

THE WORLD IN CONFLICT

BY
L. T. HOBHOUSE, D.Litt.

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BY

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Αἴλιον, αἴλιον εἶπέ, τὸ δ' εὖ νικάτω.—ÆSCHYLUS

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NOTE

THE following pages consist of a series of articles contributed to the *Manchester Guardian* during March, April, and May, 1915, reprinted, with some additions, by kind permission of the proprietors.

THE WORLD IN CONFLICT

I

THE COMING OF FEAR

THERE come in every man's life events which make a break between present and past, such a break as for a time to make all the world look unreal. Here is the familiar house, the chairs and tables just where they were yesterday; the same clock is ticking in the chimney-piece, and the familiar books look out from their shelves offering us the same wisdom as before. But since yesterday some one has died, mother or wife or child, and the world is changed. Nothing will ever be the same again, and it is for a while difficult to believe that the room and the house and the world about can really be what they were before. The people passing in the street perplex us with their indifference. They ought to be changed as we are, and we have no patience with their callous stupidity

which fails to grasp the great change in the world. Some such experience has been lived through by most of us before we have come to man's estate. But, ordinarily, it is a purely private and personal event which so shakes our world. Those of us who feel public matters most keenly are rarely moved by any national misfortune after this fashion. Here as in all things the great war is an exception. To so many the world not only seemed different but became different on August 4th, and in this case the impression was not moderated, but rather deepened by its reflection on the faces and in the manner of their neighbours. It turned out to be in sober truth a different world from that which we knew, a world in which force had a greater part to play than we had allowed, a world in which the ultimate social securities were gone, in which we seemed to see of a sudden through a thin crust of civilisation the seething forces of barbaric lust for power and indifference to life.

The middle-aged and the old are said to take great changes tranquilly. They have seen and suffered much. They have tasted the grief of life, and nothing comes to them, as to the young, with the shock of total surprise. But in

this instance it may be that the older generation felt more keenly than the young the unsettlement of ideas. Those whose memories go back to the sixties and seventies were bred in an England of confident security and an untroubled peace. We looked on battles, sieges, and above all on massacres and cruelties as matter of history. Such things belonged to the past. Certainly they would never trouble us in sea-girt England. The heart of the world was set on peace, and the energies of man were to be given more and more to the pursuit of industry and the gradual improvement and ennobling of human life. The Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny lay in the not remote past, but the former was, after all, a very small affair never touching the life of the nation, and the latter was a regrettable incident never to recur. We were proud of our navy and resolved to maintain its predominance, but we did not seriously think that anyone could touch it, and little panics were only worked up now and then to get some more money spent upon it. All that was military in England seemed a tradition of the past, destined gradually to die out, or to remain a picturesque survival for use on ceremonial occasions, like the Beefeaters'

uniform or the state coach and its cream-coloured ponies. Illimitable security was the background of English life.

It is true that in 1870 war came near our doors. It is the first public event that comes vividly within the recollection of the present writer. We were all "Prooshians" in our village, as indeed were most English people, for a lurking fear of France still remained from the Palmerstonian times; we heard of the shout "à Berlin," and naturally we knew nothing of forged telegrams. I well remember running out every morning as a small child to waylay the village postman as he tramped over the hills from the nearest post-town, that I might get from him the cream of the news—Wörth, Sedan, Gravelotte, Metz—and be the proud dispenser of the last tales of victory to my elders. But to us it was an excitement; to our elders a matter of pity and sorrow rather than anxiety. Few, I believe, grasped from the first that 1870 made an epoch in history, that it put a check to the march of peace and humanitarianism, and marked a decisive stage in the rise of a reactionary ethic and a lower civilisation. The old security remained in England, not seriously shaken even by the scare

of 1877-8, for what, after all, would a war with Russia have meant but a remote naval encounter in which the mass of the population on both sides would have been passive spectators? In any case, the scare died down, and through the eighties and early nineties peace was still in the ascendant. On the Continent itself, though the weight of armaments was pressing harder year by year, the counsels of statesmen were moderate. Bismarck clearly had no further military ambitions, and the anxieties roused by the accession of William II died away, as it began to be thought that he was a man of words rather than of deeds. The first jubilee, in 1887, seemed the apotheosis of Imperial tranquillity—assured greatness without ambition, reflecting gratefully on the progress of fifty years, innocent of aggressive intentions, and fearing no assault from without.

Yet all this time great changes, political and intellectual, were at work preparing for a catastrophe. The deeper causes we will discuss in another section, but I would first set down certain grave events which from the middle of the nineties began to alter the outlook of thoughtful observers of civilisation. The first of these was the series of Armenian massacres

from 1894-6. It was not so much the actual cruelty and outrage, bringing the worst horrors of the seventeenth century into the midst of a supposedly humane and ordered civilisation. It was the indifference of Europe in face of such deeds that affected every one with the least touch of imagination. Say what one might of the Armenians, it was never questioned that any one of them could have saved himself by accepting the Koran. They were slain as Christians, and they died as truly for their religion as any of those martyrs whom we were taught in childhood to reverence. But they were allowed to die by six great Christian Powers, possessed in the aggregate of overwhelming force, able by concerted action to stop the horror by a single remonstrance, and refusing to speak the word because not one of them would for one moment postpone selfish interests and fears to the clearest call of honour and humanity. The "year when all Europe became cynical," I remember reading in a newspaper comment on the final refusal of the Powers after the culminating massacre of 1896. It was certainly the year in which the moral bankruptcy of European statesmanship stood revealed. With every precaution against ideal-

ising the past, I find it difficult to think of any earlier occasion on which the claims of honour and humanity were so unblushingly and so consistently set aside. Europe in that great refusal stepped downwards, and from that time forward found it impossible to believe in herself. There was clearly no common conscience which any barbarity, however flagrant, could touch into life. Statesmen were prepared to set in motion the vast forces at their disposal for national aims however trumpety, to avenge national injuries however slight; but faith, honour, humanity, and the claims of co-religionists were for them words without effect. I firmly believe that if on the political side the Armenian massacres began the train of events which led through many windings to the break-up of Turkey and thereby to the conflagration of 1914, far more surely on the ethical side the failure of the European Concert gave evidence of a breakdown of principle which initiated a reign of mutual fear whereof a general catastrophe was the inevitable outcome. The moral authority of the Concert was gone. It lingered on in name, leaving Greece in the following year to encounter Turkey alone, mismanaging the affairs of Crete, and exhibiting

its futility in a succession of paper schemes for Macedonia, till it finally gave way before the resolute but wholly selfish action of Italy in 1911. Year by year Europe was more clearly divided between the two great alliances, steadily arming themselves for the coming struggle. Year by year men turned more and more away from ideals of peace, and familiarised themselves with thoughts of war.

II

THE CHANGE OF OUTLOOK

THOSE whose memories go back to the seventies and who have formed the habit of watching public events with close attention will be aware, I think, of a general contrast between the earlier and later portion of their lives. The earlier part is a time of tranquil and hopeful outlook, the latter one of increasing apprehension, rapidity of change, and general unsettlement. I took the Armenian massacres just now as an indication of the dividing line, and it is certain that after this period there began a succession of events which in the internal development and the external relations of States provide a strong contrast with the relative calm of the earlier years. Close on the Armenian troubles followed the Turco-Greek War. Next year came the war concerning Cuba, and next year again began the three years' tragedy in South Africa. The year 1898 had also seen us on the brink of war with France

over the Fashoda affair, and the last three years of the century witnessed something of the nature of a general onslaught upon the defenceless bulk of China, culminating in the occupation of Peking in 1900. The Far East had definitely entered into European politics and to the problems of the partition of Africa and the decay of Turkey, long the source of European unrest, was added the far greater question of the future of China and the relations of Europe to an Asiatic Power armed on the European model. The next act in the development of the problem followed within little more than two years of the Peace of Vereeniging. Vast forces were engaged in Manchuria, and the world saw the first examples of the great siege-battles with which it has now become familiar. After the Japanese War came the Russian revolution, followed for some years by political upheavals in many countries that seemed to give promise of better things. Revolutions occurred in Turkey, Persia, and Portugal, and for a moment it seemed as though the secular decay of the Near Eastern peoples were to be arrested by an internal movement of recuperation. But the humanitarianism of the Young Turk movement was a veneer, taken seriously

only by a small minority of good but ineffective men. At bottom it was Chauvinist and despotic, and the methods of the new régime, fostered by the jealousies and selfishness of the European Powers, led straight to the Balkan Wars. Meanwhile the whole European situation grew yearly darker, and on the question of Morocco, which had been the storm centre for seven years, the clouds came almost to bursting in 1911. In our domestic life at the same time the pace year by year became faster and more furious. Constitutional crises were solved, only to be followed by labour troubles of a magnitude quite unknown to earlier times, and these in turn yielded in excitement to threats of civil war. Whatever else may be said of the last decade in British politics, it certainly has not lacked drama or variety. Rather in the crescendo of urgency each new problem has drowned the clamour of the old and made it within a few months sound dim and distant as a voice from the dead past.

Thus the catastrophe of 1914 was not for the observer of currents of public life in any way a bolt from the blue. It was the climax of a time of stress and strain, the final eruption of forces that had been shaking the world for

two decades. For the last four years, in fact since the Italians fired the first shot on the Tripolitan coast, there has been almost continuous warfare within the European system. It is not in reality one event that has changed the world. It is a world-change that has culminated in a great event of which no man yet knows the issue. So viewed, the misfortune does not become less grave. If the desolation of Europe could be attributed solely to the fault of a handful of statesmen, if it were all, as in the popular fancy, the wickedness of the Kaiser, even if it were entirely the work of secret diplomacy, as some more instructed critics hold, we might fairly hope that once peace is restored the world would resume its normal course. But if that normal course itself has become one of violence and recklessness, if none of the great problems have been solved, and if the temper of men no longer lends itself to peaceful solutions, the future is so much the more doubtful. One thing at least is now established, and it is for the future of England a serious fact. This country can no longer pursue her own course in internal security regardless of the fate of Europe. I do not know that such isolation was ever a sound

ideal, though in practice it gave better results than the Palmerstonian system of intervention. I for one deeply regretted the departure from the old system involved in the formation of the Triple Entente, and I still think that our adhesion to one side in the European alliances increased the tension and weighted the chances in favour of war. But be that as it may, the development of the war itself and the revelation of the changes made by mechanical invention have shown that our insular position is no longer what it was. We must guard against rhetorical exaggeration which is a little too frequently heard on this point. In physical fact we are still an island, and because we are an island we have escaped invasion hitherto, and have had eight months in which to organise our defences at leisure. But the submarine has already made our island position a different thing from that which we supposed it to be, and the progress of the submarine within eight months gives us some hint of what invention may have in store in the future. It is indeed curious to reflect on the difference which a little alteration in dates might have made in this war. Had it come in 1911, as so nearly happened, the submarine would in all probability have

played a very small part and airmanship a very minor part. Had it been delayed another five years it is possible that the submarine would have been the decisive factor at sea, and quite conceivable that the airship would have become a determining element in the entire campaign. But these are inventions still in their infancy which intimately affect our position—far more intimately than that of any land power. They have linked our interests far more closely than of old to the Continent, thus illustrating that general tightening up of State relations which has made the world physically one before it had become morally one, and which is therefore one of the deeper causes of international unrest. At any rate, we can no longer secure to ourselves the certainty of uninterrupted peaceful progress by merely standing out of the European arena. For good or for evil we are now in the arena, and must work out our salvation in common with the peoples of the Continent.

