French peasant who had provided the capital from his old stocking throve soberly on the interest at the expense of less vital classes. Unfortunately Germany has set the example of this kind of looting. Prussian generals, like Napoleon's marshals, have always been shameless brigands, keeping up the seventeenth and eighteenth century tradition of making cities bribe them to refrain from sack and pillage and even billeting, and being quite incapable of the magnificence of the great Condé (or was it Turenne?), who refused a payment offered by a city on the ground that he had not intended to march through it. Blucher's fury when Wellington would not allow him to plunder Paris, and his exclamation when he saw London "What a city to loot!" is still regarded as fair soldiering; and the blackmail levied recently by the Prussian generals on the Belgian and French towns they have occupied must, I suppose, be let pass as ransom, not as ordinary criminal looting. But if the penalty of looting be thus spared, the Germans can hardly complain if they are themselves held to ransom when the fortunes

of war go against them. Liège and Lille and Antwerp and the rest must be paid their money back with interest; and there will be a big builder's bill at Rheims. But we should ourselves refrain strictly from blackmail. We should sell neither our blood nor our mercy. If we sell either we are as much brigands as Blucher.

Vindictive Damages.

And we must not let ourselves be tempted to soil our hands under pretext of vindictive damages. The man who thinks that all the money in Germany could pay for the life of a single British drummer boy ought to be shot merely as an expression of the feeling that he is unfit to live. We stake our blood as the Germans stake theirs; and in that *ganz besonderes Saft* alone should we [make**] or accept payment. We had better not say to the Kaiser at the end of the war, "Scoundrel: you can never replace the Louvain library, nor the sculpture of Rheims; and it follows logically that you shall empty your pockets into ours." Much better say: "God forgive us all!" If we cannot rise to this, and must soil our hands with plunder, at least let us call it plunder, and not profane our language and our souls by giving it fine names.

Our Annihilationists.

Then we shall have the Militarists, who will want to have Germany "bled to the white," dismembered and maimed, so that she may never do it again. Well, that is quite simple, if you are Militarist enough to do it. Loading Germany with debt will not do it. Towing her fleet into Portsmouth or sinking

it will not do it. Annexing provinces and colonies will not do it. The effective method is far shorter and more practical. What has made Germany formidable in this war? Obviously her overwhelmingly superior numbers. That was how she rushed us back almost to the gates of Paris. The organization, the readiness, the sixteen-inch howitzer helped; but it was the multitudinous *Kanonenfutter* that nearly snowed us under. The British soldier at Cambrai and Le Cateau killed and killed until his rifle was too hot to hold and his hand was paralyzed with slayer's cramp; but still they came and came.

Why Not Kill the German Women?

Well, there is no obscurity about that problem. Those Germans who took but an instant to kill had taken the travail of a woman for three-quarters of a year to breed, and eighteen years to ripen for the slaughter. All we have to do is to kill, say, 75 per cent, of all the women in Germany under 60. Then we may leave Germany her fleet and her money, and say "Much good may they do you." Why not, if you are really going in to be what you, never having read "this Neech they talk of," call a Nietzschean Superman? War is not an affair of sentiment. Some of our newspapers complain that the Germans kill the wounded and fire on field hospitals and Red Cross Ambulances. These same newspapers fill their columns with exultant accounts of how our wounded think nothing of modern bullet wounds and hope to be back at the front in a week, which I take to be the most direct incitement to the Germans to kill the wounded that

could be devized. It is no use being virtuously indignant: "stone dead hath no fellow" is an English proverb, not a German one. Even the killing of prisoners is an Agincourt tradition. Now it is not more cowardly to kill a woman than to kill a wounded man. And there is only one reason why it is a greater crime to kill a woman than a man, and why women have to be spared and protected when men are exposed and sacrificed. That reason is that the destruction of the women is the destruction of the community. Men are comparatively of no account: kill 90 per cent, of the German men, and the remaining 10 per cent. can repeople her. But kill the women, and *Delenda est Carthago*. Now this is exactly what our Militarists want to happen to Germany. Therefore the objection to killing women becomes in this case the reason for doing it. Why not? No reply is possible from the Militarist, disable-your-enemy point of view. If disablement is your will, there is your way, and the only effectual way. We really must not call the Kaiser and Von Bernhardi disciples of the mythical Neech when they have either overlooked or shrunk from such a glaring "biological necessity." A pair of puling pious sentimentalists if you like. But Supermen! Nonsense. O, my brother journalists, if you revile the Prussians, call them sheep led by snobs, call them beggars on horseback, call them sausage eaters, depict them in the good old English fashion in spectacles and comforter, seedy overcoat buttoned over paunchy figure, playing the contrabass tuba in a street band; but do not flatter them with the heroic title of Superman, and hold

up as magnificent villainies worthy of Milton's Lucifer these common crimes of violence and raid and lust that any drunken blackguard can commit when the police are away, and that no mere multiplication can dignify. As to Nietzsche, with his Polish hatred of Prussia (who heartily reciprocated the sentiment), when did he ever tell the Germans to allow themselves to be driven like sheep to the slaughter in millions by mischievous dolts who, being for the most part incapable of reading ten sentences of a philosophic treatise without falling asleep, allow journalists as illiterate as themselves to persuade them that he got his great reputation by writing a cheap gospel for bullies? Strictly between ourselves, we also are an illiterate people; but we may at least hold our tongues about matters we don't understand, and not say in the face of Europe that the English believe that the composer of Parsifal was a Militarist Prussian (he was an exiled revolutionist); that Nietzsche was a diciple of Wagner (Nietzsche preferred the music of Bizet, a Frenchman); and that the Kaiser is a disciple of Nietzsche, who would have laughed his childish pietism to scorn.

The Simple Answer.

Nietzsche would certainly have agreed that we must kill the German women if we mean business when we talk of destroying Germany. But he would also have answered my Why not?, which is more than any consistent Militarist can. Indeed, it needs no philosopher to give the answer. The first ordinary anti-Militarist human person you meet will tell you that it would be too horrible;

that life would be unbearable if people did such things. And he would be quite right; so please let us hear no more of kicking your enemy when he is down so that he may be unable to rise for a whole century. We may be unable to resist the temptation to loot Germany more or less if we conquer her. We are already actively engaged in piracy against her, stealing her ships and selling them in our prize courts, instead of honestly detaining them until the war is over and keeping a strict account of them. When gentlemen rise in the House of Commons and say that they owe Germans money and do not intend to pay it, one must face the fact that there will be a strong popular demand for plunder. War, after all, is simply a letting loose of organized murder, theft, and piracy on a foe; and I have no doubt the average Englishman will say to me what Falstaff said to Pistol concerning his share in the price of the stolen fan: "Reason, you rogue, reason: do you think I'll endanger my soul *gratis*?" To which I reply, "If you can't resist the booty, take it frankly, and know yourself for half patriot, half brigand; but don't talk nonsense about disablement. Cromwell tried it in Ireland. He had better have tried Home Rule. And what Cromwell could not do to Ireland we cannot do to Germany."

