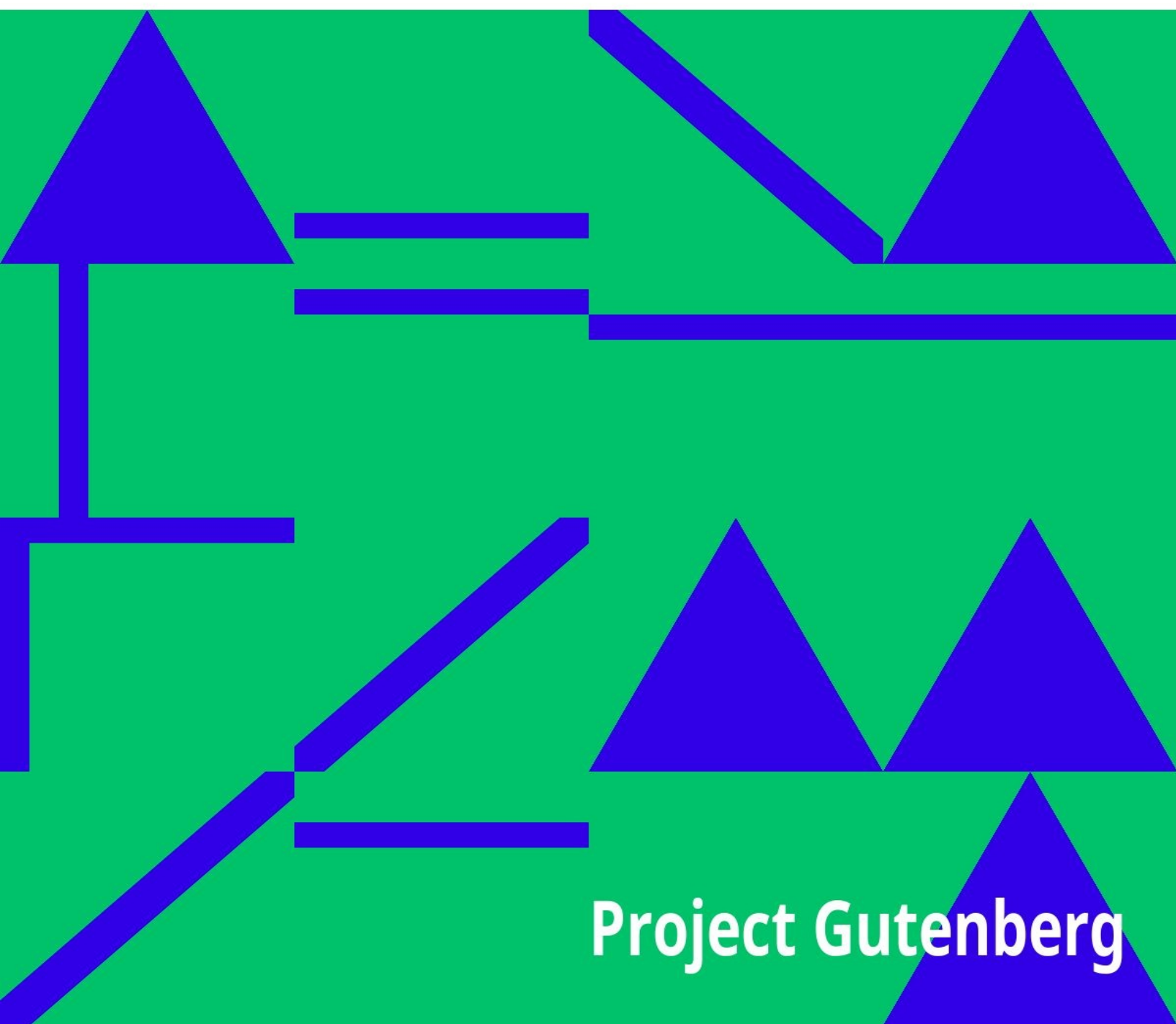


Armageddon—And After

W. L. Courtney



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Title: Armageddon--And After

Author: W. L. Courtney

Release Date: November 26, 2005 [EBook #17158]

Language: English

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ARMAGEDDON—AND AFTER

BY

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LONDON

CHAPMAN & HALL, LTD.

1914

Contents

Preface		
Chapter I	Chapter II	Chapter III
Problems Of The Future	Lessons Of The Past	Some Suggested Reforms
A Colossal Upheaval	Naked Strength	An Ignoble Pacification
Never Again!	Public Right	A New Europe
Unexpected War	A Common Will	Evil Of Armaments
Proximate And Ultimate Causes	A Hundred Years Ago	Absence Of Provocation
European Dictators	Equilibrium	Fear Of Russia
The Personal Factor	The Holy Alliance	Military Autocracy
Kaiser Wilhelm	Diplomatic Criticism	Limitation Of Armaments
An Aggressive Policy	Failure	Protection Of Commerce
Militarism	A Deceptive Parallel	Trade In Armaments
The Evils Of Autocracy	Metternich	Financial Interests
The Military Caste	Castlereagh And Canning	Protection Of Financiers
Diplomacy	Earthen Vessels	Investing Money

		Abroad
Balance Of Power	Small Nationalities	Ideal Aims
Change Of Policy	Some Plain Issues	Greatness Of States
Balance Or Concert?	European Partnership	Apostles Of The New Era
Control Of Foreign Policy	A Moral For Pacifists	
	Compulsory Arbitration	
	Democratic Unanimity	

DEDICATED
WITH ALL HUMILITY AND ADMIRATION
TO
THE YOUNG IDEALISTS OF ALL COUNTRIES
WHO WILL NOT ALLOW THE DREAMS OF THEIR
YOUTH TO BE TARNISHED BY THE
EXPERIENCES OF AN
OUTWORN AGE