What hope of salvation, then, do we find? When we look back across the troubled years to the happier and more hopeful days of the nineteenth century, what judgment are we to pass, what inference to draw from the trend of events? Are we to think that the humani-

tarianism of those days was a delusion, a dream based on a transitory rest after the turmoil of the revolutionary wars? Are we to agree with the protesters of that period that struggle is really the law of life and that peaceful co-operation exists only to prepare societies the better for internecine warfare? Or did humanitarianism represent a living movement which, though thwarted and arrested by new forces that it has failed to control, has in it the undying spirit which will in the longer run prevail? If the reader dislikes the term humanitarianism let him substitute whatever name of religious or ethic import formulates for him the spirit making for social and international harmony, and let him ask himself how it stands with this spirit to-day. Is it under eclipse? If so, what has eclipsed it? Or perchance its sun is set, as it set once before on the civilised world. Which are we to think the true account, and what view of the future are we to hold?

III

DECADENCE OR REBARBARISATION?

WHEN Ajax hurled a stone upon the Trojan ranks it was of such weight as "not ten strong men of these degenerate days" could lift, but he just played with it single-handed. Thus in Homer's time degeneracy had set in. In the golden age of Roman literature and in the beginning of that work of reconstruction which swept away a corrupt and brutal oligarchy and founded the Empire which gave the principles of law and government to Europe, Horace declares that "the age of our fathers, itself inferior to our grandfathers, produced us more worthless than they, and about to yield a still more faulty progeny." If we trusted the literary men we should picture history as a continuous process of decay. The world is always losing its lofty ideals, its valour, its vigour. Its romance for ever dies. Mr. Kipling is beyond doubt right in throwing back the complaint to the Palæolithic Age :

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“Farewell, Romance!” the cave man said:
“With bone well-carved he went away,
Flint arms the ignoble arrow-head,
And jasper tips the spear to-day.
Changed are the gods of Hunt and Dance.
And he with these. Farewell, Romance!”

Men had taken to building huts for themselves, and the dim obscurities of the cave were no longer a delight and a terror to children. Cowards who would not face the enemy with bone-tipped spear were shooting at a distance with bow and arrow. Valour no longer had its rights. Victory fell to the weakling. The race was degenerating and must soon fall a prey to the mammoth or the grizzly bear.

But, after all, it was the mammoth that perished, and Neolithic man, no longer trusting purely to the keen eye and the swift foot in the hunt, but clearing the ground for seed, and afterwards tilling it and reaping the fruits of industry, laid the foundations of a life which was not only a little more secure but also a little larger and more free. He and his successors have never yet exhausted the wells of romance nor touched the barriers of the expansion of mind. But at every stage in the extension of peaceful arts, with every year in which men have lived for a while more happily and

harmoniously, there has risen a wail from out of the sullenly retreating waters of barbarism: "You stay our flood with pitiful dams, behind which you lurk in fancied security. But the doom of rottenness is upon you. You shall wax fat and die. Peace shall be your ruin, for in its softness you shall rot." A more profound observer spoke of the most warlike state of his race in just the contrary sense. Sparta fell, said Aristotle, because the Spartans did not know how to live in peace. It was the one-sided cultivation of the arts of war that brought to its decline that city whose name has become the recognised epithet for endurance, fortitude, self-command, and discipline.

In our day the creed of decadence, like everything else, has swathed itself in the garb of science. The physical decadence of England was the subject of statistical demonstration. It was not merely assumed by Treitschke, who offered the abolition of the duel as one of its evidences, but it was accepted as demonstrated fact by our conscriptionists, our Eugenists, our reactionaries. Revelling in their own forebodings these prophets of evil wallowed in descriptions of the national decay that was to

come from our objections to universal drill, our weakness in giving freedom and equality to dependencies, our humanitarian madness that kept the unfit alive, our insanely democratic jealousies that taxed the millionaire whose fitness was written large in the gigantic fortune which he had extracted by his financial skill from our less capable selves. We could not recruit our little army. We could not fill the complement of the Territorial Forces. England's day was over. Romance, farewell. Well, the Germans are said for many years to have drunk to "the Day"—the day that was to open the short, sharp, and decisive conflict between their youthful vigour and that Empire of ours which was, in Treitschke's words, "wholly a sham." The day dawned, and every German success was answered by an upward bound of the British recruitment roll. In spite of every War Office blunder, the young men came pouring in. The generation which even their fathers thought too much set upon amusement, showed that the moment they were convinced of necessity they could give it up and go to drill. The "soft" young man from behind the counter took his place beside the miner, the spinner, and the schoolmaster under

canvas in the drenching autumn rains. The Oxford undergraduate left his football and his clubs to drill and be drilled. The city man abandoned golf and motor-car and money-making to get him ready for the front. We elders see them day by day in the streets, men strengthened by drill, fresh-faced and ruddy with the open-air, clear-eyed, vigorous, and happy as though no tragedy of parting lay straight before them. Nor is theirs the courage of ignorance. Every man of them has read newspaper accounts by the score that tell them that in the warfare of the trenches there is little glory and much of frostbite, rheumatism, filth, and fatigue—all that is most repugnant to the habits of civilisation. They know well what they are about, and they make no tall talk about it. When they get there they put off tragedy with a joke, and salt the grimness of war with the native wit of the London street. This is not the temper of a few picked men, but of the youth of England—the last product of a hundred years of general peace, the fourth generation born in the lap of security, the sons and grandsons of men nine out of ten of whom never saw a man killed in anger. War may destroy the virtues of peace, but peace cultivates the virtues

that are required in war. As to the feats of individuals, can any soldier deed of earlier days match the flight over hostile territory to Friederichshafen, or was ever a demand on constancy and endurance of nerve to match the unceasing watchfulness against torpedo or mine that may at any moment send a whole ship's company to the bottom without the chance of a blow in self-defence? These tests of courage are higher and more exacting than those of the older warfare. Not but that the feats of those days are emulated. Did not a handful of Frenchmen the other day hold a dug-out close upon the enemy's lines for all the world like D'Artagnan and the immortal three at their breakfast in the Bastion St. Gervais?

Whatever else this war has done, let us hope that for a time it has stopped the cant of decadence. There are good things in civilisation which are often threatened with decay, but physical vigour, courage, and enterprise are the last qualities to be seriously endangered. Before the war any cool-headed observer could see that, whatever else might be threatened in our time, it was not manhood, vigour, originality, enterprise. Consider the art of flying alone,

beyond reasonable question the most daring experiment ever made by men, leaping from a dream to a reality in five years, and yet requiring the most consummate union of nerve, skill and mechanical ingenuity. It is the gentle and humaner elements of civilisation that are more often in danger, and the cant of physical decadence is at bottom a part of the campaign waged against all progress in the peaceful arts by the active and plausible advocates of rebarbarisation. The triumph of this party is its logical undoing. The test of war has justified peace. Yet the victory is but for a day. In the next generation it is likely that men will be wondering if their sons can fight as they did, if their boy who is so keen on golf (or whatever be the substitute for golf in 1950) and who smokes rather too many cigarettes, could stand as they did in the trenches and joke about Jack Johnsons as the huge shells dig their craters near at hand. In 1950 as in 1914 there will be those who lament that the old breed has died out, that the hardy virtues of the fathers have perished, that the poor are coddled, and the sick cured, and the feeble kept alive, while the strong have to bear the burden. Lamenting over these signs of perishing manhood they

will look forward with apprehension to the day when the rising military Power of the time will challenge England's greatness and reveal it for an image with feet of clay, and with a sorrowful shake of the head the old men will turn from the outward signs of a decadent generation to the inward vision of those glorious days of national youth and vigour when George V was King.

IV

THE IDEA OF LAW

It is not physical decadence that threatens civilisation ; it is not the loss of manliness and vigour which has changed the face of the world, and threatened us with debarbarisation. It is always the more delicate elements of the civilised fabric which are weakest, and yield most easily to assault. It is the painfully won tradition of fear and self-restraint that man learns to impose on himself with so much effort which, being in a sense an artificial fabric, is ever liable to yield to the crude instincts of naked self-assertion which it scarcely covers, and with difficulty holds in. On this side there has been a real weakening, of which we now see the result. For, as has been said, the European war was not a bolt from the blue. It was rather the bursting of a long-gathered storm. What was it, then, that had so charged the world-atmosphere with electricity? In every nation there were elements of peaceful

progress. There was a constant advance in the conquest of material nature. There were the germs slowly maturing of a better social order. There was a humaner spirit in the making and administration of law. There was a reasonable prospect of achieving for a great mass of mankind a better life and a fuller opportunity. What turned men away from these paths of peace and impelled them to mutual destruction? What causes produced the unrest which, alongside this peaceful development, we have seen growing year by year till it culminated in the crash of 1914. Such causes will be better analysed by the historian fifty years hence, who will see the change from a distance in truer perspective, but our ideas, in turn, will be of value to him, and I shall try here to give for what they are worth the impressions of one observer. In the first place, then, I think that during my own time there has been a profound change of intellectual, or possibly, one should say, of moral outlook. The Victorian age believed in law and reason. Its sons have come in large measure to believe in violence, and in impulse, emotion, or instinct. I do not mean, of course, that all Victorians were rationalists, or that everybody at the

present day is a follower of Nietzsche or a disciple of M. Bergson. I mean simply that during the last thirty or forty years new influences have arisen which, in almost every field of thought, of ethics, of religion, of politics, of literature, and even of art, have tended to subvert an ideal which was gaining ground during the Victorian era, and have replaced it in the minds of many by its exact opposite. Of course this has only been one of the influences at work, but it has been a potent one, and it has had much to do, as I think, with the unrest that can be seen in so many parts of the world and in so many different directions within the life of every community. We are inclined to laugh a little at Victorian respectability, with its silk hats, its frock coats, and its church-going on Sunday that produced such very slender results between Monday morning and Saturday night. These little externals are always a legitimate theme of satire. But in its cult of outward respectability, pharisaical as it may sometimes have seemed, the Victorian age was essentially true to itself. It was expressing outwardly what it really felt—the supreme value of an idea. What was this idea, and how was it expressed? How was it lost, and what has

replaced it?—are the questions which we must ask if we would discover the difference between the last age and our own.