The Sensible People.

Finally we come to the only body of opinion in which there is any hope of civilization: the opinion of the people who are bent, not on gallantry nor revenge nor plunder nor pride nor panic nor glory nor any of the invidiousnesses of patriotism, but

on the problem of how to so redraw the map of Europe and reform its political constitutions that this abominable crime and atrocious nuisance, a European war, shall not easily occur again. The map is very important; for the open sores which have at last suppurated and burst after having made the world uneasy for years, were produced by altering the colour of Alsace and Lorraine and of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the map. And the new map must be settled, not by conquest, but by consent of the people immediately concerned. One of the broken treaties of Europe which has been mentioned less frequently of late than the Belgian treaty is the treaty of Prague, by which a plebiscite was to have been taken on the subject of the nationality of Schleswig and Holstein. That plebiscite has never been taken. It may have to be taken, with other plebiscites, before this war is settled.

German Unity Inviolable.

But here let me warn those who are hoping for a disintegrated Germany like that which Thackeray ridiculed, that their hopes are vain. The southern Germans, the, friendliest, most easy-going people in the world (as far as I know the world) dislike the Prussians far more heartily than we do; but they know that they are respected and strong and big as part of United Germany, and that they were weak and despised and petty as separate kingdoms. Germany will hold together. No doubt the Germans may reasonably say to the Prussian drill sergeant and his master Hohenzollern, "A nice mess you have made of your job after all we have endured from you because we believed

you could make us invincible. We thought that if you were hard masters you were at any rate good grenadiers; but here are these piffling little Belgians and these Russians who were beaten by the Japanese, and these English who made such a poor show against a handful of Boer farmers, fighting and organizing just as well as you. So, as the French and English are organized as a republic and an extremely limited monarchy, we will try how that sort of constitution will suit us." But they will not break up: on the contrary, they are much more likely to extend the German community by incorporating German Austria. And as this would raise the question whether Hohenzollern or Hapsburg should rule the roost, the simplest solution would be to get rid of them both, and take the sooner or later inevitable step into the democratic republican form of Government to which Europe is visibly tending, though "this king business," as my American correspondents call it, has certain conveniences when it is limited and combined with an aristocracy also limited by primogeniture and politically controlled by a commonalty into which all but the eldest brothers in the aristocratic families fall, thus making the German segregation of the *adel* class impossible. Such a monarchy, especially when the monarch is a woman, as in Holland today, and in England under Victoria, is a fairly acceptable working substitute for a formal republic in old civilizations with inveterate monarchical traditions, absurd as it is in new and essentially democratic States. At any rate, it is conceivable that the western allies might demand the

introduction of some such political constitution in Germany and Austria as a guarantee; for though the demand would not please Russia, some of Russia's demands will not please us; and there must be some give and take in the business.

Limits of Constitutional Interference.

Let us consider this possibility for a moment. First, it must be firmly postulated that civilized nations cannot have their political constitutions imposed on them from without if the object of the arrangement is peace and stability. If a victorious Germany were to attempt to impose the Prussian constitution on France and England, they would submit to it just as Ireland submitted to Dublin Castle, which, to say the least, would not be a millennial settlement. Profoundly as we are convinced that our Government of India is far better than any native Indian government could be (the assumption that "natives" could govern at all being made for the sake of argument with due reluctance), it is quite certain that until it becomes as voluntary as the parliamentary government of Australia, and has been modified accordingly, it will remain an artificial, precarious, and continually threatening political structure. Nevertheless, we need not go to the opposite extreme and conclude that a political constitution must fit a country so accurately that it must be home-made to measure. Europe has a stock of ready-made constitutions, both Monarchical and Republican, which will fit any western European nation comfortably enough. We are at present considerably bothered by the number of Germans who, though their own country and

constitution is less than a day's journey away, settle here and marry Englishwomen without feeling that our constitution is unbearable. Englishmen are never tired of declaring that "they do things better abroad" (as a matter of fact they often do), and that the ways of Prussia are smarter than the ways of Paddington. It is therefore quite possible that a reach-me-down constitution proposed, not by the conquerors, but by an international congress with no interest to serve but the interests of peace, might prove acceptable enough to a nation thoroughly disgusted with its tyrants.

Physician: Heal Thyself.

Now a congress which undertook the Liberalization of Germany would certainly not stop there. If we invite a congress to press for a democratization of the German constitution, we must consent to the democratization of our own. If we send the Kaiser to St. Helena (or whatever the title of the Chiselhurst villa may be) we must send Sir Edward Grey there, too. For if on the morrow of the peace we may all begin to plot and plan one another's destruction over again in the secrecy of our Foreign Office, so that in spite of Parliament and free democratic institutions the Foreign Secretary may at any moment step down from the Foreign Office to the House of Commons and say, "I arranged yesterday with the ambassador from Cocagne that England is to join his country in fighting Brobdingnag; so vote me a couple of hundred millions, and off with you to the trenches," we shall be just where we were before as far as any

likelihood of putting an end to war is concerned. The congress will certainly ask us to pledge ourselves that if we shake the mailed fist at all we shall shake it publicly, and that though we may keep our sword ready (let me interject in passing that disarmament is all nonsense: nobody is going to disarm after this experience) it shall be drawn by the representatives of the nation, and not by Junker diplomatists who despise and distrust the nation, and have planned war behind its back for years. Indeed they will probably demur to its being drawn even by the representative of the nation until the occasion has been submitted to the judgment of the representatives of the world, or such beginnings of a world representative body as may be possible. That is the true *Weltpolitik*.

The Hegemony of Peace.

For the main business of the settlement, if it is to have any serious business at all, must be the establishment of a Hegemony of Peace, as desired by all who are really capable of high civilization, and formulated by me in the daily Press in a vain attempt to avert this mischief whilst it was brewing. Nobody took the smallest public notice of me; so I made a lady in a play say "Not bloody likely," and instantly became famous beyond the Kaiser, beyond the Tsar, beyond Sir Edward Grey, beyond Shakespeare and Homer and President Wilson, the papers occupying themselves with me for a whole week just as they are now occupying themselves with the war, and one paper actually devoting a special edition to a single word in my play,

which is more than it has done for the Treaty of London (1839). I concluded then that this was a country which really could not be taken seriously. But the habits of a lifetime are not so easily broken; and I am not afraid to produce another dead silence by renewing my good advice, as I can easily recover my popularity by putting still more shocking expressions into my next play, especially now that events have shewn that I was right on the point of foreign policy.