PREFACE

I dedicate this little book to the young idealists of this and other countries, for several reasons. They must, obviously, be young, because their older contemporaries, with a large amount of experience of earlier conditions, will hardly have the courage to deal with the novel data. I take it that, after the conclusion of the present war, there will come an uneasy period of exhaustion and anxiety when we shall be told that those who hold military power in their hands are alone qualified to act as saviours of society. That conclusion, as I understand the matter, young idealists will strenuously oppose. They will be quite aware that all the conservative elements will be against them; they will appreciate also the eagerness with which a large number of people will point out that the safest way is to leave matters more or less alone, and to allow the situation to be controlled by soldiers and diplomatists. Of course there is obvious truth in the assertion that the immediate settlement of peace conditions must, to a large extent, be left in the hands of those who brought the war to a successful conclusion. But the relief from pressing anxiety when this horrible strife is over, and the feeling of gratitude to those who have delivered us must not be allowed to gild and consecrate, as it were, systems proved effete and policies which intelligent men recognise as bankrupt. The moment of deliverance will be too unique and too splendid to be left in the hands of men who have grown, if not cynical, at all events a little weary of the notorious defects of humanity, and who are, perhaps naturally, tempted to allow European progress to fall back into the old well-worn ruts. It is the young men who must take the matter in hand, with their ardent hopes and their keen imagination, and only so far as they believe in the possibility of a great amelioration will they have any chance of doing yeoman service for humanity.

The dawn of a new era must be plenary accepted as a wonderful opportunity for reform. If viewed in any other spirit, the splendours of the morning will soon give way before the obstinate clouds hanging on the horizon. In some fashion or other it must be acknowledged that older methods of dealing with international affairs have been tried and found wanting. It must be admitted that the ancient principles helped to bring about the tremendous catastrophe in which we are at present involved, and that a thorough re-organisation is required if the new Europe is to start under better auspices. That is why I appeal to the younger

idealists, because they are not likely to be deterred by inveterate prejudices; they will be only too eager to examine things with a fresh intelligence of their own. Somehow or other we must get rid of the absurd idea that the nations of Europe are always on the look out to do each other an injury. We have to establish the doctrines of Right on a proper basis, and dethrone that ugly phantom of Might, which is the object of Potsdam worship. International law must be built up with its proper sanctions; and virtues, which are Christian and humane, must find their proper place in the ordinary dealings of states with one another. Much clever dialectics will probably be employed in order to prove that idealistic dreams are vain. Young men will not be afraid of such arguments; they will not be deterred by purely logical difficulties. Let us remember that this war has been waged in order to make war for the future impossible. If that be the presiding idea of men's minds, they will keep their reforming course steadily directed towards ideal ends, patiently working for the reconstruction of Europe and a better lot for humanity at large.

Once more let me repeat that it is only young idealists who are sufficient for these things. They may call themselves democrats, or socialists, or futurists, or merely reformers. The name is unimportant: the main point is that they must thoroughly examine their creed in the light of their finest hopes and aspirations. They will not be the slaves of any formulæ, and they will hold out their right hands to every man—whatever may be the label he puts on his theories—who is striving in single-minded devotion for a millennial peace. The new era will have to be of a spiritual, ethical type. Coarser forms of materialism, whether in thought or life, will have to be banished, because the scales have at last dropped from our eyes, and we intend to regard a human being no longer as a thing of luxury, or wealth, or greedy passions, but as the possessor of a living soul.

W.L.C.

November 10, 1914.

I wish to acknowledge my obligation to Mr. H.N. Brailsford's *The War of Steel and Gold* (Bell). I do not pretend to agree with all that Mr. Brailsford says: but I have found his book always interesting, and sometimes inspiring.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
CHAPTER I	
PROBLEMS OF THE FUTURE	1
CHAPTER II	
LESSONS OF THE PAST	32
CHAPTER III	
SOME SUGGESTED REFORMS	63

ARMAGEDDON—AND AFTER

CHAPTER I

PROBLEMS OF THE FUTURE

The newspapers have lately been making large quotations from the poems of Mr. Rudyard Kipling. They might, if they had been so minded, have laid under similar contribution the Revelation of St. John the Divine. There, too, with all the imagery usual in Apocalyptic literature, is to be found a description of vague and confused fighting, when most of the Kings of the earth come together to fight a last and desperate battle. The Seven Angels go forth, each armed with a vial, the first poisoning the earth, the second the sea, the third the rivers and fountains of waters, the fourth the sun. Then out of the mouth of the dragon, of the beast, and of the Antichrist come the lying spirits which persuade the Kings of the earth to gather all the people for that great day of God Almighty "into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon." Translated into our language the account might very well serve for the modern assemblage of troops in which nearly all the kingdoms of the earth have to play their part, with few, and not very important, exceptions. It is almost absurd to speak of the events of the past three months as though they were merely incidents in a great and important campaign. There is nothing in history like them so far as we are aware. In the clash of the two great European organisations—the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente—we have all those wild features of universal chaos which the writer of the Apocalypse saw with prophetic eye as ushering in the great day of the Lord, and paving the way for a New Heaven and a New Earth.

A COLOSSAL UPHEAVAL

It is a colossal upheaval. But what sort of New Heaven and New Earth is it likely to usher in? This is a question which it is hardly too early to discuss, for it makes a vast difference, to us English in especial, if, fighting for what we deem to be a just cause, we can look forward to an issue in the long run beneficial to ourselves and the world. We know the character of the desperate conflict which has yet to be accomplished before our eyes. Everything points to a long stern war, which cannot be completed in a single campaign. Every one knows that Lord Kitchener is supposed to have prophesied a war of three years, and we can hardly ignore