Now, when we look back on the work of the middle and later nineteenth century, we see one principle, among others, making its way from philosophic into popular thought, and reflected in most diverse ways, and sometimes in unexpected quarters. It is a little dangerous to compress a pervasive idea into a single word, but in a broad and general sense the idea which I have in mind may be called the idea of Law, or perhaps of Order. The idea of Law in its Victorian incarnation, was the child of science. Science had discovered uniform relations in the physical world. It had followed out the many wonderful ways in which this uniformity runs through all manner of variations, and had given to its generalisations the name of laws. There lay in the term a suggestion that a refractory material could somehow be tamed and rendered obedient to a scientific prescription—a false suggestion, out of which intellectual trouble was bound to arise. But for the time it, perhaps, heightened the sense of scientific success. It was, in fact, a period of great constructive achievement. The middle

of the century saw the consolidation of the laws of physical nature in the conception of the Conservation of Energy, and a few more years brought the first luminous hypothesis, not, indeed, upon the origin but on the development of life, and therewith of mind, of consciousness, and of human society. It was characteristic of the constructive spirit of the times that this hypothesis rapidly became in the minds of scientific men itself a "law" of evolution. A guarded footnote here and there might refer to its unproven character, but, in reality, it very speedily became a dogma of scientific orthodoxy, and the amplitude of its range was illustrated in every nook and cranny of investigation into all that belongs to the living world. Thus the world of the dead and of the living alike seemed to be reduced, or in process of being reduced, to the realm of law.

It is most instructive for our purpose to notice the bearing of this conception on religion and ethics. The nineteenth century was a period of great religious revival, partly within the orthodox fold or folds, partly in more original experiments. Now the idea of law came into collision with orthodoxy on the question of the miraculous, and it so far carried

the field that the miraculous element from being a support of belief rapidly became a serious difficulty. It may be pretty confidently laid down that no modern apologist who knows the elements of his business would any longer adduce a miraculous event as evidence of a supernatural intervention. But the implications of the scientific criticism went further. Evolutionary ideas were unsympathetic to any sort of special revelation. They treated religion as the product of anterior mundane causes, intellectual, social, or whatever they might be. More than this, the doctrine of natural selection undercut the principal argument of natural theology—the argument from design—for it suggested a method whereby the apparently purposive structure of the eye or the ear (or for that matter, of the brain and the living consciousness of mankind) might grow up through a series of physical causes in which there was nowhere a spark of intelligent foresight.

Yet, in spite of all this conflict, the most instructive thing to my mind in the attitude of philosophic science towards orthodox religion in the latter half of the nineteenth century, is not its antagonism, but its secret sympathy.

If science stood for law in one sense, it half consciously recognised that Christianity stood for law in another—for law in the positive order of life that men had built up for themselves. What would happen if this fabric should disappear was not certain, and there was, in consequence, an anxiety to preserve the ethical edifice while destroying the theological substructure. The permanence of the Christian virtues was upheld as against the transitory and external nature of supernatural beliefs. The doctrine of personal salvation had been the merely provisional support of a spirit of altruism, of gentleness, of self-surrender, that was permanently necessary to humanity. No writer of the time brought out this view more strongly than George Eliot, and the discredit and oblivion into which her work has fallen is an interesting evidence of the change that has come about in the outlook of our generation. George Eliot, in reality, has one theme throughout her stories. Her method is wholly scientific in spirit. It is a repeated attempt to show in the concrete case, how the wheels of life turn, and, in particular, how the characteristics of men and women work out to the salvation or damnation of their own lives and those of

others. In her greatest effort in this direction, "Middlemarch," the attempt is made to show the interweaving of these moral forces throughout the life of an entire neighbourhood. The result is a justification of all that it was then usual to sum up in the word altruism, which for this generation it is necessary to translate as meaning living for others, and for this justification George Eliot has been damned by those that have come after her. I am not concerned to uphold George Eliot, who will ultimately regain her place without the help of critics, but to illustrate the change in the temper of a generation. We have here a writer who is in the middle of the stream of Victorian philosophy and science, the friend of Herbert Spencer, wife of G. H. Lewes, translator of Strauss. Yet her purpose is constructive, and in the deepest sense conservative. She upholds the traditional virtues, she insists on order and obedience. She is permeated by the sense of a law of life and the conviction that those who hold by it resolutely will win through, will save their own souls, and bring in others with them. Man will master his fate provided he seeks mastery in the way appointed by science, of obedience to immutable law. It is

interesting to contrast her view with that of Thomas Hardy a generation later. Hardy is also concerned with cause and effect in human life. His tragedies are also the unfolding of germs, the inexorable development of consequences from actions. But in Hardy there is an element of fatality that intervenes, just at the point where human will and reason might set things right, a god from the machine who comes upon the stage in trivial guise, not to cut the knot but to arrest the hand that was about to untie it. Life is with him an ever renewed, ever frustrated purpose. Now this pessimism marked the beginning of a change. It expressed the growing sense of that cleavage between "natural law," as formulated in the evolution theory, and moral or spiritual law as upheld by the old tradition—the cleavage incisively formulated by Huxley in his well-known lecture on Evolution and Ethics, the cleavage which, never appreciated by Herbert Spencer, destroyed the elaborate reconstruction of ethics which he essayed. For more and more as the formulæ of evolution became popular, and gathered about them all the loose and unscientific accretions that belong to the language of a half-educated society, they

spread the belief that for "science" progress was the child of strife, and, therefore, of self-assertion, hardness, and moral anarchy. Science was deemed to have slain not merely the Christian God, but the Christian ethics, the essentials of which the Victorians had upheld on rational grounds, and in the name of Humanity. So at this stage, the two kinds of law, which we saw above working together in harmony, have fallen asunder. There is law in the natural world, but it seems to involve a denial of the deepest laws of the spiritual world. Love and hate, said an ancient thinker, are the forces that move the universe. The modern found love, except as a reproductive instinct, a mere encumbrance. It was by fighting for its own hand that the living being at every stage maintained itself, and moved on to higher types.

V

THE REVOLT

THE biological theory which was the crowning glory of nineteenth-century science could be interpreted as a justification of force and self-assertion. It then became a theory of revolt against law and morals, and more particularly against the morals of Christianity. The man who first grasped its full possibilities in this direction was Nietzsche. What is most significant for our purpose is that the revolt which Nietzsche initiated was directed not merely against Christianity, nor merely against morals—or all that side of morals which enforces gentleness, restraint, and peace—but against law in general, law in both its senses. His superman will no more admit of intellectual than of moral restraint. Far from being in the Baconian phrase which any Victorian would have taken as his motto, “the minister and interpreter” of nature, it was his business to be minister and interpreter of himself. He formulated scientific laws for his own satisfaction.

Nietzsche was, in fact, a Pragmatist in everything but name. His superman could not endure the idea of gods, because they would be beings above him. Then there are no gods, he concludes. In the same way the notion of waiting on Nature and learning from her is repugnant. Scientific laws for Nietzsche are by no means the result of humble, patient inquiry. They are simply the output of the will to know, the will to render things intelligible. We are almost prepared to hear that they are imposed on Nature by the fiat of the scientific man. As Pragmatism developed under criticism its exponents had sorrowfully to admit that there was a core of reality which they could neither make nor unmake, but subject to that limiting condition they insist always on the element of choice, of interest, of emotion, in the making of that world of knowledge which the vain Victorian had supposed to be objective. Men were no longer to be led to conclusions by force of argument, but to choose their arguments, find the conclusions they desired, and "validate" them, that is make them good under the test of experience if they could possibly do so. Belief in anything from the truth of religion to the admission that I have a headache was at bottom

a matter of will, and just as by resolution I may perhaps avert the headache, so by a larger and more comprehensive act of will I might become seized of more important truths. Unfortunately for this argument it was necessary not only that my belief should depend on my choice, but that the reality itself should somehow be constituted as I chose to think it, and this was a paradox which even the Pragmatist recognised to be too strong for him.

Pragmatism, though it had its disciples in Germany, England and America, was a fleeting moment in modern thought, but the same impulse that gave it birth secured in later years the popularity of Mons. Bergson's philosophy. Here again the essential point is the feebleness of reason, the arbitrary and unreal character of scientific law, the primariness of impulse, the superiority of instinct to rational purpose, the glorification of movement without vision. It was not without reason that M. Bergson was claimed by the Syndicalists as their philosopher, though in point of fact his philosophy would serve equally well for anyone who was very much bent upon asserting himself, expressing his emotions, and doing something big without precisely knowing what was to come of it. The point of interest

for the moment is that alike in Bergsonism and in Pragmatism, that is in both the schools of philosophy that have been popular in all the nations of late years, we have had the completest possible reaction against the ideas of the nineteenth century. We have an extraordinary exaltation of the human will, and in particular of those elements underlying the will which man shares with the animal world, emotion, impulse, instinct. Instead of subduing them to reason, conscience and law, we are bidden rather to confide ourselves to them and let them carry us whithersoever they will.