East Is East; and West Is West.

I repeat, then, that there should be a definite understanding that whatever may happen or not happen further east, England, France, and Germany solemnly pledge themselves to maintain the internal peace of the west of Europe, and renounce absolutely all alliances and engagements that bind them to join any Power outside the combination in military operations, whether offensive or defensive, against one inside it. We must get rid of the monstrous situation that produced the present war. France made an alliance with Russia as a defence against Germany. Germany made an alliance with Austria as a defence against Russia. England joined the Franco-Russian alliance as a defence against Germany and Austria. The result was that Germany became involved in a quarrel between Austria and Russia. Having no quarrel with France, and only a second-hand quarrel with Russia, she was, nevertheless, forced to attack France in order to disable her before she could strike Germany from behind when Germany was fighting France's ally, Russia. And this attack on France

forced England to come to the rescue of England's ally, France. Not one of the three nations (as distinguished from their tiny Junker-Militarist cliques) wanted to fight; for England had nothing to gain and Germany had everything to lose, whilst France had given up hope of her Alsace-Lorraine *revanche*, and would certainly not have hazarded a war for it. Yet because Russia, who has a great deal to gain by victory and nothing except military prestige to lose by defeat, had a quarrel with Austria over Servia, she has been able to set all three western friends and neighbours shedding "rivers of blood" from one another's throats; an outrageous absurdity. Fifty years ago the notion of England helping Russia and Japan to destroy Germany would have seemed as suicidal as Canada helping the Apaches to destroy the United States of America; and though we now think much better of the Japanese (and also, by the way, of the Apaches), that does not make us any the more patient with the man who burns down his own street because he admires the domestic architecture of Yokohama, especially when the fire presently spreads to the cathedral of Rheims. It is bad enough that we should have betrayed oriental Persia to oriental Russia as we did (and get nothing for our pains but what we deserved); but when it comes to sacrificing occidental Germany to her as well, we are sharpening a knife for our own occidental throat. The Russian Government is the open enemy of every liberty we boast of. Charles I.'s unsuccessful attempt to arrest five members of the House of Commons for disagreeing with him is ancient

history here: it occurred 272 years ago; but the Tsar's successful attempt to arrest thirty members of the Duma and to punish them as dangerous criminals is a fact of to-day. Under Russian government people whose worst crime is to find *The Daily News* a congenial newspaper are hanged, flogged, or sent to Siberia as a matter of daily routine; so that before 1906 even the articles in *The Times* on such events as the assassinations of Bobrikoff and the Grand Duke were simply polite paraphrases of "Serve him right." It may be asked why our newspapers have since ceased to report examples of Russia's disregard of the political principles we are supposed to stand for. The answer is simple. It was in 1906 that we began to lend Russia money, and Russia began to advertise in *The Times*. Since then she has been welcome to flog and hang her H.G. Wellses and Lloyd Georges by the dozen without a word of remonstrance from our plutocratic Press, provided the interest is paid punctually. Russia has been embraced in the large charity of cosmopolitan capital, the only charity that does not begin at home.

The Russian Russians and Their Prussian Tsars.

And here I must save my face with my personal friends who are either Russians or discoverers of the soul of the Russian people. I hereby declare to Sasha Kropotkin and Cunninghame Graham that my heart is with their Russia, the Russia of Tolstoy and Turgenieff and Dostoieffsky, of Gorki and Tchekoff, of the Moscow Art Theatre and the Drury Lane Ballet, of Peter Kropotkin and all the great humanitarians, great artists, and

charming people whom their very North German Tsars exile and imprison and flog and generally do what in them lies to suppress and abolish. For the sake of Russian Russia, I am prepared to strain every point in Prussian Russia's favour. I grant that the Nihilists, much as we loved them, were futile romantic people who could have done nothing if Alexander II. had abdicated and offered them the task of governing Russia instead of persecuting them and being finally blown to bits by them. I grant that the manners of the Fins to the Russians are described as insufferable both by the Swedes and the Russians, and that we never listened to the Russian side of that story. I am ready to grant Gilbert Murray's plea that the recent rate of democratic advance has been greater in Russia than anywhere else in Europe, though it does remind me a little of the bygone days when the Socialists, scoring 20 votes at one general election and forty at the next, were able to demonstrate that their gain of 100 per cent. was immensely in excess of the wretched two or three per cent. that was the best the Unionists or Liberals could shew. I am willing to forget how short a time it is since Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman said: "The Duma is dead: long live the Duma!" and since we refused to allow the Tsar to land in England when his ship was within gangway's length of our shore, on which occasion I myself held up the Anglo-Russian agreement for the partition of Persia to the execration of a crowd in Trafalgar Square, whilst our Metropolitan Police snatched the *l'sarbeleidigend* English newspapers from the sellers and tore them up precisely in the

Cossack manner. I have an enormous relish for the art of Russia; I perceive a spirit in Russia which is the natural antidote to Potsdamnation; and I like most of the Russians I know quite unaffectedly. I could find it in my heart to reproach the Kaiser for making war on the Russia of these delightful people, just as I like to think that at this very moment good Germans may be asking him how he can bring himself to discharge shrapnel at the England of Bernard Shaw and Cunninghame Graham. History may not forgive him for it; but the practical point at the moment is that he does it, and no doubt attributes the perfidy of England to the popularity of our works. And as we have to take the Kaiser as we find him, and not as the Hohenzollern legend glorifies him, I have to take the Tsar as I find him. When we fight the Kaiser we are not fighting Bach and Wagner and Strauss, to whom we have just joyfully surrendered without a blow at the battle of Queen's Hall, but all the forces in Germany that made things hard for Wagner and Strauss. And when we fight for the Tsar we are not fighting for Tolstoy and Gorki, but for the forces that Tolstoy thundered against all his life and that would have destroyed him had he not been himself a highly connected Junker as well as a revolutionary Christian. And if I doubt whether the Tsar would feel comfortable as a member of a Democratic League of Peace, I am not doubting the good intent of Kropotkin: I am facing the record of Kropotkin's imperial jailer, and standing on the proud fact that England is the only country in Europe, not excepting even France, in which