the opinion of so good a judge. If we ask why, the obvious answer is that every nation engaged is not fighting for mere victory in battle, nor yet for extension of territory; but for something more important than these. They fight for the triumph of their respective ideas, and it will make the greatest difference to Europe and the world which of the ideas is eventually conqueror. Supposing the German invasion of France ends in failure; that, clearly, will not finish the war. Supposing even that Berlin is taken by the Russians, we cannot affirm that so great an event will necessarily complete the campaign. The whole of Germany will have to be invaded and subdued, and that is a process which will take a very long time even under the most favourable auspices. Or take the opposite hypothesis. Let us suppose that the Germans capture Paris, and manage by forced marches to defend their country against the Muscovite incursion. Even so, nothing is accomplished of a lasting character. France will go on fighting as she did after 1870, and we shall be found at her side. Or, assuming the worst hypothesis of all, that France lies prostrate under the heel of her German conqueror, does any one suppose that Great Britain will desist from fighting? We know perfectly well that, with the aid of our Fleet, we shall still be in a position to defy the German invader and make use of our enormous reserves to wear out even Teutonic obstinacy. The great sign and seal of this battle to the death is the recent covenant entered into by the three members of the Triple Entente.^[1] They have declared in the most formal fashion, over the signatures of their three representatives, Sir Edward Grey, M. Paul Cambon, and Count Benckendorff, that they will not make a separate peace, that they will continue to act in unison, and fight, not as three nations, but as one. Perhaps one of the least expected results of the present conjuncture is that the Triple Entente, which was supposed to possess less cohesive efficiency than the rival organisation, has proved, on the contrary, the stronger of the two. The Triple Alliance is not true to its name. Italy, the third and unwilling member, still preserves her neutrality, and declares that her interests are not immediately involved.

^[1] Subsequently joined by Japan.

NEVER AGAIN!

In order to attempt to discover the vast changes that are likely to come as a direct consequence of the present Armageddon, it is necessary to refer in brief retrospect to some of the main causes and features of the great European war. Meanwhile, I think the general feeling amongst all thoughtful men is best expressed in the phrase, "Never again." Never again must we have to face the

possibility of such a world-wide catastrophe. Never again must it be possible for the pursuit of merely selfish interests to work such colossal havoc. Never again must we have war as the only solution of national differences. Never again must all the arts of peace be suspended while Europe rings to the tramp of armed millions. Never again must spiritual, moral, artistic culture be submerged under a wave of barbarism. Never again must the Ruler of this Universe be addressed as the "God of battles." Never again shall a new Wordsworth hail "carnage" as "God's daughter." The illogicality of it all is too patent. That everything which we respect and revere in the way of science or thought, or culture, or music, or poetry, or drama, should be cast into the melting-pot to satisfy dynastic ambition is a thing too puerile as well as too appalling to be even considered. And the horror of it all is something more than our nerves will stand. The best brains and intellects of Europe, the brightest and most promising youths, all the manhood everywhere in Europe to be shrivelled and consumed in a holocaust like this—it is such a reign of the Devil and Antichrist on earth that it must be banished in perpetuity if civilisation and progress are to endure. Never again!

UNEXPECTED WAR

How did we get into such a stupid and appalling calamity? Let us think for a moment. I do not suppose it would be wrong to say that no one ever expected war in our days. Take up any of the recent books. With the exception of the fiery martial pamphlets of Germany, the work of a von der Goltz or a Treitschke, or a Bernhardi, we shall find a general consensus of opinion that war on a large scale was impossible because too ruinous, that the very size of the European armaments made war impracticable. Or else, to take the extreme case of Mr. Norman Angell, the entanglements of modern finance were said to have put war out of count as an absurdity. We were a little too hasty in our judgments. It is clear that a single determined man, if he is powerful enough, may embroil Europe. However destructive modern armaments may be, and however costly a campaign may prove, yet there are men who will face the cost and confront the wholesale destruction of life that modern warfare entails. How pitiful it is, how strange also, to look back upon the solemn asseveration of the Kaiser and the Tsar, not so many months ago (Port Baltic, July 1912), that the division of Europe into the two great confederations known as the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente provided a safeguard against hostilities! We were constantly assured that diplomats were working for a Balance of Power, such an equilibrium of rival forces that the total result would be stability and peace.

Arbitration, too, was considered by many as the panacea, to say nothing of the Hague Palace of Peace. And now we discover that nations may possibly refer to arbitration points of small importance in their quarrels, but that the greater things which are supposed to touch national honour and the preservation of national life are tacitly, if not formally, exempted from the category of arbitrable disputes. Diplomacy, Arbitration, Palaces of Peace seem equally useless.

PROXIMATE AND ULTIMATE CAUSES

In attempting to understand how Europe has (to use Lord Rosebery's phrase) "rattled into barbarism" in the uncompromising fashion which we see before our eyes, we must distinguish between recent operative causes and those more slowly evolving antecedent conditions which play a considerable, though not necessarily an obvious part in the result. Recent operative causes are such things as the murder of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand at Serajevo, the consequent Austrian ultimatum to Servia, the hasty and intemperate action of the Kaiser in forcing war, and—from a more general point of view—the particular form of militarism prevalent in Germany. Ulterior antecedent conditions are to be found in the changing history of European States and their mutual relations in the last quarter of a century; the ambition of Germany to create an Imperial fleet; the ambition of Germany to have "a place in the sun" and become a large colonial power; the formation of a Triple Entente following on the formation of a Triple Alliance; the rivalry between Teuton and Slav; and the mutations of diplomacy and *Real-politik*. It is not always possible to keep the two sets of causes, the recent and the ulterior, separate, for they naturally tend either to overlap or to interpenetrate one another. German Militarism, for instance, is only a specific form of the general ambition of Germany, and the Austrian desire to avenge herself on Servia is a part of her secular animosity towards Slavdom and its protector, Russia. Nor yet, when we are considering the present *débâcle* of civilisation, need we interest ourselves overmuch in the immediate occasions and circumstances of the huge quarrel. We want to know not how Europe flared into war, but why. Our object is so to understand the present imbroglio as to prevent, if we can, the possibility for the future of any similar world-wide catastrophe.