Philosophy, though it does not like to think so, is in fact always influenced profoundly by the position of contemporary science, its achievements and its failures. Now, in the sciences the last twenty years have provided us with a series of revolutions more startling than any the world has witnessed since the days of Copernicus and Galileo. The most stable elements in the physical world have been shaken under our feet. The conception of matter itself has been called in question, no longer by a dreamy, philosophic mysticism but in the investigations of the laboratory. In place of the seventy or more fixed elements with which the Victorian chemist

set out, in place of the eternal and indestructible atom which underlay those elements, we have had a conception of the whirl of energies, a shifting scene of interfused forces whose play makes up the appearance of solidity and substantiality. Matter, the hardest and firmest of all the concepts of common-sense, seems to the plain man to have evaporated into abstractions. No longer does it provide a firm starting-point for a mechanical view of the world. Its evolutions and transformations appear to make everything possible. The boundaries of the miraculous have receded. What wonder if the notion of the fixity of law is shaken and people are ready to believe that anything may happen. Even mathematics has not escaped the spirit of the time. Euclid, whom, as boys, we were set to study, in spite of his appalling dryness, as the model of rigid reasoning and the pattern of precise thinking, is now accused of redundant and defective proofs in some of his simplest propositions; his definitions are shown to assume the point at issue; his axioms are called in question; it is shown to be possible to construct consistent geometries which negate his postulates and contradict the assumptions which we were told in old days were primary principles

based on the constitution of the human mind, revealed as self-evident to intuition. Lastly, in the science of life, the generalisations which were the crowning glory of the Victorian epoch have broken down. The attempt to explain life by a continuous evolution based on accidental variation has been discarded. Darwinism, at least in the specific form which it took towards the close of the century, is held to be dead, and in its latest incarnations the entire evolutionary theory seems to have come into a position in which it will have to choose between some form of teleological principle and admitted bankruptcy. Thus on all sides in physical science there has been a tremendous disruption of old ideas, an expansion of outlook from which, in the end, an infinitely wider and deeper philosophy of science must arise, but which in the meanwhile has served to shake the foundations, to diminish confidence in the positions which science conceives itself to have attained, and therewith to give an opening to those who attack ratiocination in general as an instrument of truth.

The revolution in science and philosophy has its parallel in every region of thought and action. In literature, we have noted the moral

conservatism of the Victorian age, with its exaltation of self-sacrifice and all the traditional virtues as means not to salvation in another life but to social harmony in this life. The contemporary hero wants to live his own life and the contemporary heroine to live hers. Instead of marrying in the last chapter and living happily ever after they marry in the first chapter and make a mess of it. Instead of being devoted to each other they are devoted to themselves. All this may or may not be more true to life. The Victorian romance may have been sentimentalism, its standards of honour may have been conventional, its notions of duty hollow. The robust criminals who are now held up to admiration may or may not have more manhood in them than the Colonel Newcomes whom the older generation admired. I merely note the change of thought which has placed the human ego in the front of the stage, stripped off all idealism as mere paint and flummery, and taught us how to honour in unscrupulous selfishness the sincere expression of human nature as it really is. Fear, weakness, indecision—here is the one vice. Be strong, have courage to be what you are, do what you have in you to do, these are variants of the one law. It is

not a law which allows for compunction, mutual forbearance, or the nice complexities of the social structure.

The revolution in art and art criticism follows the same curve. The most vital school of the Victorian age made the artist Nature's faithful servant and follower. Fidelity to truth, carried often enough to a prosaic exposition of detail, was the watchword of pre-Raphaelitism. Sincerity, fidelity, truthfulness are the foundations of Ruskin's teaching, and make for him the link between art, morals and science. The artist certainly was to paint what he saw, but his first duty was to learn to see. He was to find out, to accept in a spirit of submission, what was really in the object, and try in all conscientiousness to render it. As to expressing himself, to say nothing of his temporary and fleeting emotions, that was to court excommunication. Notwithstanding Morris and Mediævalism, notwithstanding all protests against machinery and the modern spirit, we can easily realise, on looking back in the art world of the Victorian age, the same ideas as in its science and its philosophy—the idea of "man the minister and interpreter of nature," the idea of his necessary submission to inexorable law, the idea of a final conquest, an

ordered peace, and repose ensuing through submission.

Now all this has been revolutionised. First we had the doctrine that a man should not paint what is there, but what he sees, and not what he sees if he looks long enough, but rather what he can see at a glance. But even this was too objective for the new age, and gave way to the theory that the only thing worthy of a man is to paint what he feels. Landscape or human face, tree, valley, mountain and river exist only to excite in him emotions, often apparently of indescribably painful character and tangled meaning, which he proceeds to transfer to canvas. The picture need be no more like the original than a tree is like the painful internal sensation to which it apparently gives rise in some painters. The artist's business is ever the same—to express himself in his moving and changeful moods, and despise alike nature and the critic. If he aims at anything, it should be violence. If he despises anything on principle it should be beauty. If he persistently abhors anything it is repose. Noise is to be the note of music; glaring contrast and flaunting incongruity of painting.

In practical and political life again we see

the same contrast. The law in which the Victorians believed was the law of nations as well as the law of nature. In Great Britain, above all, settled confidence in the established order was common ground to all parties at least after the middle of the century. The days of storm and stress were over. Freedom was broadening slowly down, but always by the enlargement of the sphere of law. It moved strictly, and by no merely poetical metaphor, from precedent to precedent. Democracy was accepted by the governing classes, and democracy on its side had accepted the Constitution. There might be great, even fundamental changes in the future, but they would all be changes made in due process of law. The governing classes had thoroughly taught the people the lessons of constitutionalism, and would abide by their own teaching without a murmur if it should so happen that it were turned to uses which they might dislike. The most respected of constitutional text-books showed how the supremacy of law was the very inner citadel of British political life. They showed how, by a wise preservation of forms, continuity had been maintained, orderly development secured, the necessity for change reconciled with regard for

the past, the prerogatives of the Crown converted into rights of the people.

Now, before the present war had broken out, all this had come to seem very remote. A complete change of temper had occurred in our political life. The pace had become too quick for the slow movement of the Governmental machine. Year in and year out people insisted more and more that men must trust to themselves and rely on strength to gain what they would never win by persuasion. It was useless, they maintained, to appeal to justice. Legality and constitutionalism were outworn ideas that served merely to stave off decisions. Men must fight for their rights, and equally women for theirs. They should never expect to convince an opponent or a neutral, but let them make themselves sufficiently unpleasant and opposition would finally collapse. It did not matter whether the cause were conservative or revolutionary, aristocratic or democratic. The method was to be the same. It might be the red terror or the white terror, but terror was the only weapon that sensible men would use. Not that physical violence was in all cases necessary. That lay in the background. In the interval, every method of annoyance was good provided

it was unrelenting and inventive in its malice. These were rapidly becoming the maxims of all parties, who agreed in nothing but the repudiation of that constitutionalism which a generation before all had united to uphold. But perhaps the most instructive illustration may be drawn from the world of labour. The Victorian age knew a revolutionary as well as a "tame" socialism. But even the revolutionary socialism, whether in Germany or England or France, was to make use of the State. One bold act of violence might be required, or it might be that by the extension of the suffrage even this single departure from legality might be rendered superfluous. At any rate, the object of Socialism was to capture the machinery of law and government and use it for its own purposes. It did not disbelieve in government. It believed in it perhaps too much. All the more extraordinary was the change of temper revealed in the rapid upgrowth of Syndicalism, which was essentially an appeal to each industrial interest to act for itself, which rested on a deep distrust not only of governmental machinery, but of political leaders, and not only of political leaders, but of labour leaders as well. For as these newer ideas spread, workmen began to revolt against

their own chiefs, and strikes were directed not merely against employers, but against union officials, while the idea of scoring a party victory by making the public suffer became increasingly popular with every symptom of success.

The idea of violence was in the air, then, in the years before the war ; and it was not merely the violence that comes naturally from despair of all legal remedy. There was a deliberate theory of force. Men were being taught not to look too far ahead, not to wait till they could see where they were going, not to follow deliberately a reasoned policy, but rather to throw themselves on instinct, to strike a blow which should smash something and make an echo in the world even if they did not quite know what they were breaking or what would follow. They were above all things to be strong, and not let the native hue of resolution be sicklied o'er by the pale cast of thought. This was to be guided by the vital impulse, which was above rationality and superior to any deliberate purpose. To feel this impulse in one was to be at the centre of things ; to follow it to play the part of a man. To stop and think was to check the well-springs of energy. Rationality, science,

philosophy as an intellectual interpretation of the world, were relatively superficial and illusory. If the pragmatists took us back from reason to will, this philosophy carried us a step further on the line of retrogression from will to the instincts, emotions, and impulses which man shares with the brute creation. It was not, indeed, like Nietzsche's teaching, egoistic and therefore anti-social, but it was irrationalist. The old order of values was reversed. Reason, that we were taught for ages to place at the summit of human faculty, was degraded, and instinct, which men spent painful generations in seeking to subdue, was set upon the throne. I do not know how much such philosophising has actually formed the character of our generation, but we can easily see that it was a philosophy most appropriate to a generation which was rushing headlong upon disaster.

VI

THE TEMPER OF AGGRESSION

It is a mistake to suppose that ideas of world domination based on racial superiority backed by military force are the peculiar product of the German mind. That any such suggestion is possible in England only shows how short are the political memories of men. It is less than twenty years since very similar notions enjoyed a brief but disastrous ascendancy in this country, under the name of Imperialism. We, too, were swayed by prophets who told us that the Anglo-Saxon was the greatest of all races, that it was endowed with a superlative faculty for governing, that it was pre-eminent in the love of liberty, and should prove it by imposing its ideas of liberty on other peoples. We, too, were assured that it was our manifest destiny to enter into the heritage of the "dying nations," that it was our stern duty to take up the white man's burden of imbuing the savage with a sense of the dignity of labour.

We, too, were intoxicated with the progress of a hundred years, with successful commerce, growing wealth, and the pride of a history which since 1783 had known no lasting defeat. Fortunately for us and for Europe we took the disease in a mild form. It took us into the South African War, and the war provided the cure. We obtained a military victory through the employment of overwhelming force, but we became perfectly aware that we had come up against a race man for man as good as ourselves. We learned that liberty and national right were not unmeaning names. We saw into the baser uses to which an "Imperial mission" might be put, and the better tradition of the people reasserted itself. We fell back into the British habit of mind which dislikes self-exaltation and desires to live and let live. We turned again to the domestic problems which the epoch of Imperialism had left in suspension.