Kropotkin has been allowed to live a free man, and had his birthday celebrated by public meetings all over the country, and his articles welcomed by the leading review. In point of fact, it is largely on Kropotkin's account that I regard the Tsar as a gentleman of slightly different views to President Wilson, and hate the infamous tyranny of which he is the figurehead as I hate the devil. And I know that practically all our disinterested and thoughtful supporters of the war feel deeply uneasy about the Russian alliance. At all events, I should be trifling grossly with the facts of the situation if I pretended that the most absolute autocracy in Europe, commanding an inexhaustible army in an invincible country with a dominion stretching from the Baltic to the Pacific, may not, if it achieves a military success against the most dreaded military Power in Europe, be stirred to ambitions far more formidable to western liberty and human welfare than those of which Germany is now finding out the vanity after worrying herself and everyone else with them for forty years. When all is said that can be said for Russia, the fact remains that a forcibly Russianized German province would be just such another open sore in Europe as Alsace-Lorraine, Poland, Macedonia or Ireland. It is useless to dream of guarantees: if Russia undertook to govern democratically she would not be able to redeem her promise: she would do better with primitive Communism. Her city populations may be as capable of Democracy as our own (it is, alas! not saying much); but the overwhelming mass of peasants to whom the Tsar is a

personal God will for a long time to come make his bureaucracy irresistible. As against Russian civilization German and Austrian civilization is our civilization: there is no getting over that. A constitutional kingship of Poland and a sort of Caliphate of the Slavs in remapped southeastern Europe, with that access to warm sea water which is Russia's common human right, valid against all Balances of Power and Keys to India and the like, must be her reward for her share in the war, even if we have to nationalize Constantinople to secure it to her. But it cannot be too frankly said at the outset that any attempt to settle Europe on the basis of the present hemming in of a consolidated Germany and German Austria by a hostile combination of Russia and the extreme states against it, would go to pieces by its own inherent absurdity, just as it has already exploded most destructively by its own instability. Until Russia becomes a federation of several separate democratic States, and the Tsar is either promoted to the honourable position of hereditary President or else totally abolished, the eastern boundary of the League of Peace must be the eastern boundary of Swedish, German, and Italian civilization; and Poland must stand between it and the quite different and for the moment unassimilable, civilization of Russia, whose friendship we could not really keep on any other terms, as a closer alliance would embarrass her as much as it would embarrass us. Meanwhile, we must trust to the march of Democracy to de-Russianize Berlin and de-Prussianize Petrograd, and to put the nagaikas of the Cossacks and the riding-whips with which Junker officers slash

German privates, and the forty tolerated homosexual brothels of Berlin, and all the other psychopathic symptoms of overfeeding and inculcated insolence and sham virility in their proper place, which I take to be the dustbin.

Driving Capital Out of the Country.

But I must here warn everyone concerned that the most formidable opposition to the break-up of these unnatural alliances between east and west, between Democracy and Autocracy, between the twentieth century and the Dark Ages, will not come from the Balancers of Power. They are not really Balance of Power alliances: in fact, they are tending to an enormous overbalance of power in favor of the east as against the west and in favor of Militarist Autocracy as against Democracy. They are at root absolutely unpatriotic, even absolutely conscienceless products of commercial finance; and the Balance of Power theories are only the attempts of our diplomats to put a public spirited face on the operations of private cupidity. This is not the first time nor the second that I have had to urge that the greatest danger to us in the sphere of foreign politics is the tendency of capital to run away from civilization: the one running downhill to hell as naturally as the other struggles uphill to the Celestial City. The Englishman is allowed to produce the subsistence of himself and his family only on condition that he produces the subsistence of the capitalist and his retainers as well; and lo! he finds more and more that these retainers are not Englishmen, but Russians, South Americans,

Kaffirs, Persians, or yellow or black barbarians armed for his destruction (not to mention Prussians and Austrians), and that the treaties made by our diplomatists have less and less to do with the security of the nation or the balance of power or any other public business, and more and more with capitalist opportunities of making big dividends out of slavish labour. For instance, the Anglo-Russian agreement is not a national treaty: it is the memorandum of a commercial agreement settling what parts of Persia are to be exploited by the Russian and English capitalists respectively; the capitalists, always against State interference for the benefit of the people, being very strongly in favor of it for coercing strikers at home and keeping foreign rivals off their grass abroad. And the absurd part of it is that when the State has thus arranged for our capitalists to exploit certain parts of Persia, and for their sakes to protect the parliamentary liberties of the part left to Russia, they discovered that, after all, the most profitable game was to lend Russia the money to exploit with, and to facilitate the operation by allowing her to destroy the Persian parliament in the face of our own exhortation to it to keep the flag flying, which we accordingly did without a blush. The French capitalists had dragged France into an alliance with Russia long before this; but the French Republic had the excuse of the German peril and the need for an anti-German ally. Her natural ally for that purpose was England; but as there was no market in England for her money, her plutocrats drove her into the alliance with Russia as well; and it is that alliance

and not the alliance with England that has terrified Germany into flying at her throat and plunging Europe into a frightful war. The natural alliance with England twice averted war: in the Moroccan crises of Algeciras and Agadir, when Sir Edward Grey said boldly that we should defend France, and took the first steps towards a joint military and naval control of the French and English forces. Why he shrank from that firm position last July and thereby led Germany to count so fatally on our neutrality I do not pretend to know; it suffices for my argument that we were able to hold the balance between France and Germany, but failed to hold it between Germany and Russia, and that it was the placing of Russian loans in France and England that brought Russia into our western affairs. It would have paid us ten times over to have made Russia a present of all we and France have lent her (indemnifying, of course, the holders of the stock through an addition to the income tax) rather than pay the price of a European war. But what is the use of crying for spilt milk? I am merely explaining why, when French money went to Russia, the French papers discovered that the Russians were a most interesting people and their Government—properly understood—a surprisingly Liberal Government; and why, when English money went to Russia, the English press suddenly developed leanings towards the Greek Church, and deplored the unofficial execution of Stolypin as deeply as it had rejoiced in the like fate of Bobrikoff. The upshot of it all is that western civilization is at present busy committing suicide by machinery, and importing

hordes of Asiatics and Africans to help in the throat cutting, not for the benefit of the silly capitalists, who are being ruined wholesale, but to break up the Austrian Empire for the benefit of Russia and the Slavs of eastern Europe, which may be a very desirable thing, but which could and should be done by the eastern Powers among themselves, without tearing Belgium and Germany and France and England to pieces in the process.

The Red Flag and the Black.