EUROPEAN DICTATORS

Let us fix our attention on one or two salient points. Europe has often been

accustomed to watch with anxiety the rise of some potent arbiter of her destinies who seems to arrogate to himself a large personal dominion. There was Philip II. There was Louis XIV. There was Napoleon a hundred years ago. Then, a mere shadow of his great ancestor, there was Napoleon III. Then, after the Franco-German war, there was Bismarck. Now it is Kaiser Wilhelm II. The emergence of some ambitious personality naturally makes Europe suspicious and watchful, and leads to the formation of leagues and confederations against him. The only thing, however, which seems to have any power of real resistance to the potential tyrant is not the manœuvring of diplomats, but the steady growth of democracy in Europe, which, in virtue of its character and principles, steadily objects to the despotism of any given individual, and the arbitrary designs of a personal will. We had hoped that the spread of democracies in all European nations would progressively render dynastic wars an impossibility. The peoples would cry out, we hoped, against being butchered to make a holiday for any latter-day Cæsar. But democracy is a slow growth, and exists in very varying degrees of strength in different parts of our continent. Evidently it has not yet discovered its own power. We have sadly to recognise that its range of influence and the new spirit which it seeks to introduce into the world are as yet impotent against the personal ascendancy of a monarch and the old conceptions of high politics. European democracy is still too vague, too dispersed, too unorganised, to prevent the breaking out of a bloody international conflict.

THE PERSONAL FACTOR

Europe then has still to reckon with the personal factor—with all its vagaries and its desolating ambitions. Let us see how this has worked in the case before us. In 1888 the present German Emperor ascended the throne. Two years afterwards, in March 1890, the Pilot was dropped—Bismarck resigned. The change was something more than a mere substitution of men like Caprivi and Hohenlohe for the Iron Chancellor. There was involved a radical alteration in policy. The Germany which was the ideal of Bismarck's dreams was an exceedingly prosperous self-contained country, which should flourish mainly because it developed its internal industries as well as paid attention to its agriculture, and secured its somewhat perilous position in the centre of Europe by skilful diplomatic means of sowing dissension amongst its neighbours. Thus Bismarck discouraged colonial extensions. He thought they might weaken Germany. On the other hand, he encouraged French colonial policy, because he thought it would divert the French from their preoccupation with the idea of *revanche*. He

played, more or less successfully, with England, sometimes tempting her with plausible suggestions that she should join the Teutonic Empires on the Continent, sometimes thwarting her aims by sowing dissensions between her and her nearest neighbour, France. But there was one empire which, certainly, Bismarck dreaded not so much because she was actually of much importance, but because she might be. That empire was Russia. The last thing in the world Bismarck desired was precisely that approximation between France and Russia which ended in the strange phenomenon of an offensive and defensive alliance between a western republic and a semi-eastern despotic empire.

KAISER WILHELM

Kaiser Wilhelm II had very different ideals for Germany, and in many points he simply reversed the policy of Bismarck. He began to develop the German colonial empire, and in order that it might be protected he did all in his power to encourage the formation of a large German navy. He even allowed himself to say that "the future of Germany was on the sea." It was part of that peculiar form of personal autocracy which the Kaiser introduced that he should from time to time invent phrases suggestive of different principles of his policy. Side by side with the assertion that Germany's future was on the sea, we have the phrases "Germany wants her place in the sun" and that the "drag" of Teutonic development is "towards the East." The reality and imminence of "a yellow peril" was another of his devices for stimulating the efforts of his countrymen. Thus the new policy was expansion, evolution as a world-power, colonisation; and each in turn brought him up against the older arrangement of European Powers. His colonial policy, especially in Africa, led to collisions with both France and Great Britain. The building of the fleet, the Kiel Canal, and other details of maritime policy naturally made England very suspicious, while the steady drag towards the East rendered wholly unavoidable the conflict between Teutonism and the Slav races. Germany looked, undoubtedly, towards Asia Minor, and for this reason made great advances to and many professions of friendship for the Ottoman Empire. Turkey, indeed, in several phrases was declared to be "the natural ally" of Germany in the Near East. And if we ask why, the answer nowadays is obvious. Not only was Turkey to lend herself to the encouragement of German commercial enterprise in Asia Minor, but she was, in the judgment of the Emperor, the one power which could in time of trouble make herself especially obnoxious to Great Britain. She could encourage revolt in Egypt, and still more, through the influence of Mahomedanism, stir up

disaffection in India.^[2]

^[2] Turkey has now joined Germany.

AN AGGRESSIVE POLICY

And now let us watch this policy in action in recent events. In 1897 Germany demanded reparation from China for the recent murder of two German missionaries. Troops were landed at Kiao-chau Bay, a large pecuniary indemnity of about £35,000 was refused, and Kiao-chau itself with the adjacent territory was ceded to Germany. That was a significant demonstration of the Emperor's determination to make his country a world-power, so that, as was stated afterwards, nothing should occur in the whole world in which Germany would not have her say. Meanwhile, in Europe itself event after event occurred to prove the persistent character of German aggressiveness. On March 31, 1905, the German Emperor landed at Tangier, in order to aid the Sultan of Morocco in his demand for a Conference of the Powers to check the military dispositions of France. M. Delcassé, France's Foreign Minister, demurred to this proposal, asserting that a Conference was wholly unnecessary. Thereupon Prince Bülow used menacing language, and Delcassé resigned in June 1905. The Conference of Algeçiras was held in January 1906, in which Austria proved herself "a brilliant second" to Germany. Two years afterwards, in 1908, came still further proofs of Germany's ambition. Austria annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina. Russia immediately protested; so did most of the other Great Powers. But Germany at once took up the Austrian cause, and stood "in shining armour" side by side with her ally. Inasmuch as Russia was, in 1908, only just recovering from the effects of her disastrous war with Japan, and was therefore in no condition to take the offensive, the Triple Alliance gained a distinct victory. Three years later occurred another striking event. In July 1911 the world was startled by the news that the German gunboat *Panther*, joined shortly afterwards by the cruiser *Berlin*, had been sent to Agadir. Clearly Berlin intended to reopen the whole Moroccan question, and the tension between the Powers was for some time acute. Nor did Mr. Lloyd George make it much better by a fiery speech at the Mansion House on July 21, which considerably fluttered the Continental doves. The immediate problem, however, was solved by the cession of about one hundred thousand square miles of territory in the Congo basin by France to Germany in compensation for German acquiescence in the French protectorate over Morocco. I need not, perhaps, refer to other more recent events. One point, however, must not be omitted. The issue of the Balkan wars in 1912 caused a