Meanwhile in Germany very similar forces had been gathering strength. There was the same racial pride swollen by nearer and greater victories. The same confidence in the virtues of German culture, the same enthusiasm for the idea of spreading it by force if necessary

among the lesser breeds, the same disbelief in any restraining law. Aggressive militarism is a disease incidental to a period of disbelief in law. But Germany took it worse than we did for reasons partly historical, partly geographical. Indeed, with Germany, it should not be called a disease. Belief in the militant state is rather the natural expression of the normal life of Germany. Among Liberal nations the antinomian doctrines that we have described were annoying and ridiculous rather than a source of vital danger. They stood in the way of progress. They impeded the orderly development of democracy, but they did not provide a new and positive focus for the energies of the people. In Germany they stand in organic connection with the whole history of her national development. The dominant State philosophies in that country have been consciously framed in reaction against the Liberal theories of democracy and humanity. They associated themselves with the rise of the nation under Prussia, for German nationhood was won not by democratic ardour but by acquiescence in the conception of a military power. The Hegelian philosophy deified the State, and by making it the embodiment of the rational will,

gave it an authority over the individual which relegated the free exercise of thought, the rights of conscience, and the claims of personality to a subordinate position. It set up the State as the highest form of human association, admitted war as a permanent and necessary feature of its life and turned resolutely away from the gospel of peace and humanity which had been preached by Kant. In Hegel the State is still the incarnation of a spiritual ideal, but in Treitschke, apparently the most influential figure in the world of academic politics after 1870, the State is identified with force, and though it is still to have a moral aim, yet no aim for a conquering State can be so high as the extension of its own power. It is indeed a strange and gloomy religion that is preached in Treitschke's "Politik." There is a Puritanic rejection of all the elements of joy, happiness, repose in life. Man's business is to strive, but he is to strive neither in the service of God, nor of mankind, nor of his own soul. He is to strive in the service of power, that is, as the citizen of an organised, controlled and armed State, which is the highest human incarnation of power. It is drill that has made the Germans what they are, the hard service of hard masters

from the Great Elector onwards. It is war that is to be for ever the dreadful medicine of humanity. The anarchism of Nietzsche might have seemed destined to destroy this State religion—indeed Nietzsche himself would fain have done so, for his invectives against the Prussian State are as poignant as his arraignment of Christianity or of humility—but in reality Nietzsche put the finishing touch to German psychology, for he destroyed the moral restraints against which power chafed. No doubt he acted in the interest of the individual but the result accrued to the State philosophy. Thus, while elsewhere the disruption of moral bonds produced political, literary or artistic eccentricities, which in the end were bound to correct themselves, in Germany it removed the feeble barriers which stood between an avalanche and a peaceful world. Hegel's divine State, Treitschke's power, Nietzsche's contempt of restraint are fused together in the faith which animates the governing classes of Germany, political, military and academic—fused in the medium of some misty conception of the progress of mankind through competition and the fated superiority of the German race. This faith has been fostered in Germany by her

political and economic position. She had no colonial empire worthy of the name. A late comer among the nations, she found all the places "in the sun" already occupied. Boxed up in Central Europe, with a defective coastline on the Baltic and a bare egress to the ocean, she saw the natural outlets of her growing energies closed by two small peoples and an island Power behind them. France, whom she had defeated, was building up a great African Empire. England, whom she despised as un-military, possessed a quarter of the world's population. She looked to the ocean and saw the British Fleet guarding the way. She looked eastwards and saw Russia regaining strength after the disasters in Manchuria. She looked south-east and discovered possibilities of expansion in the decay of Turkey—only to see them blocked by the rise of military Powers in the Balkan States. A sense of immense energy held in magic bonds possessed her. With an effort she could surely break them, for they were magical, not real. In part they were fetters of law and honour, like the independence of Belgium. But the divine State knew no superior. It was bound by no law. Of its honour it was the judge, Treaties only

held as long as circumstances remained the same, and the fact that there was a strong desire to break them showed that circumstances had changed. England's military force was negligible. France had been beaten once, and might be beaten again. Russia could be held back till she was isolated, and then would make peace. Germany would dominate Europe and become a world-Power, if not indeed the world-Power. Then the state of the world would reflect the true relation of forces which at present it utterly distorted. As long as the strongest of all the Powers was boxed up virtually within its own territory there must be all the unrest that belongs to a radically false position.

It was open to a moderately minded German to argue forcibly enough against these contentions, and no doubt many did so argue. "We have, after all, done pretty well," they might say. "We have secured a commercial expansion far more rapid than that of any contemporary nation. We have grown rich, and that quickly. It is true that our own markets are limited, but by business efficiency we secure plenty of trade in the markets of other countries, and England, the special object

of jealousy, is after all a Free Trade country where we can compete on equal terms with the domestic producer." But all argument of this kind was written down as materialistic. Germans in other countries ceased to be Germans. They no longer swelled the might and majesty of the Fatherland. If this did not appeal there was always another argument for the benefit of the least bellicose, and in particular of the Social Democrat. Germany had an enemy on her eastern front, less civilised, less industrial, above all given over to ideals of absolute autocracy. The fear of Tsarism silenced those who were least disposed to be excited by dreams of nationalist ambition. There are those who maintain that fear was the real cause of the war. There are those who ascribe it to ambition. The truth is that these are but two sides of one and the same strain in national psychology. The very same mood of nervous excitability which on the crest of the wave is all boastfulness and aggression drops in its trough to a shivering apprehensiveness; and the outcome in both cases is the same—arm and get in your blow first.

How far this mood might have been modified by a different attitude on the part of the

European Powers, and in particular of this country, it is now impossible to say. It is a study in the science of hypothetics moving in the dim region of the might have been. So far as it was a league of peace, the Triple Entente failed. Would any other policy have succeeded? We can easily understand that the formation and the strengthening of the Entente was a potent argument in the mouth of the German militarist. If he could keep the Pacifist and the Social Democrat under by appealing to the fear of Russia, so he could check the doubts and hesitations of the ordinary moderate man by a reference to "hemming in." The formation of the Triple Entente merely emphasised those natural disabilities of geography which we find at the root of German unrest. They translated the physical possibilities of the position into positive political fact. At least, they could be so represented by the German militant. A moderate might, indeed, have asked whether, after all, England was so averse to German expansion. Was she not, for example, ready to make easy arrangements with regard to the Bagdad Railway, and did she not on the Albanian question show a readiness to work with Germany herself in the interest

of European peace? These, however, were secondary points, and would only appeal to men sincerely anxious for a peaceful solution and ready to give credit to antagonists. To the average German the alliance of England with Russia and France wore an appearance of hostility, and barely concealed a menace. It disposed him to believe when the militarist assured him that he must be prepared to meet the world in arms and that the choice lay between world empire and national humiliation. Probably the circumstances attending our participation in the war have only strengthened this disposition. For it was the vice of the Triple Entente that it reposed on no specific terms. No one knew, not even our own Foreign Office, to what precisely we stood morally committed. It was not known on what terms we should fight, and Sir E. Grey found it apparently impossible to say on what terms we should remain neutral. German statesmen rapidly made up their minds that we should fight whatever they did, so that it was not worth while to forfeit any immediate advantage in the hope of securing our neutrality. Our habit of leaving things undefined has its drawbacks. In sum, we can see that the policy of the Allies

played on German political psychology in such a way as to reinforce the elements—the mingled ambitions and anxieties—that were making for war. Whether if it had been guided by archangels it could have radically modified that psychology and so averted war it is impossible to say. Germany was in the mood to take concession as an evidence of timidity, and when that spirit has once arisen the hour of the statesman is already passing. Germany was in the position of an unrecognised man of capacity, conscious of power, resentful of poverty. Such a man is ready to throw off scruples and listen to those who bid the strong take what they can get. Germany had many men of mark to preach this gospel to her, and she listened with willing ears.

VII

THE INFLUENCE OF NATIONALISM

NATIONALITY, Mr. Lowes Dickinson has lately said, is a Janus. It looks both ways—towards freedom and towards aggression. The struggles of subject nationalities with oppressors and conquerors have filled a great chapter in the history of freedom. Yet nationalities that have become free have often gone on to enslave others. A nationality feels itself to be one. It also feels itself or fancies itself to be unique, and as it can tolerate no superior, so when it has sufficient strength it is not very ready to tolerate an equal. It requires a very perfect drilling in principles of liberty to impose voluntary restraint on a nationality conscious of power. Hence the rise of nationality, essential in its first stages to political liberty—for, think what we may of it, national sentiment is a hard fact, and will not be kept under except by coercion—is also a permanent menace to peace and order. It is in particular the rise of nationality

in Europe that has caused the succession of wars since 1815. Indeed we ought to go back to 1793 and say that it was the assertion of French nationality, finding itself for the first time in the Revolution and seeking to impose its type on Europe, that gradually called forth by reaction the national sentiment of one European people after another. The nineteenth century witnessed the successful emergence of two great nationalities, the German and the Italian, into consolidated political States, the successful claim of Magyar nationality to equality and internal independence, the liberation of Greece, the failure of Poland, and the partial success of Ireland. The later years of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century have seen the rise of the Slav nationalities into political prominence, and the problems arising out of this last movement have provided the occasion and in part the cause of the present war.

Few if any European States correspond accurately to national boundaries. But partly through grants of autonomy or through Federal or quasi-Federal arrangements, partly by transfers of territory, partly through a greater liberality in internal government, which tends

to conciliate and so to overcome differences, there has been on the whole a tendency for the State and the nationality to coincide. Thus the typical State of the modern world is coming to be more and more a national State. Great Britain, though comprising many racial strains, though including three peoples that nourish a strong and distinctive sentiment of patriotism, has yet been for many generations a true national unity. Scots, Welsh and English are all clearly one in sentiment as against the rest of the world. It is the general belief and hope that liberal measures have similarly incorporated Irish sentiment in a true national unity common to the United Kingdom. France has long been such a unity, though lacerated at one point by the forcible tearing away of two provinces. Germany includes Poles, some Danes, and Alsace-Lorraine, but for the rest is preponderantly German and permeated with an intense feeling for national unity. Italy is all Italian, though she does not include all Italians. All such States have elements of strength which Austria-Hungary, for example, wholly lacks. It is this fusion of living sentiment permeating the whole or the great majority of the population which gives to the State

a new power and a new unity. Patriotism has become a more general a more spontaneous and a deeper feeling. The State has penetrated further and more sympathetically into private life than of old. Government no longer means in the concrete a king, a nobility, and a mercenary army that takes taxes, administers justice, and levies dynastic wars. It is much more truly an organisation of the common life, and this is no less true in semi-autocratic Germany than in semi-democratic England. Thus the national consciousness and the State consciousness have come to be one and the same thing. Each people has felt itself more at one, and at the same time has drawn the line more definitely between itself and others.