Will you now at last believe, O stupid British, German, and French patriots, what the Socialists have been telling you for so many years: that your Union Jacks and tricolours and Imperial Eagles ("where the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered") are only toys to keep you amused, and that there are only two real flags in the world henceforth: the red flag of Democratic Socialism and the black flag of Capitalism, the flag of God and the flag of Mammon? What earthly or heavenly good is done when Tom Fool shoots Hans Narr? The plain fact is that if we leave our capital to be dealt with according to the selfishness of the private man he will send it where wages are low and workers enslaved and docile: that is, as many thousand miles as possible from the Trade Unions and Trade Union rates and parliamentary Labour Parties of civilization; and Germany, at his sordid behest, will plunge the world into war for the sake of disgracing herself with a few rubber plantations, poetically described by her orators and journalists as "a place in the sun." When you do what the Socialists tell you by keeping your capital

jealously under national control and reserving your shrapnel for the wasters who not only shirk their share of the industrial service of their country, but intend that their children and children's children shall be idle wasters like themselves, you will find that not a farthing of our capital will go abroad as long as there is a British slum to be cleared and rebuilt, or a hungry, ragged, and ignorant British child to be fed, clothed, and educated.

A League of Peace.

But in the west I see no insuperable obstacle to a Treaty of Peace in the largest sense. This war has smoothed the way to it, if I may use the word smoothing to describe a process conduced with so little courtesy and so much shrapnel. Germany has now learned—and the lesson was apparently needed, obvious as it would have been to a sanely governed nation—that when it comes to shoving and shooting, Germany instantly loses all the advantages of her high civilization, because France and England, cultured or uncultured, can shove and shoot as well or beter than she, whilst as to slashing and stabbing, their half barbarous Turco and Ghoorka slaves can cut the Prussian Guard to bits, in spite of the unquestionable superiority of Wagner's music to theirs. Then take France. She does not dream that she could fight Germany and England single-handed. And England could not fight France and Germany without a sacrifice as ruinous as it would be senseless. We therefore have the necessary primary conditions for a League of Peace between the three countries; for if one of them break it, the other two can make her sorry, under which

circumstances she will probably not break it. The present war, if it end in the reconquest of Alsace and Lorraine by the French, will make such a League much more stable; not that France can acquire by mere conquest any right to hold either province against its will (which could be ascertained by plebiscite), but because the honors of war as between France and Germany would then be easy, France having regained her laurels and taught Germany to respect her, without obliterating the record of Germany's triumph in 1870. And if the war should further result in the political reconstruction of the German Empire as a democratic Commonwealth, and the conquest by the English people of democratic control of English foreign policy, the combination would be immensely eased and strengthened, besides being brought into harmony with American public feeling, which is important to the security and prestige of the League.

The Case of the Smaller States.

Already the war has greatly added to the value of one of the factors upon which the League of Peace will depend. The smaller States: Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, and the Scandinavian Powers, would have joined it any time these 40 years, had it existed, for the sake of its protection, and thereby made the Protestant north of Mr. Houston Chamberlain's dream as much a reality as any such dream is ever likely to be. But after the fight put up by Belgium the other day, the small States will be able to come in with the certainty of being treated with considerable respect as military factors; for Belgium can now

claim to have saved Europe single-handed. Germany has been very unpleasantly reminded of the fact that though a big man may be able to beat a little one, yet if the little one fights for all he is worth he may leave the victor very sorry he broke the peace. Even as between the big Powers, victory has not, as far as the fighting has yet gone, been always with the biggest battalions. With a couple of millions less men, the Kaiser might have taken more care of them and made a better job of it.

At the same time I hold no brief for small States as such, and most vehemently deny that we are in any way bound to knight errantry on their behalf as against big ones. They are mostly either incorrigibly bellicose themselves, like Montenegro, or standing temptations to the big Powers, like Bosnia and Herzegovina. They multiply frontiers, which are nuisances, and languages, which have made confusion since the building of Babel. The striking contrast between the United States of North America and the disunited States of South America in this respect is, from the Pacifist point of view, very much in favor of the northern unity. The only objection to large political units is that they make extremely dangerous autocracies. But as groups of federated democracies they are the best neighbours in the world. A federal democratic Russia would be as safe a colleague as America: a federal democratic Germany would be as pleasant company as Switzerland. Let us, I beg, hear no more of little States as British Dulcineas.

The Claims of Belgium.

As to the special case of Belgium, its claims in the settlement are simple and indeed single. If we conclude a peace without clearing the Germans completely out of Belgium, we shall be either beaten or dishonoured. And such indemnity as a money payment can effect for Belgium is due not only by Germany, but by Britain, France, and Russia as well. Belgium has been crushed between the Alliance and the Entente: it was these two menaces to the peace of Europe that produced Armageddon; and as Belgium's heroic resistance served the Entente against the Alliance, the obligation to make good the remediable damage is even more binding on the Entente.

But there is another and more pressing matter arising out of the conquest of Belgium.

The Belgian Refugees and the Problem of Unemployment.

As I write these lines the descent on our shores of an army of refugees from captured Antwerp and threatened Ostend has forced the President of the Local Government Board to make a desperate appeal to all and sundry to form representative committees to deal with the prevention and relief of distress: in other words to save the refugees from starving to death. Now the Board of Trade has already drawn attention to a memorandum of the Local Government Board as to the propriety of providing employment for refugees. And instantly and inevitably the condition had to be laid down that if the Committees find employment for anyone, they shall refer the

case to the local Labour Exchange in order that "any steps taken to assist refugees to find employment shall not be such as to endanger the employment of British workpeople." In other words, the starving Belgians have fled from the Germans only to compete for crust with starving Englishmen. As long as there is an unemployed Englishman in the country—and there are a good many, especially in the cotton industry—how is it possible to give a job to a Belgian without depriving an Englishman of it? Why, instead of making impossible conditions, and helplessly asking private citizens to do something for pity's sake, will not the Government face the fact that the refugee question is simply an intensification of the normal unemployed question, the only difference being that we are accustomed to leave our own people to starve when they are common persons with whom the governing classes do not associate, whereas the Belgians have rendered us such a tremendous service in the war, and our statesmen have so loudly protested that the integrity of Belgium is dearer to England than her own heart's blood, that we cannot with any decency treat the destitute Belgians as if they were mere British riffraff. Yet when we attempt to provide for the Belgians by finding work for them the Board of Trade has to point out that by doing so we are taking the bread out of the mouths of our own people. Hence we arrive at the remarkable situation of starving Britons and Belgians looking hungrily through barbed wire fences at flourishing communities of jolly and well fed German prisoners of war (whose friendly hat wavings to me and

my fellow passengers as I rush through Newbury Racecourse Station in the Great Western Express I hereby acknowledge publicly with all possible good feeling). I therefore for the present strongly recommend all Belgians who have made up their minds to flee to England, to pick up German uniforms on the battle fields and surrender to the British in the character of Uhlans. Their subsistence will then be secure until the war is over, as we dare not illtreat our prisoners lest the Germans should retaliate upon the British soldiers in their hands, even if we were all spiteful enough to desire to do it, as some of our baser sort have not been ashamed to propose.