distinct disappointment to both Germany and Austria. Turkey's defeat lessened the importance of the Ottoman Empire as an ally. Austria had to curb her desires in the direction of Salonica. And the enemies who had prevented the realisation of wide Teutonic schemes were Serbia and her protector, Russia. From this time onwards Austria waited for an opportunity to avenge herself on Serbia, while Germany, in close union with her ally, began to study the situation in relation to the Great Northern Empire in an eminently bellicose spirit.

MILITARISM

Now that we have the proper standpoint from which to watch the general tendency of events like these, we can form some estimate of the nature of German ambition and the results of the personal ascendancy of the Kaiser. We speak vaguely of militarism. Fortunately, we have a very valuable document to enable us to understand what precisely German militarism signifies. General von Bernhardi's *Germany and the Next War* is one of the most interesting, as well as most suggestive, of books, intended to illustrate the spirit of German ambition. Bernhardi writes like a soldier. Such philosophy as he possesses he has taken from Nietzsche. His applications of history come from Treitschke. He has persuaded himself that the main object of human life is war, and the higher the nation the more persistently must it pursue preparations for war. Hence the best men in the State are the fighting men. Ethics and religion, so far as they deprecate fighting and plead for peace, are absolutely pernicious. Culture does not mean, as we hoped and thought, the best development of scientific and artistic enlightenment, but merely an all-absorbing will-power, an all-devouring ambition to be on the top and to crush every one else. The assumption throughout is that the German is the highest specimen of humanity. Germany is especially qualified to be the leader, and the only way in which it can become the leader is to have such overwhelming military power that no one has any chance of resisting. Moreover, all methods are justified in the sacred cause of German culture—duplicity, violence, the deliberate sowing of dissensions between possible rivals, incitements of Asiatics to rise against Europeans. All means are to be adopted to win the ultimate great victory, and, of course, when the struggle comes there must be no misplaced leniency to any of the inferior races who interpose between Germany and her legitimate place in the sun.^[3] The ideal is almost too naïve and too ferocious to be conceived by ordinary minds. Yet here it all stands in black and white. According to Bernhardi's volume German militarism means at least two things. First the suppression of every other

nationality except the German; second the suppression of the whole civilian element in the population under the heel of the German drill-sergeant. Is it any wonder that the recent war has been conducted by Berlin with such appalling barbarism and ferocity?

[3] *Germany and the Next War*, by F. von Bernhardi. See especially Chap. V, "World-Power or Downfall." Other works which may be consulted are Professor J.A. Cramb's *Germany and England* (esp. pp. 111-112) and Professor Usher's *Pan-Germanism*.

THE EVILS OF AUTOCRACY

Our inquiry so far has led to two conclusions. We have discovered by bitter experience that a personal ascendancy, such as the German Emperor wields, is in the highest degree perilous to the interests of peace: and that a militarism such as that which holds in its thrall the German Empire is an open menace to intellectual culture and to Christian ethics. But we must not suppose that these conclusions are only true so far as they apply to the Teutonic race, and that the same phenomena observed elsewhere are comparatively innocuous. Alas! autocracy in any and every country seems to be inimical to the best and highest of social needs, and militarism, wherever found, is the enemy of pacific social development. Let us take a few instances at haphazard of the danger of the personal factor in European politics. There is hardly a person to be found nowadays who defends the Crimean war, or indeed thinks that it was in any sense inevitable. Yet if there was one man more than another whose personal will brought it about, it was—not Lord Aberdeen who ought to have been responsible—but Lord Stratford de Redcliffe. "The great Eltchi," as he was called, was our Ambassador at Constantinople, a man of uncommon strength of will, which, as is often the case with these powerful natures, not infrequently degenerated into sheer obstinacy. He had made up his mind that England was to support Turkey and fight with Russia, and inasmuch as Louis Napoleon, for the sake of personal glory, had similar opinions, France as well as England was dragged into a costly and quite useless war. Napoleon III has already figured among those aspiring monarchs who wish "to sit in the chair of Europe." It was his personal will once more which sent the unhappy Maximilian to his death in Mexico, and his personal jealousy of Prussia which launched him in the fatal enterprise "à Berlin" in 1870. In the latter case we find another personal influence, still more sinister—that of the Empress Eugénie, whose capricious ambition and interference in military matters directly led to the ruinous disaster of Sedan. The French people, who had to suffer, discovered it too late. "Quicquid

delirant reges plectuntur Achivi." Or take another more recent instance. Who was responsible for the Russo-Japanese war? Not Kuropatkin, assuredly, nor yet the Russian Prime Minister, but certain of the Grand Dukes and probably the Tsar himself, who were interested in the forests of the Yalu district and had no mind to lose the money they had invested in a purely financial operation. The truth is that modern Europe has no room for "prancing Pro-consuls," and no longer takes stock in autocrats. They are, or ought to be, superannuated, out of date. To use an expressive colloquialism they are "a back number." The progress of the world demands the development of peoples; it has no use for mediæval monarchies like that of Potsdam. One of the things we ought to banish for ever is the horrible idea that whole nations can be massacred and civilisation indefinitely postponed to suit the individual caprice of a bragging and self-opinionated despot who calls himself God's elect. Now that we know the ruin he can cause, let us fight shy of the Superman, and the whole range of ideas which he connotes.