It is this heightening of national unity which has wrecked the peace programme of the old Manchester School. Cobden and Bright, whom it is the fashion to disparage as materialists, were in reality men of a broad spiritual vision. They saw a world becoming more intimately connected in all its parts by the growth of communication. They saw a peaceful commerce not only as an end in itself but as a means to the development of a real sense of human unity. They taught—and Mr. Norman Angell,

whose work has been most unjustly decried in the same terms, sought to revive their teaching—that separate national self-interest was not only wrong but illusory. They showed that in exchange advantage was mutual, that in the end Germany was not to lose by England's wealth, nor England to become poorer through German's expansion: They showed that Protectionism, avowedly an expression of national selfishness, was also a policy of class and even of individual selfishness. Their appeal was always to the truest interest of the widest community. In every tariff controversy the Protectionist always has the best of it as long as the argument is conducted on the lines of appeal to particular interests. The Free Trader has always to bring the argument back to the interest of trade as a whole, and even of the world as a whole. Now Cobden and Bright were sanguine men who trusted much to human rationality. They believed that as Lancashire had followed them and as England had followed Lancashire, so by degrees the world would follow England, and they looked forward accordingly to a reign of Free Trade and peace. In this they were mistaken, but in the principle underlying their argument they were right. The

interconnection of Free Trade and peace, of Protection and armaments, stands fast. He who would think out a political map of Europe to-day which should give satisfaction to national claims is constantly pulled up by the contention that this or that outlet through foreign soil is necessary to the economic independence of a State. On principles of Free Trade there would be no such necessity. It could be a matter of no moment to Austria-Hungary to have a port on the Adriatic or to Bulgaria to have access to the Ægean or to Poland to have Dantzic as a harbour but for the constant fear of the interposition of hostile tariff walls. But more than this, the colonial ambitions of the European States as distinct from our own have been motivated mainly by Protectionist principles, and questions of commercial rights or privileges have been among those which have made controversies as to aggression most acute. Protectionism and national sentiment have played into one another's hands, and between them have defeated reason and humanity.

Thus we have had a group of States, each consolidating itself more and more within, marking itself off from others by sentiments of national pride, and seeking economic aggran-

disement at the expense of its neighbours by means of a tariff boundary. Meanwhile to these States there has fallen the prize of a derelict world as an apple of contention. Africa has been opened out. The Far East has been half opened. The Near East has been ever tempting with large unrealised possibilities. On all hands there has been the belief, three-parts illusory, that the extension of territory in these defenceless or semi-defenceless regions redounds to national glory and economic advantage. Of this belief Protectionism has been the most solid support. But Protectionism, as we have seen, is itself at bottom an expression of national egoism, and so in the general impulse to plunder a new world we have an illustration on the grand scale of the side of nationalism that faces towards aggression and conquest. Perhaps the historian who reviews the last fifty years will marvel not that the crash came, but that it was averted so long. He will give their meed of credit to two statesmen who retained some of the traditions of older days, to Bismarck, who combined with all his unscrupulousness a certain moderation which disinclined him to adventure for its own sake, and to Lord Salisbury who learned his lesson late in life

from his chief opponent, Gladstone, and applied it so well as to carry through a peaceful partition of the greater part of Africa and to avert the imminent danger to China at the end of the century by insisting on the policy of the open door. But the equilibrium became more and more unstable. The new arrivals in the company of Great Powers were dissatisfied with their share, Germany most of all. They quickened the pace in the race of armaments. They drank in eagerly the new doctrines of lawlessness. They believed that the world was for the strong and that they were the strong. They had just arrived and were swollen with the consciousness of new maturity. Nor were they the first to overestimate themselves or undervalue their neighbours. It is not twenty years since it was fashionable in England to dismiss all the Latin peoples as dying nations, and to bepraise the Teuton as racially one with ourselves. If political memories are short, how much shorter is political foresight. The friends of France in those days would hardly themselves have ventured to attribute to her such rallying power as she showed in the dark days of last August and September, nor would they have found listeners if they had predicted a time not

far off when we in England should be thankful for so staunch and virile an ally. Every nation in the days of its vigour and prosperity allows itself expressions of self-esteem and depreciation of others which would not be tolerated in an individual, and comes through repetition to believe thoroughly in what it says.

So it was that in Europe at any time in the last dozen years there came together all the elements of disaster—a group of States inflamed with national self-consciousness, grasping at great prizes, discontented with each distribution, emancipated by their new spiritual guides from all sense of law, indoctrinated with all the ethics of violence, ready to accept discipline and hardship only for the sake of overwhelming others, and sustained in their course, if ever aggressive confidence flagged, by fear of the very rivals whom they despised and yet perpetually provoked. Such was the prolonged condition of moral warfare which we now see embodied in physical fact.

VIII

THE ELEMENTS OF HOPE

IN previous articles we have traced the European calamity to the co-operation of two main causes. The first lay in the region of ideas ; the second in that of political and economic development. In the region of ideas we noted the loss of faith in the rational betterment of humanity, the erection of lawlessness into an ideal ; the depreciation of reason and the rational virtue, justice ; the exaltation of self, of power, of impulse, and of instinct. We saw that this trend of thought was common to the civilised world, and it would be easy to show that its influence has been peculiarly marked in Germany, where it has chimed in with the historical development of the nation and appeals to the sentiment of a military caste. This seed of ideas, we saw, found a fertile soil in the facts of national development, in the deepening sentiment of patriotism, which unfortunately has fostered antagonism to other countries together

with love for one's own, in the growth of industry under Protection, in the consequent lust for colonial expansion and the rivalries of nations that ensued. We have now to ask how far these causes are temporary and removable, or permanent and ineradicable. On the answer to this question our hope for the future of European civilisation must depend.

In the region of ideas we must believe that if man remains—in spite of the current philosophies—a rational animal the war itself must work a change. A great calamity should, and normally does, have an effect on a nation comparable to that of a crash of misfortune upon the individual. If it does not overwhelm it braces. To a shock of a certain magnitude a man will either succumb or he will respond by pulling himself together, asking where he was wrong and how he is to retrieve himself. It shakes the nonsense out of him, and if he has the requisite fibre he may be twice the man that he was before. Now a nation is greater than an individual, and a whole civilisation—which is here at stake—is greater than a single nation. The ideal of unreason and immoralism is nonsense, and we may fairly hope, without relying on an optimistic faith which is itself irrational,

that the chastening of adversity will shake this nonsense out of the world. We may believe that loose talk of the survival of the fittest will no longer be allowed to pass, that men will have had enough of violence to prefer the ways of orderly justice, that they will be sated with sensationalism and turn with a fresh appreciation to the real springs of human happiness. The superman has been allowed to fill the stage and act out his part. We have seen him as he really is, and we have seen enough. I do not think that anarchy in any shape will be admired or even tolerated when the war is over. We shall find that tranquillity and repose have their part to fill in a desirable life. We shall be more ready to see the true romance that lies buried in all the prosaic detail of that social reconstruction which seeks the assuagement of misery and the suppression of injustice.

Far more difficult and doubtful are the problems centring upon the hard fact of nationality. Here we are dealing, be it remembered, with the actual organisation of Europe. European history owes its character, its progress as well as its epochs of stagnation and retrogression, to the fact that it is what some philosophers call

a unity in or permeating differences. It is one continent ; it is, on the whole, one civilisation. It has behind it a common religious basis, a community of cultivated thought, a long tradition of close political interaction. Yet this community is split up into different centres, speaking different languages, putting a different colour and interpretation even on that which they hold in common, often divided in the past by bitter antagonisms, inclined to mutual rivalry even in peaceful times, and easily inflamed to mutual suspicion. These different centres are organised, the common centre is not. At bottom it is the fact that the State undertakes the protection of life and property that rallies the individual to it unfailingly when the moment of decision comes. Somehow, by hook or by crook, Europe has survived hitherto without a common organisation. Yet she has never since the break-up of the Roman Empire been long without feeling the need and forming the ideal of re-creating some concrete expression of her unity. In general it has required the stimulus of some sharp experience to call forth any serious effort in this direction. In particular, every attempt on the part of a single Power to establish its supremacy has

led in the end to a combination against it in defence of threatened liberties. Even after the defeat of Napoleon, the statesmen of the day, reactionary as were many of their aims, were none the less clearly possessed of the idea of Europe as a community with problems that had to be solved in common, demanding of each component part a certain loyalty to the whole. At a later date the imminent dangers arising from the dissolution of Turkey engendered the European Concert—an ineffective and somewhat soulless instrument, but yet a testimony to the community of European life. It was the final dissolution of the Concert into the system of alliances that set Europe into the path leading to war. Yet in our time the need for a common and, indeed, a more definite organisation has become greater, for two reasons. The first of these is that the channels of international life are broader, deeper, and more numerous than of old. The community of interest has actually been growing greater, while the sentiments of jealousy and antagonism have been hardening. Inter-communication is so easy as to have become an incident of daily life. Every educated man travels. Science and philosophy, industrial and com-

mercial organisation are more and more international in character. What happens in any corner of Europe may affect the whole continent, economically or politically. Secondly, the calamity of war is greater in proportion as the populations affected are more densely packed, as social organisation has made it possible to bring the whole people under arms, and as science has perfected the destructive power of weapons. Europe cannot afford to amuse itself with two such wars in a century, or it will, without rhetorical exaggeration, revert to barbarism. It will have to face the problem of such organisation as may guarantee peace, if not because it will, then because it must.

Yet with the best will in the world it will be faced with difficulties which may at first blush seem insuperable. Consider, for example, the atmosphere of hatred and suspicion which the war will leave behind it. Such an atmosphere, it is true, clears off more quickly than one would easily imagine. Yet with the best will in the world I find it difficult to conceive of a hearty and unsuspecting co-operation with Germany during the next generation. If, indeed, Germany should put her own house

in order, which means in effect if she should undertake a political revolution which would drive the military caste from power, the outlook would be different. But we cannot count on such an event. Still less can we bring it about by any action of our own. We must put out of our minds any scheme of interference in the domestic affairs of Germany if we would avoid repetition of the mistake made by our great-grandfathers when they brought the Bourbons back to Paris. Germany must heal herself. Nor can any proposals of dismemberment be seriously entertained, even if the Allies should ever be in a position to enforce them. If we divide States that are of true German nationality, we shall merely initiate a period of unrest which will last until by force or by consent they are reunited. Those whom national sentiment has joined together no far-seeing statesman will put asunder. We must, therefore, in our counsels reckon with Germany as she is—a great Power of sixty or seventy millions in the centre of Europe, capable of such gigantic efforts as the last nine months have witnessed, unchanged—for all we can tell—in temper and in her attitude to European solidarity and the laws of nations.