But the women and children, and the too young and the too old, cannot resort to this expedient. And though theoretically our own unemployed could be dressed in British uniforms and sent abroad with instructions to take refuge in neutral territory and be "interned" or to surrender to the first Uhlan patrol they met, yet it would be difficult to reduce this theory to practice, though the possibility is worth mentioning as a reduction to absurdity of the situation. As a matter of common sense "we should at once place all destitute Belgian refugees on the footing of prisoners of war, except that we need not post sentries to shoot them if they try to escape, nor surround them with barbed wire. Indeed these precautions are necessary in the case of the Germans rather to save their sense of honour whilst remaining here than to defeat any very strong longing on their part to return to the trenches.

In a reasonable state of society there would be another

difference. The Belgians would offer to work so as not to be a burden to us; whilst the German prisoner would say—as he actually does, by the way—"No: I am not here by my own will: if you open the door I shall go home and take myself off your hands; so I am in no way bound to work for you." As it is, our Trade Unions are up in arms at the slightest hint of either Belgian or German labour being employed when there is no shortage of English labour!

The Minority Report.

All this exasperating anomaly and deadlock and breakdown would disappear if we had a proper system of provision for our own unemployed civilians (there are no unemployed soldiers: we do not discharge them between the battles). The Belgians would have found an organization of unemployment ready for them, and would have been provided for with our own unemployed, not as refugees, but simply as unemployed. How to do that need not be explained here. The problem was worked out by one of the hardest bits of thinking yet done in the Socialist movement, and set forth in the Minority Report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws and the Relief of Distress, 1909. Our helplessness in the present emergency shews how very unwise we were to shelve that report. Unluckily, what with the wounded vanity of the majority of the Commission, who had been played off the stage by Mrs. Sidney Webb; the folly of the younger journalists of the advanced guard, who had just then rediscovered Herbert Spencer's mare's nest of "the servile State," and revolted with

all the petulant anarchism of the literary profession against the ideal Interfering Female as typified in their heated imaginations by poor Mrs. Sidney Webb, who became the Aunt Sally of our young artists in stale anti-bureaucratic invective; and, above all, the mulishly silent refusal of our governing classes to see why the unemployed should not be simply left to starve, as they had always been (the Poor Law being worse than useless for so large a purpose), nothing was done; and there is consequently no machinery ready for dealing with the refugees. That is why we must treat them for the moment simply as unguarded prisoners of war.

The General Strike Against War.

But if the problem of unemployment among our own people becomes acute, we shall have to fall back on the Minority Report proposals or else run the risk of a revolt against the war. We have already counted on the chances of that revolt hampering Germany, just as Germany counted on the chances of its hampering Russia, The notion that the working classes can stop a war by a general international strike is never mentioned during the first rally to the national flag at the outbreak of a war; but it is there all the time, ready to break out again if the supplies of food and glory run short. Its gravity lies in its impracticability. If it were practicable, every sane man would advocate it. As it is, it might easily mean that British troops would be coercing British strikers at home when they should be fighting Potsdam abroad, thus producing a disastrous and detestable division of popular

feeling in the face of the enemy.

The Disarmament Delusion.

Objections to the Western Pacifist settlement will come from several quarters, including the Pacifist quarters. Some of the best disposed parties will stumble over the old delusion of disarmament. They think it is the gun that matters. They are wrong: the gun matters very much when war breaks out; but what makes both war and the gun is the man behind them. And if that man really means the peace of the world to be kept, he will take care to have a gun to keep it with. The League of Peace must have a first-rate armament, or the League of War will very soon make mincemeat of it. The notion that the men of evil intent are to have all the weapons will not work. Theoretically, all our armaments should be pooled. But as we, the British Empire, will most certainly not pool our defenses with anyone, and as we have not the very smallest intention of disarming, and will go on building gun for gun and ship for ship in step with even our dearest friends if we see the least risk of our being left in a position of inferiority, we cannot with any countenance demand that other Powers shall do what we will not do ourselves. Our business is not to disable ourselves or anyone else, but to organize a balance of military power against war, whether made by ourselves or any other Power; and this can be done only by a combination of armed and fanatical Pacifists of all nations, not by a crowd of non-combatants wielding deprecations, remonstrances, and Christmas cards.

America's Example: War at a Year's Notice.

How far it will be possible to take these national armaments out of national control remains to be seen. Already America, who is as deeply demoralized by Capitalism as we are, though much less tainted with Militarism now that Colonel Roosevelt has lost his front seat, has pledged herself to several European States not to go to war with them until the matter under dispute has been in the hands of an international tribunal for a year. Now there is no military force on earth, nor likely to be, strong enough to prevent America from treating these agreements as Germany has just treated the 1839 Treaty guaranteeing the neutrality of Belgium. Therefore the Militarists declare that the agreements are not worth the scraps of paper they are written on. They always will footle in this way. They might as well say that because there are crimes which men can commit with legal impunity in spite of our haphazard criminal codes, men always do commit them. No doubt nations will do what it is to their interest to do. But because there is in every nation a set of noisy moral imbeciles who cannot see that nations have an overwhelming interest in creating and maintaining a tradition of international good faith, and honouring their promissory notes as scrupulously as the moral imbeciles pay their silly gambling debts and fight their foolish duels, we are not, I presume, going to discard every international guarantee except the howitzer. Why, the very Prussian Militarists themselves are reviling us for doing what their own Militarist preachers assumed as a matter of course that we should do: that is, attack Prussia

without regard to the interests of European civilization when we caught her at a disadvantage between France and Russia. But we should have been ashamed to do that if she had not, by assuming that there was no such thing as shame (*alias* conscience), terrified herself into attacking France and Belgium, when, of course, we were immediately ashamed not to defend them. This idiotic ignoring of the highest energies of the human soul, without the strenuous pressure of which the fabric of civilization—German civilization perhaps most of all—could not hold together for a single day, should really be treated in the asylums of Europe, not on battlefields.

I conclude that we might all very well make a beginning by pledging ourselves as America has done to The Hague tribunal not to take up arms in any cause that has been less than a year under arbitration, and to treat any western Power refusing this pledge as an unpopular and suspicious member of the European club. To break such a pledge would be an act of brigandage; and the need for suppressing brigandage cannot be regarded as an open question.

The Security Will o' the Wisp.