THE MILITARY CASTE

Militarism is another of our maladies. Here we must distinguish with some care. A military spirit is one thing: militarism is another. It is probable that no nation is worthy to survive which does not possess a military spirit, or, in other words, the instinct to defend itself and its liberties against an aggressor. It is a virtue which is closely interfused with high moral qualities—self-respect, a proper pride, self-reliance—and is compatible with real modesty and sobriety of mind. But militarism has nothing ethical about it. It is not courage, but sheer pugnacity and quarrelsomeness, and as exemplified in our modern history it means the dominion of a clique, the reign of a few self-opinionated officials. That these individuals should possess only a limited intelligence is almost inevitable. Existing for the purposes of war, they naturally look at everything from an oblique and perverted point of view. They regard nations, not as peaceful communities of citizens, but as material to be worked up into armies. Their assumption is that war, being an indelible feature in the history of our common humanity, must be ceaselessly prepared for by the piling up of huge armaments and weapons of destruction. Their invariable motto is that if you wish for peace you must prepare for war—"si vis pacem, para bellum"—a notoriously false apophthegm, because armaments are provocative, not soothing, and the man who is a swash-buckler invites attack. It is needless to say that thousands of military men do not belong to this category: no one dreads war so much as the

man who knows what it means. I am not speaking of individuals, I am speaking of a particular caste, military officials in the abstract, if you like to put it so, who, because their business is war, have not the slightest idea what the pacific social development of a people really means. Militarism is simply a one-sided, partial point of view, and to enforce that upon a nation is as though a man with a pronounced squint were to be accepted as a man of normal vision. We have seen what it involves in Germany. In a less offensive form, however, it exists in most states, and its root idea is usually that the civilian as such belongs to a lower order of humanity, and is not so important to the State as the officer who discharges vague and for the most part useless functions in the War Office.^[4] It is a swollen, over-developed militarism that has got us into the present mess, and one of our earliest concerns, when the storm is over, must be to put it into its proper place. Let him who uses the sword perish by the sword.

[4] Thus it was the Military party in Bulgaria which drove her to the disastrous second Balkan war, and the Military party in Austria which insisted on the ultimatum to Servia.

DIplomacy

And I fear that there is another ancient piece of our international strategy which has been found wanting. I approach with some hesitation the subject of diplomacy, because it contains so many elements of value to a state, and has given so many opportunities for active and original minds. Its worst feature is that its operations have to be conducted in secret: its best is that it affords a fine exemplification of the way in which the history and fortunes of states are—to their advantage—dependent upon the initiative of gifted and patriotic individuals. But if we look back over the history of recent years, we shall discover that diplomacy has not fulfilled its especial mission. According to a well-known cynical dictum a diplomatist is a man who is paid to lie for his country. And, indeed, it is one of the least gracious aspects of the diplomatic career that it seems necessarily to involve the use of a certain amount of chicanery and falsehood, the object being to jockey opponents by means of skilful ruses into a position in which they find themselves at a disadvantage. Clearly, however, there are better aims than these for diplomacy—one aim in particular, which is the preservation of peace. A diplomat is supposed to have failed if the result of his work leads to war. It is not his business to bring about war. Any king or prime minister or general can do that, very often with conspicuous ease. A diplomat is a skilful statesman versed in international politics, who makes the best provision he can for the interests of his country, carefully steering it away from those rocks of angry hostility on which possibly his good ship may founder.

BALANCE OF POWER

Now what has diplomacy done for us during the last few years? It has formed certain understandings and alliances between different states; it has tried to safeguard our position by creating sympathetic bonds with those nations who are allied to us in policy. It has also attempted to produce that kind of "Balance of Power" in Europe which on its own showing makes for peace. This Balance of Power, so often and so mysteriously alluded to by the diplomatic world, has become a veritable fetish. Perhaps its supreme achievement was reached when

two autocratic monarchs—the Tsar of Russia and the German Emperor—solemnly propounded a statement, as we have seen, at Port Baltic that the Balance of Power, as distributed between the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente, had proved itself valuable in the interests of European peace. That was only two years ago, and the thing seems a mockery now. If we examine precisely what is meant by a Balance of Power, we shall see that it presupposes certain conditions of animosity and attempts to neutralise them by the exhibition of superior or, at all events, equivalent forces. A Balance of Power in the continental system assumes, for all practical purposes, that the nations of Europe are ready to fly at each other's throats, and that the only way to deter them is to make them realise how extremely perilous to themselves would be any such military enterprise. Can any one doubt that this is the real meaning of the phrase? If we listen to the Delphic oracles of diplomacy on this subject of the Balance of Power, we shall understand that in nine cases out of ten a man invoking this phrase means that he wants the Balance of Power to be favourable to himself. It is not so much an exact equipoise that he desires, as a certain tendency of the scales to dip in his direction. If Germany feels herself weak she not only associates Austria and Italy with herself, but looks eastward to get the assistance of Turkey, or, perhaps, attempts—as it so happens without any success—to create sympathy for herself in the United States of America. If, on the other hand, France feels herself in danger, she not only forms an alliance with Russia, but also an entente with England and, on the principle that the friends of one's friends ought to be accepted, produces a further entente between England and Russia. England, on her part, if for whatever reason she feels that she is liable to attack, goes even so far as to make an alliance with an Asiatic nation—Japan—in order to safeguard her Asiatic interests in India. Thus, when diplomatists invoke the necessity of a Balance of Power, they are really trying to work for a preponderance of power on their side. It is inevitable that this should be so. An exact Balance of Power must result in a stalemate.