That is our first great difficulty. We must not allow it to paralyse our efforts ; but it must, I think, govern the method of approach to European organisation.

IX

NATIONALITY

THE Allies are fighting on behalf of the rights of nations and the public law of Europe. How far are these two subjects in the end compatible? The sentiment of nationality over-stimulated is one great source of all the trouble. The same emotions, the same loyalties that animate oppressed nationalities to self-defence and draw scattered nationalities together into political union are apt, as soon as they have gathered strength, to launch them into a career of ambition. Of this tendency Germany herself is a leading example, but not the only example. True, if we could define the rights of nations adequately and be sure that national sentiment would keep within its rights and respect its own fellow when manifested by another people, we should have no trouble. But can we believe that a sentiment of this sort will ever observe the just mean? Will it not, if fostered, be betrayed into excess? In short, must not

nationality be regarded as the separator, the source of discord and permanent danger to peace? If we protect the smaller nationalities, must we not thereby divide up Europe so much the further, create two or three rival camps where we now have one, and render the ideal of an organised European unity so much the more remote?

There is here a genuine and, it may turn out, insuperable difficulty. Yet the argument based on it is fallacious, as may be seen if we press it to its conclusion. If peace is to be secured by the suppression of independent centres of national life, the rule would have to be applied to great Powers as well as small, to the greater Powers even before the smaller. Such a result might conceivably be achieved by conquest, and the attempt has, in fact, been made more than once in the course of history. But it has always called forth the most lively opposition, and it is such an opposition which is ranging the sympathies of the majority of neutrals on the side of the Triple Entente to-day. The feeling for independence in Europe is stronger than any perception of the advantages to be derived by submission to a common head, and the feeling is only being

accentuated by the present course of events. We may assume that no Great Power would either submit to foreign domination without fighting to the end or voluntarily enter into any union which should impair its right to defend its existing territory. Whatever sort of European organisation that we contemplate as practicable must therefore take full account of national independence. It must be based on the distinct individuality of the component peoples and not on the extinction of their separate life. But if this is a fixed condition of the problem it matters comparatively little to the solution whether the independent peoples to be reckoned with are few or many. To bring the six Great Powers together would be in principle as difficult as to organise sixty States of all sizes. Details of adjustment would be easier, but the kernel of the problem—how to get separate States retaining power of self-defence to subject their ambition to a common will—would remain the same.

The suppression of nationality can be of no use to the cause of peace because it could not be carried through. We need not, therefore, stay to ask whether if it could be carried through the world might not lose more than

it would gain. But if this road is blocked may we not try the opposite direction? May not the rights of nationality be carried through and unity be established on the basis of a more thorough liberty? Here, too, we shall come up against immense practical difficulties. But let us first consider the question in general terms. Every nationality which is held under by force, or which is divided by violence, is a source of unrest. The whole history of the Continent since Waterloo teems with proofs. There was no rest in Italy till she had expelled the Austrians and achieved unity. The union of Germany caused three wars. The subjection of the Balkan States cost several wars, and the relations of the Serb populations in Serbia and in the Austrian Empire were an originating cause of the present war. In the Balkans the League was dissolved by the refusal to recognise mutual rights, and it is the maintenance of a Bulgarian population in subjection to Serbia to this hour which is the principal obstacle to its renewal—a renewal which would at once change the face of the war and lay for the Balkan people the only possible foundation of assured independence. As long as a subject people, capable by numbers

and geographical position of independent life, is forcibly held under an alien Government there is a principle of wrong within the State which will conflict with any attempt to establish a rule of right in its external relations. Conversely, if every political unit in Europe were content with its status, had no internal enemy with whom foreign Powers might intrigue, and were debarred by general agreement from the forcible acquisition of any unwilling population, the grounds of quarrel so far as they are internal to Europe would disappear. I conclude that in proportion as we can approach a general recognition of national rights, in proportion as we can advance the tendency of the political State to coincide with spontaneous national sentiment, we shall facilitate the political union of Europe. It is only by working down to the natural units that we can work up to the organisation within which they might co-operate without friction.

But, it may be said, the principle of nationality cannot be pushed through. Just as its suppression cannot be carried out to the end, so its recognition cannot be consistently maintained. Take Alsace-Lorraine. Probably on a free vote a substantial part of the population

would elect to rejoin France, another part would be for autonomy within the German Empire, and yet another for independence. If you take a vote of Alsace-Lorraine as a whole you get one result, if you take the provinces separately you may get another. If you subdivide the provinces you would get a third. On what principle will you proceed, and how, if you took a vote, would you prevent the officials in charge from "making" it to their satisfaction? A portion of Transylvania voting as a whole would go to Roumania, but it would contain a colony of Magyars and a smaller colony of Germans, who would then become small but discontented nationalities. You will always have a minority, and the minority will always be a rallying point of dissatisfaction. Without pretending to the possession of any sovereign remedy for these difficulties, we may remark, first of all, that the principle of nationality does not lay down that any group of persons, however small, enjoy an unqualified right to choose their own form of government. Number, geographical and economic self-sufficiency must be taken into account. Anyone in earnest with the desire to solve political controversies by local freedom

would carry division as low as should be compatible with these conditions. Thus he would not insist on retaining in Lorraine a population of German speech and sympathies living along the German border. On the other hand, he would recognise the physical impossibility of a union of a Magyar island in a sea of Roumanian population with the continent of Magyar territory. In those cases he would seek to apply measures of local autonomy which will often reconcile a minority to a government which in itself they would not have chosen. But I shall not here attempt to examine all the possibilities open to a constructive statesmanship. I shall content myself with two propositions which I believe to have a bearing, the first on the permanent order of Europe, the second on the prospect of terminating the war. The first is that in proportion as political unity can be brought into accord with national sentiment the chances of international union are improved. The second is that as a practical policy the principle of national choice should at least be a limiting condition. I mean that no portion of European territory should be transferred from one government to another without the concurrence of its population, and

that concurrence should be expressed by a vote taken under the presidency of a neutral Power. This is a principle which even now might be accepted and proclaimed by the Allies as a condition governing their policy, without the smallest prejudice to their vigour in the conduct of the war. To hope for it may be Utopian, yet it is but the translation into literal terms of that combination of the ideas of nationality and of public law which has been inscribed on our banner by official sanction. It is to make the right of nationality an integral part of the public law of Europe.

X

THROUGH ALLIANCE TO FEDERATION

LET us for a moment suppose the ideal of national liberty secured in Europe. Let us imagine that to the nearest approximation allowed by geography each nationality has obtained the government that it desires. It is clear that even so we should not have done away with the possibility of future wars. Nationality—we must again recall Mr. Lowes Dickinson's description—is a Janus looking towards aggression as well as towards liberty. If peace in Europe is ever to be set on a firm foundation some bond must be established among the independent units. What is the nature of that bond to be? Is it to be an alliance? But alliances are rarely made except as against a common enemy, and we are hoping to supersede enmities. Is it to be a federation? But a federation involves a considerable sacrifice of internal sovereignty, and is not effective unless the armed force is in the hands of the

federal Government. Is it conceivable that the European States would confide to any common centre the control of their military organisation? The dilemma is serious, and I do not think that sincere lovers of peace can cope with it except by abandoning in the first instance some of their cherished traditions.

It has, for example, been a cherished belief of peace people that without prejudice to national independence wars might be averted and perhaps finally suppressed by the creation of rational means of avoiding disputes. It is natural that even now many who are looking to the problem that lies beyond this struggle should be planning improved methods of arbitration, conciliation, and so forth. These schemes have in the past foundered on the fact that they presumed a general will for peace. They supposed a ring of nations and Governments desirous of living a tranquil life, and in danger of being hurried into war only by some sudden passion or some awkward incident which would be disposed of if the proper machinery for that purpose were at hand. This supposition did not, unfortunately, conform to the facts. It is clear that some Governments had no desire for peace in itself, but were bent on aggrandise-

ment at all costs, and as long as the lust of aggrandisement remains a living political motive, as long as ideals of violence or national dominance play their part in the life of peoples, so long this danger will remain. No doubt for a short time after the present war there will be a sense of exhaustion in which people will be glad to make use of any machinery for the avoidance of disputes. But it will be with the passing of this period that the danger will be renewed, and I must record my belief that then no schemes of arbitration unsupported by force will be worth the paper they are writ upon. There was plenty of machinery available for the settlement of the dispute of last July, but there was not the will to use it. How can we create such a will ?

Another belief cherished by peace people in England, and not least by this present writer, is that Continental alliances are dangerous to our country and a source of possible war. So far as relates to the past this belief has been justified by the event of last year. But that event itself has produced a new situation, and, to speak for one peace man alone, has radically changed my view. The alliance of Great Britain, France, Russia, Belgium, and Serbia has now been cemented with blood. It is going

to be a part of the most moving historical traditions of these peoples. So far as the three Western States are concerned it is reinforced by similarity of political development and by geographical conditions, and all these forces together have engendered a sense of true solidarity which must not be allowed to perish. Scoffers ask whether we are really fighting for Belgium, France, or ourselves. The true answer is that we have been forced by hard facts to regard the cause of all three as one. We are fighting neither selfishly nor unselfishly, but for the whole of which we are members, just as the man who works for his family is working neither selfishly nor unselfishly, but for the whole of which he is a member. I cannot think that this sense of solidarity once gained will, or ought to, die away. On the contrary, I think that here we may have the beginning of that true foundation in feeling which may be the basis of an international State. I would look to the union of States in Europe through the existing alliance and not as requiring its dissolution.