It will be observed that I propose no guarantee of absolute security. Not being a sufferer from *delirium tremens* I can live without it. Security is no doubt the Militarists' most seductive bait to catch the coward's vote. But their method makes security impossible, They undertook to secure the English in Egypt from an imaginary Islam rising by the Denshawai Horror, as a result

of which nobody has ventured to suggest that we should trust the Egyptian army in this conflict, though India, having learnt from Mr. Keir Hardie and Mr. Ramsay Macdonald that there are really anti-Militarists in England who regard Indians as fellow creatures, is actually rallying to us against the Prussian Junkers, who are, in Indian eyes, indistinguishable from the Anglo-Indians who call Mr. Keir Hardie and Mr. Ramsay Macdonald traitors, and whose panicstricken denial of even a decent pretence of justice in the sedition trials is particularly unfortunate just now. We must always take risks; and we should never trade on the terror of death, nor forget that this wretchedest of all the trades is none the less craven because it can so easily be gilt with romance and heroism and solemn national duty and patriotism and the like by persons whose superficial literary and oratorical talent covers an abyss of Godforsaken folly.

The Only Real World Danger.

The one danger before us that nothing can avert but a general raising of human character through the deliberate cultivation and endowment of democratic virtue without consideration of property and class, is the danger created by inventing weapons capable of destroying civilization faster than we produce men who can be trusted to use them wisely. At present we are handling them like children. Now children are very pretty, very lovable, very affectionate creatures (sometimes); and a child can make nitroglycerine or chloride of nitrogen as well as a man if it is taught to do so. We have sense enough not to teach it; but we

do teach the grown-up children. We actually accompany that dangerous technical training with solemn moral lessons in which the most destructive use of these forces at the command of kings and capitalists is inculcated as heroism, patriotism, glory and all the rest of it. It is all very well to fire cannons at the Kaiser for doing this; but we do it ourselves. It is therefore undeniably possible that a diabolical rhythm may be set up in which civilization will rise periodically to the point at which explosives powerful enough to destroy it are discovered, and will then be shattered and thrown back to a fresh start with a few starving and ruined survivors. H.G. Wells and Anatole France have pre-figured that result in fiction; and I cannot deny the strength of its probability; for if England and Germany can find no better way of celebrating their arrival at the highest point of civilization yet attained than setting out to blow one another to fragments with fulminates, it would seem that the peace of the neutral States is the result, not of their being more civilized, but less heavily armed. And when we see that the effect of the enterprise is not to redouble civil vigilance and stimulate the most alert and jealous political criticism, but on the contrary to produce an assumption that every constitutional safeguard must be suspended until the war is over, and that every silly tyrannical expedient such as censorship of the press, martial law, and the like, will begin to work good instead of evil the moment men take to murdering one another, it must be admitted that the prospect is not too hopeful. Our only consolation is that civilization has

survived very destructive wars before, mostly because they have produced effects not only unintended but violently objected to by the people who made them. In 1870, for instance, Napoleon III. can hardly have intended his own overthrow and return to exile in England; nor did Bismarck aim at the restoration of French Republicanism and the formation of an Anglo-Franco-Russian alliance against Prussia. Several good things may come out of the present war if it leaves anybody alive to enjoy them.

The Church and the War.

And now, where in our society is the organ whose function it should be to keep us constantly in mind that, as Lassalle said, "the sword is never right," and to shudder with him at the fact that "the Lie is a European Power"? In no previous war have we struck that top note of keen irony, the closing of the Stock Exchange and not of the Church. The pagans were more logical: they closed the Temple of Peace when they drew the sword. We turn our Temples of Peace promptly into temples of war, and exhibit our parsons as the most pugnacious characters in the community. I venture to affirm that the sense of scandal given by this is far deeper and more general than the Church thinks, especially among the working classes, who are apt either to take religion seriously or else to repudiate it and criticize it closely. When a bishop at the first shot abandons the worship of Christ and rallies his flock around the altar of Mars, he may be acting patriotically, necessarily, manfully, rightly; but that does not justify him in pretending that there has been no

change, and that Christ is, in effect, Mars. The straightforward course, and the one that would serve the Church best in the long run, would be to close our professedly Christian Churches the moment war is declared by us, and reopen them only on the signing of the treaty of peace. No doubt to many of us the privation thus imposed would be far worse than the privation of small change, of horses and motor cars, of express trains, and all the other prosaic inconveniences of war. But would it be worse than the privation of faith, and the horror of the soul, wrought by the spectacle of nations praying to their common Father to assist them in sabring and bayonetting and blowing one another to pieces with explosives that are also corrosives, and of the Church organizing this monstrous paradox instead of protesting against it? Would it make less atheists or more? Atheism is not a simple homogeneous phenomenon. There is the youthful atheism with which every able modern mind begins: an atheism that clears the soul of superstitions and terrors and servilities and base compliances and hypocrisies, and lets in the light of heaven. And there is the atheism of despair and pessimism: the sullen cry with which so many of us at this moment, looking on blinded deafened maimed wrecks that were once able-bodied admirable lovable men, and on priests blessing war, and newspapers and statesmen and exempt old men hounding young men on to it, are saying "I know now there is no God." What has the Church in its present attitude to set against this crushed acceptance of darkness except the quaint but awful fact that there are cruder people on whom

horrifying calamities have just the opposite effect, because they seem the work of some power so overwhelming in its malignity that it must be worshipped because it is mighty? Let the Church beware how it plays to that gallery. If all the Churches of Europe closed their doors until the drums ceased rolling they would act as a most powerful reminder that though the glory of war is a famous and ancient glory, it is not the final glory of God.

But as I know quite well that the Churches are not going to do anything of the kind, I must not close on a note which might to some readers imply that I hope, as some highly respected friends of mine do, to build a pacific civilization on the ruins of the vast ecclesiastical organizations which have never yet been able to utter the truth, because they have had to speak to the poor according to their ignorance and credulity, and to the rich according to their power. When I read that the icon of the Russian peasant is a religious force that will prevail over the materialism of Helmholtz and Haeckel, I have to contain myself as best I can in the face of an assumption by a modern educated European which implies that the Irish peasants who tied scraps of rag to the trees over their holy wells and paid for masses to shorten the stay of their dead relatives in purgatory, were more enlightened than their countryman Tyndall, the Lucretian materialist, and to ask whether the Russian peasant may not find his religious opinions somewhat neutralized by his alliance with the countries of Paul Bert and Combes, of Darwin and Almroth Wright. If we are to keep up any decent show of talking sense