CHANGE OF POLICY

Observe what has happened to Great Britain during recent years. When she was ruled by that extremely clear-headed though obstinate statesman, Lord Salisbury, she remained, at his advice, outside the circle of continental entanglements and rejoiced in what was known as a policy of "Splendid Isolation." It was, of course, a selfish policy. It rested on sound geographical grounds, because, making use of the fortunate accident that Great Britain is an island, it suggested

that she could pursue her own commercial career and, thanks to the English Channel, let the whole of the rest of the world go hang. Such a position could not possibly last, partly because Great Britain is not only an island, but also an empire scattered over the seven seas; partly because we could not remain alien from those social and economic interests which necessarily link our career with continental nations. So we became part of the continental system, and it became necessary for us to choose friends and partners and mark off other peoples as our enemies. It might have been possible a certain number of years ago for us to join the Triple Alliance. At one time Prince Bülow seemed anxious that we should do so, and Mr. Chamberlain on our side was by no means unwilling. But gradually we discovered that Germany was intensely jealous of us as a colonial power and as a great sea-power, and for this reason, as well as for others, we preferred to compose our ancient differences with France and promote an understanding between English and French as the nearest of neighbours and the most convenient of allies. Observe, however, that every step in the process was a challenge, and a challenge which the rival aimed at could not possibly ignore. The conclusion of the French Entente Cordiale in 1904, the launching of the *Dreadnought* in 1906, the formation of the Russian agreement in 1907, and certain changes which we made in our own army were obviously intended as warnings to Germany that we were dangerous people to attack.^[5] Germany naturally sought reprisals in her fashion, and gradually Europe was transformed into a huge armed camp, divided into two powerful organisations which necessarily watched each other with no friendly gaze.

^[5] See *The War of Steel and Gold*, by H.N. Brailsford (Bell)—opening chapter on "The Balance of Power."

BALANCE OR CONCERT?

I do not say that the course of events could possibly have been altered. When once we became part of the continental system, it was necessary for us to choose between friends and enemies. I only say that if diplomacy calls itself an agency for preventing war, it cannot be said to be altogether successful. Its famous doctrine of a Balance of Power is in reality a mere phrase. If one combination be represented as X and the other as Y, and X increases itself up to X^2 , it becomes necessary that Y should similarly increase itself to Y^2 , a process which, clearly, does not make for peace. I should imagine that the best of diplomatists are quite aware of this. Indeed, there seems reason to suppose that Sir Edward Grey, owing to definite experience in the last two years, not only discovered the

uselessness of the principle of a Balance of Power, but did his best to substitute something entirely different—the Concert of Europe. All the negotiations he conducted during and after the two Balkan wars, his constant effort to summon London Conferences and other things, were intended to create a Concert of European Powers, discussing amongst themselves the best measures to secure the peace of the world. Alas! the whole of the fabric was destroyed, the fair prospects hopelessly clouded over, by the intemperate ambition of the Kaiser, who, just because he believed that the Balance of Power was favourable to himself, that Russia was unready, that France was involved in serious domestic trouble, that England was on the brink of civil war, set fire to the magazine and engineered the present colossal explosion.

CONTROL OF FOREIGN POLICY

One cannot feel sure that diplomacy as hitherto recognised will be able, or, indeed, ought to be able, to survive the shock. In this country, as in others, diplomacy has been considered a highly specialised science, which can only be conducted by trained men and by methods of entire secrecy. As a mere matter of fact, England has far less control over her foreign policy than any of the continental Powers. In Germany foreign affairs come before the Reichstag, in France they are surveyed by the Senate, in America there is a special department of the Senate empowered to deal with foreign concerns. In Great Britain there is nothing of the kind. Parliament has practically no control whatsoever over foreign affairs, it is not even consulted in the formation of treaties and arrangements with other nations. Nor yet has the Cabinet any real control, because it must act together as a whole, and a determined criticism of a foreign secretary means the resignation of the Government. Fortunately, our diplomacy has been left for the most part in very able hands. Nevertheless, it is surely a paradox that the English people should know so little about foreign affairs as to be absolutely incapable of any control in questions that affect their life or death. Democracy, though it is supposed to be incompetent to manage foreign relations, could hardly have made a worse mess of it than the highly-trained Chancelleries. When the new Europe arises out of the ashes of the old, it is not very hazardous to prophesy that diplomacy, with its secret methods, its belief in phrases and abstract principles, and its assumption of a special professional knowledge, will find the range of its powers and the sphere of its authority sensibly curtailed.

CHAPTER II

LESSONS OF THE PAST

The problems that lie before us in the reconstitution of Europe are so many and so various that we can only hope to take a few separately, especially those which seem to throw most light on a possible future. I have used the phrase "reconstitution of Europe," because I do not know how otherwise to characterise the general trend of the ideas germinating in many men's minds as they survey the present crisis and its probable outcome. Europe will have to be reconstituted in more respects than one. At the present moment, or rather before the present war broke out, it was governed by phrases and conceptions which had become superannuated. An uneasy equipoise between the Great Powers represented the highest culmination of our diplomatic efforts. Something must clearly be substituted for this uneasy equipoise. It is not enough that after tremendous efforts the relative balance of forces between great states should, on the whole, dissuade them from war. As a matter of fact, it has not done so. The underlying conception has been that nations are so ardently bellicose that they require to be restrained from headlong conflicts by the doubtful and dangerous character of such military efforts as might be practicable. Hence Europe, as divided into armed camps, represents one of the old-fashioned ideas that we want to abolish. We wish to put in its stead something like a Concert of Europe. We have before our eyes a vague, but inspiring vision not of tremendous and rival armaments, but of a United States of Europe, each component element striving for the public weal, and for further advances in general cultivation and welfare rather than commercial prosperity. The last is a vital point, for it does not require much knowledge of modern history to discover that the race for commercial advantage is exactly one of the reasons why Europe is at war at the present moment. A vast increase in the commercial prosperity of any one state means a frantic effort on the part of its rivals to pull down this advantage. In some fashion, therefore, we have to substitute for endless competition the principle of co-operation, national welfare being construed at the same time not in terms of overwhelming wealth, but of thorough sanity and health in the body corporate.