But it will be said, "This is a flat contradiction with what you have said above of the nature of alliances. An alliance contemplates an enemy. You may preserve the Triple Entente,

but in doing so you will simply maintain the existing division of Europe into two camps. You will prolong the situation of 1914, only embittered and rendered more dangerous by the memory of the Great War." To this I would reply, first, that we may contemplate two changes in the character of the alliance. The first would be its conversion into something of the nature of a permanent League or Federation. For this purpose it would need a standing council for dealing with all matters affecting the League as a whole, and in particular for adjusting any questions arising between any two of its members. I do not think such questions need necessarily be settled by arbitration. I fancy rather that what needs cultivating as between nations is the Parliamentary habit, and the recognition that many problems, problems of territorial acquisition, for example, should be settled neither by force nor by rigid juridical rules, which, after all, are very difficult to apply, but rather by discussion among all parties interested and in accordance ultimately with the decision of a majority as to what seems best for the common good. I think there would be a sufficiently strong sentiment of common suffering and common interest to persuade the nations

of the alliance to agree upon such a collective regulation of their affairs—to agree not merely in that verbal fashion in which the nations of Europe and America have signed Hague Conventions, but with the real intention of establishing a permanent working union of the States concerned. How far it would be possible to equip the League with a common force controlled by its council would be the crucial question. It is impossible to predict and fruitless at this stage to consider detailed possibilities of adjustment, but I would point out that the feelings of antagonism and distrust which would obstruct any working Federation of Europe would not be there to hinder the development of a common authority in a League of Allies tested by a hard experience. There is nothing in the existing state of feeling to prevent the assumption by the League of a certain supervision and partial control of the military forces, and in particular of the manufacture of armaments. The private manufacture of armaments every lover of peace will desire to abolish.

I would look forward, then, to the conversion of the existing Alliance into a permanent League or Federation, with a regular constitution and definite functions, which should include some

measure of control over the production of munitions of war. But from the outset I would contemplate the extension of the League by the free entry of new members. There would be no obstacle to the immediate inclusion of every neutral State in Europe, and in America, provided that each newcomer should frankly accept the conditions of membership. This would at once transform it from an ordinary alliance into something approaching a world-federation. But it might still wear the guise of a confederation arrayed in great strength with a front against Germany. At the outset I confess I cannot see how this can be avoided. If Germany were a member of any such League the entire constitution would have to be framed on different principles. The assumption of mutual trust and goodwill would not be admissible. At every point precautions and guarantees would have to be inserted, which would tend to impede the working of the machine, and any question of a control of armaments would have to be dismissed. Peacemakers will err seriously if they set to work after the war as though the revelation of the mind of German statesmanship were to count for nothing in the future councils of the world. Every association that works is

founded on a bedrock of trust and mutual goodwill. All attempts at internationalism in the past have failed because they have sought to unite those who trusted one another along with those who did not trust one another. To avoid this mistake we must give up something. We must abandon the ideal of any world-embracing union as our immediate object, and seek to work towards it through a union which will be international but not at first all-inclusive. I say not at first, but it need not be said that the ultimate ideal of statesmanship would be to include the Germanic peoples with the rest. The time for that inclusion would arrive as soon as it could be effected without wrecking the scheme.

XI

THE SPIRIT OF THE WEST

HISTORY forbids the cheap optimism which assumes that everything will always go forward. More than one great effort of mankind has failed, and if modern civilisation is more broadly based than that of an older day, the catastrophe which has overtaken it is proportionately wider in its sweep. If we are to regain a rational confidence in the future we must look below the surface. We must ask what has been lost, and whether anything has been gained to set against it. In the broadest sense what has been lost, in addition to the material havoc and the probable destruction of a sensible proportion of the best men of an entire generation in Europe, is the sense of confidence in certain fundamentals of civilised life. First of all, underlying all the anxieties which have been felt by students of international politics for many years, there has been a certain belief in the ultimate wisdom of statesmen, or perhaps in a certain saving instinct among peoples

as a force which at the last moment would prevent a general war. That confidence disappeared in August of last year. But there was worse to come. There was a much more deeply rooted confidence in certain fundamental decencies as the common property of civilised people. It was thought that, cynical as international statesmanship had been, there were some primary points of civilised behaviour common to all the nations which shared in Western culture. By a series of ruthless blows Germany has destroyed this illusion, and has shown that, from poisoning the wells to sinking a great passenger ship, there is nothing at which a nation armed with all the resources of modern science will draw the line. The position is, then, that science has immeasurably increased the efficacy of weapons of destruction and placed them in the hands of men with no more scruples than a horde of conquering barbarians in times past. Unless the world can react against disruptive forces so terrible as these, it is clear that science, which has in a manner been the foundation of what is most distinctive in modern civilisation, must end by destroying it. The different races of mankind have somehow to live together in this world, and if they are to advance in civilisation

they must somehow co-operate ; but, far from co-operating, they cannot even live unless they can cope with this source of danger. The future of the world, therefore, must depend on the degree of energy and whole-heartedness with which all nations, those that have hitherto been neutral as well as belligerents, will combine to suppress the common peril.

But it may be said, if scientific civilisation has produced such a portent as German militarism as we now know it to be, is it not stricken at heart ? Civilisations perish not by external calamity, but when the soul is dead within them. The Roman civilisation went under not because the barbarian invaders were strong, but because Rome, at the core, was weak. The structure of the Empire, even in the palmy days of the Antonines, was that of a great machine which is running of its own inertia, but which has lost the force that originally set the mass in motion. At an earlier date the genius of Hellenism perished in the long internecine contest which paralysed the free cities and took the heart out of that civic life which was the source of inspiration alike to the poet, the artist, and the philosopher. Has the modern world lost its heart in the same way ? To determine this question we

must ask ourselves how far Germany was in heart at one with the modern world. We have perhaps been in the habit of attributing too great a community of ideals to the nations of Europe. In reality Germany took but little share in that new democratic, humanising impulse which arose in England in the seventeenth and more vividly in France in the eighteenth century, which animated the American Revolution, which directed the liberalising movement throughout the British Empire giving us the circle of free colonies around the mother country, and which inspired the union and liberation of Italy. To this spirit of freedom, democracy, and humanity the nations of Western Europe and the new peoples sprung from them have contributed at different times and on different sides, from Holland in the sixteenth century to Belgium in 1914. Small peoples and great have played their part. Thinkers, poets, statesmen, and philanthropists have done their share. But this spirit is the creation of the West. Elements of its teaching have leavened the political and social structure of Central and Eastern Europe in greater or less degree. They have inspired the revolutionary movements and the occasional bursts of reforming policy in Russia. They

have stimulated the revival of the Balkan nationalities, and they have no doubt affected the structure of German society as well. But it has not been sufficiently recognised that the main body of German thought has stood outside this movement since the beginning of the nineteenth century. In earlier days this was not so. Kant, the greatest of German thinkers, stood in full sympathy with the humanitarianism of the eighteenth century. Fichte was an idealist whose teachings were a force that counted on the side of liberty in the struggle with Napoleon. But with the rise of the Hegelian philosophy academic thought in Germany associated itself more and more with the powers that were. The Hegelian system was the first completely reasoned answer to the democratic and humanitarian ideal, and though the sceptre passed from the Hegelians it was taken up by very inferior thinkers of the type of Treitschke, who were far more extreme in their claims for the bureaucratic State and the militarist ideal. There have, of course, been advanced thinkers in Germany, but in the main stream of all German thought that is not avowedly militarist and, from the Western point of view, reactionary, we notice two things. The first is that the main body of such thought,

Social Democracy, is avowedly revolutionary. It can make no terms with the existing order, but neither can it effect any political resistance to that order. Its impotence was confessed at Zabern and manifested to all the world at the outbreak of the war. Secondly, we notice that it is Socialistic and not Liberal in the true sense, for the claim of personality, and its correlative the rule of right, has never focussed itself in a political party with the Germans. Such Liberalism as existed in Germany died in 1848. Germany, therefore, has built up a culture of her own, self-centred, based on a notion of the State, its claims upon the individual and its rights against the rest of the world, which Western civilisation repudiated. The whole meaning of the democratic movement lay in this repudiation. The whole movement of the reaction as we see it expressed as early as Hegel is to the reassertion of the old ideal. The State is master of the man, and it knows no laws of God or humanity to bind it in its dealings with others.

Thus when we ask questions as to the soul of modern civilisation we are not to take Germany into account. On the contrary, in a far deeper sense than any of us supposed a year ago, we are

to conceive her as standing in determined opposition to the ideals which, however imperfectly, the civilised nations of the modern world have been endeavouring to hammer out into practical shape. So regarded, then, the war resolves itself into a contest for the fundamentals of the modern civilised order, not merely for national freedom but for something deeper even than national freedom—for the belief in primary rules of right binding all nations and all men in every relation and under every circumstance. Now, looking through the nations of the world other than Germany, we see no sign of any loss of faith in these principles. On the contrary, we see that the nations one by one are waking to the fact that it is these principles that are at stake. If that is so, we have not here to deal with a civilisation which is sick unto death through loss of belief in its own principles, through lack of confidence in itself, through the deadly sin of self-betrayal. Properly regarded, there is less danger to civilisation in such a catastrophe as this than in some of those smaller wars in which the Western nations have in time past betrayed their principles and sinned against the light within them. They have seemed of less account because the material issues involved were

smaller, yet were they more threatening because they indicated a moral weakness. Here we see no moral weakness. We see the primary belligerents more and more conscious day by day of the vastness of the stake, and more and more resolute accordingly to throw the last ounce of their energy into the contest. In such a struggle civilisation has never yet gone down. As long as it has believed in itself it has always defeated the enemy at the gate. If this is so the outcome of the present war may yet be a union of the nations based upon a far clearer consciousness of those fundamentals which are necessary to co-operation in peaceful order and advance in the true art of living. Victory should mean, not a return to the old state of things dominated by mutual suspicion, but the emergence of a new and more real feeling for the unity of human interests ; and it will be the task of the political thinker and statesman to devise the form which will give to this bond definite and permanent expression. In effect Germany has challenged the world as Napoleon challenged Europe. By slow degrees Napoleon united Europe against him, but it was a Europe dominated by reactionary Governments, and the union was for the time fatal to liberty. By

degrees Germany is uniting the world against her, but it is a world of far more democratic States. The war which will be waged will be more truly a people's war and inspired by ideas of nationality, freedom, and of right. The sacrifice imposed upon our generation is immense, and the loss of young lives must for many years to come tell upon the output of the best work, yet the price will be worth paying if out of it there arises, for the first time, the conception of a common humanity, not as the dream of a philosopher, but as a popular emotion which has tested and proved itself in the hardest of schools.



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