on this point we must begin by recognizing that the lines of battle in this war cut right across all the political and sectarian lines in Europe, except the line between our Socialist future and our Commercialist past. Materialist France, metaphysical Germany, muddle-headed English, Byzantine Russia may form what military combinations they please: the one thing they cannot form is a Crusade; and all attempts to represent this war as anything higher or more significant philosophically or politically or religiously for our Junkers and our Tommies than a quite simple primitive contest of the pugnacity that bullies and the pugnacity that will not be bullied are foredoomed to the derision of history. However far-reaching the consequences of the war may be, we in England are fighting to shew the Prussians that they shall not trample on us nor on our neighbors if we can help it, and that if they are fools enough to make their fighting efficiency the test of civilization, we can play that game as destructively as they. That is simple, and the truth, and by far the jolliest and most inspiring ground to recruit on. It stirs the blood and stiffens the back as effectively and quickly as hypocrisy and cant and humbug sour and trouble and discourage. But it will not carry us farther than the end of the fight. We cannot go on fighting forever, or even for very long, whatever Lord Kitchener may think; and win, lose, or tie, the parties, when the fight is over, must fall back on their civil wisdom and political foresight for a settlement of the terms on which we are to live happily together ever after. The practicable conditions of a stable comity of nations cannot

be established by the bayonet, which settles nothing but the hash of those who rely on it. They are to found, as I have already explained, in the substitution for our present Militarist kingdoms of a system of democratic units delimited by community of language, religion, and habit; grouped in federations of united States when their extent makes them politically unwieldy; and held against war by the bond of international Socialism, the only ground upon which the identity of interest between all workers never becomes obscured.

The Death of Jaures.

By far the greatest calamity wrought by the war has been the death of Jaurès, who was worth more to France and to Europe than ten army corps and a hundred Archdukes. I once proposed a press law that might have saved him. It was that every article printed in a newspaper should bear not only the name and address of the writer, but the sum paid him for the contribution. If the wretched dupe who assassinated Jaurès had known that the trashy articles on the Three Years Law he had been reading were not the voice of France in peril, but the ignorant scribbling of some poor devil at his wits' end to earn three francs, he would hardly have thrown away his own life to take that of the greatest statesman his country has produced since Mirabeau. It is hardly too much to say that this ghastly murder and the appalling war that almost eclipsed its horror, is the revenge of the sweated journalist on a society so silly that though it will not allow a man to stuff its teeth without ascertained qualifications for the task, it allows

anyone, no matter how poor, how ignorant, how untrained, how imbecile, to stuff its brains without even taking the trouble to ask his name. When we interfere with him and his sweaters at all, we interfere by way of appointing a censorship to prevent him from telling, not lies, however mischievous and dangerous to our own people abroad, but the truth. To be a liar and a brewer of bad blood is to be a privileged person under our censorship, which, so far, has proceeded by no discoverable rule except that of concealing from us everything that the Germans must know lest the Germans should find it out.

Socialism Alone Keeps Its Head.

Socialism has lost its leader on the Continent; but it is solid and representative on the main point; it loathes war; and it sees clearly that war is always waged by working men who have no quarrel, but on the contrary a supreme common interest. It steadily resists the dangerous export of capital by pressing the need for uncommercial employment of capital at home: the only practicable alternative. It knows that war, on its romantic side, is "the sport of kings": and it concludes that we had better get rid of kings unless they can kill their tedium with more democratic amusements. It notes the fact that though the newspapers shout at us that these battles on fronts a hundred miles long, where the slain outnumber the total forces engaged in older campaigns, are the greatest battles known to history, such machine-carnages bore us so horribly that we are ashamed of our ingratitude to our soldiers in not being able to feel about them as about

comparatively trumpery scraps like Waterloo or even Inkerman and Balaclava. It never forgets that as long as higher education, culture, foreign travel, knowledge of the world: in short, the qualification for comprehension of foreign affairs and intelligent voting, is confined to one small class, leaving the masses in poverty, narrowness, and ignorance, and being itself artificially cut off at their expense from the salutary pressure of the common burden which alone keeps men unspoilt and sane, so long will that small class be forced to obtain the support of the masses for its wars by flattering proclamations of the national virtues and indignant denunciations of the villanies of the enemy, with, if necessary, a stiffening of deliberate falsehood and a strenuous persecution of any attempt at inconvenient truthtelling. Here there is no question of the Junker being a monster. You must rule ignoramuses according to their ignorance. The priest must work bogus miracles for them; the man of science must offer them magical cures and prophylactics; the barrister must win their verdict by sophistries, false pathos, and appeals to their prejudices; the army and navy must dazzle them with pageants and bands and thundering salvos and romantic tales; the king must cut himself off from humanity and become an idol. There is no escape whilst such classes exist. Mahomet, the boldest prophet that ever threw down the gage of the singleness and supremacy of God to a fierce tribe of warriors who worshipped stones as devotedly as we worship dukes and millionaires, could not govern them by religious truth, and was forced to fall back on

revolting descriptions of hell and the day of judgment, invented by him for the purpose. What else could he do if his people were not to be abandoned to their own destruction? If it is an axiom of diplomacy that the people must not be told the truth, that is not in the least because, for example, Sir Edward Grey has a personal taste for mendacity; it is a necessity imposed by the fact that the people are incapable of the truth. In the end, lying becomes a reflex action with diplomatists; and we cannot even issue a penny bluebook without beginning it with the quite unprovoked statement that "no crime has ever aroused deeper or more general horror throughout Europe" than the assassination of the Archduke. The real tragedy was that the violent death of a fellow creature should have aroused so little.

Divided Against Ourselves.

This state of things would be bad enough if the governing classes really sought the welfare of the governed, and were deceiving them for their own good. But they are doing nothing of the sort. They are using their power secondarily, no doubt, to uphold the country in which they have so powerful and comfortable a position; but primarily their object is to maintain that position by the organized legal robbery of the poor; and to that end they would join hands with the German Junkers as against the working class in Germany and England as readily as Bismarck joined hands with Thiers to suppress the Commune of Paris. And even if this were not so, nothing would persuade the working classes that those who sweat them ruthlessly in

commercial enterprise are any more considerate in public affairs, especially when there is any question of war, by which much money can be made for rich people who deal in the things most wanted and most highly paid for in war time: to wit, armaments and money. The direct interest of our military caste in war accounts for a good deal; but at least it involves personal risk and hardship and bereavement to the members of that caste. But the capitalist who has shares in explosives and cannons and soldiers' boots runs no risk and suffers no hardship; whilst as to the investor pure and simple, all that happens to him is that he finds the unearned income obtainable on Government security larger than ever. Victory to the capitalists of Europe means that they can not only impose on the enemy a huge indemnity, but lend him the money to pay it with whilst the working classes produce and pay both principal and interest.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, купив полную легальную версию на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.