NAKED STRENGTH

All this sounds shadowy and abstruse until it is translated into something concrete and definite. What is it we want to dispossess and banish from the Europe of to-day? We have to find something to take the place of what is called militarism. I dealt with the general features of militarism in my last essay; I will therefore content myself with saying that militarism in Europe has meant two things above all. First, the worship of might, as expressed in formidable armaments; next, the corresponding worship of wealth to enable the burden of armaments to be borne with comparative ease. The worship of naked strength involves several deductions. Right disappears, or rather is translated in terms of might. International morality equally disappears. Individuals, it is true, seek to be governed by the consciousness of universal moral laws. But a nation, as such, has no conscience, and is not bound to recognise the supremacy of anything higher than itself. Morality, though it may bind the individual, does not bind the State, or, as General von Bernhardi has expressed it, "political morality differs from individual morality because there is no power above the State." In similar fashion the worship of wealth carries numerous consequences with it, which are well worthy of consideration. But the main point, so far as it affects my present argument, is that it substitutes materialistic objects of endeavour for ethical and spiritual aims. Once more morality is defeated. The ideal is not the supremacy of good, but the supremacy of that range and sphere of material efficiency that is procurable by wealth.

PUBLIC RIGHT

Let us try to be more concrete still, and in this context let us turn to such definite statements as are available of the views entertained by our chief statesmen, politicians, and leaders of public opinion. I turn to the speech which Mr. Asquith delivered on Friday evening, September 25, in Dublin, as part of the crusade which he and others are undertaking for the general enlightenment of the country. "I should like," said Mr. Asquith, "to ask your attention and that of my fellow-countrymen to the end which, in this war, we ought to keep in view. Forty-four years ago, at the time of the war of 1870, Mr. Gladstone used these words. He said: 'The greatest triumph of our time will be the enthronement of the idea of public right as the governing idea of European politics.' Nearly fifty years have passed. Little progress, it seems, has as yet been made towards that good and beneficent change, but it seems to me to be now at this moment as good a definition as we can have of our European policy—the idea of public right. What does it mean when translated into concrete terms? It means, first and foremost,

the clearing of the ground by the definite repudiation of militarism as the governing factor in the relation of states and of the future moulding of the European world. It means next that room must be found and kept for the independent existence and the free development of the smaller nationalities, each with a corporate consciousness of its own.... And it means, finally, or it ought to mean, perhaps, by a slow and gradual process, the substitution for force, for the clash of competing ambition, for groupings and alliances, of a real European partnership based on the recognition of equal right and established and enforced by a common will."^[6]

Much the same language has been used by Sir Edward Grey and by Mr. Winston Churchill.

^[6] *The Times*, September 26.

A COMMON WILL

Observe that there are three points here. In the first place—if I do not misapprehend Mr. Asquith's drift—in working for the abolition of militarism, we are working for a great diminution in those armaments which have become a nightmare to the modern world. The second point is that we have to help in every fashion small nationalities, or, in other words, that we have to see that countries like Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, the Scandinavian countries, Greece and the Balkan States, and, perhaps, more specially, the Slav nationalities shall have a free chance in Europe, shall "have their place in the sun," and not be browbeaten and raided and overwhelmed by their powerful neighbours. And the third point, perhaps more important than all, is the creation of what Mr. Asquith calls a "European partnership based on the recognition of equal right and established and enforced by a common will." We have to recognise that there is such a thing as public right; that there is such a thing as international morality, and that the United States of Europe have to keep as their ideal the affirmation of this public right, and to enforce it by a common will. That creation of a common will is at once the most difficult and the most imperative thing of all. Every one must be aware how difficult it is. We know, for instance, how the common law is enforced in any specified state, because it has a "sanction," or, in other words, because those who break it can be punished. But the weakness for a long time past of international law, from the time of Grotius onwards, is that it apparently has no real sanction. How are we to punish an offending state? It can only be done by the gradual development of a public conscience in Europe, and by

means of definite agreements so that the rest of the civilised world shall compel a recalcitrant member to abide by the common decrees. If only this common will of Europe ever came into existence, we should have solved most, if not all, our troubles. But the question is: How?

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO

It may be depressing, but it certainly is an instructive lesson to go back just a hundred years ago, when the condition of Europe was in many respects similar to that which prevails now. The problems that unrolled themselves before the nations afford useful points of comparison. The great enemy was then Napoleon and France. Napoleon's views of empire were precisely of that universal predatory type which we have learnt to associate with the Kaiser and the German Empire. The autocratic rule of the single personal will was weighing heavily on nearly every quarter of the globe. Then came a time when the principle of nationality, which Napoleon had everywhere defied, gradually grew in strength until it was able to shake off the yoke of the conqueror. In Germany, and Spain, and Italy the principle of nationality steadily grew, while in England there had always been a steady opposition to the tyranny of Napoleon on the precise ground that it interfered with the independent existence of nations. The defeat of Napoleon, therefore, was hailed by our forefathers a hundred years ago as the dawn of a new era. Four great Powers—Great Britain, Russia, Austria, and Prussia—had before them as their task the settlement of Europe, one of the noblest tasks that could possibly be assigned to those who, having suffered under the old regime, were desirous to secure peace and base it on just and equitable foundations. There is thus an obvious parallelism between the conditions of affairs in 1815 and those which will, as we hope, obtain if and when the German tyrant is defeated and the nations of Europe commence their solemn task of reconstituting Europe. Of course, we must not press the analogy too far. The dawn of a new era might have been welcomed in 1815, but the proviso was always kept in the background that most of the older traditions should be preserved. Diplomacy was still inspired by its traditional watchwords. Above all, the transformation so keenly and so vaguely desired was in the hands of sovereigns who were more anxious about their own interests than perhaps was consistent with the common weal.

EQUILIBRIUM

At first the four Great Powers proceeded very tentatively. They wished to confine France—the dangerous element in Europe—within her legitimate boundaries. Next, they desired to arrange an equilibrium of Powers (observe, in passing, the old doctrine of the Balance of Power) so that no individual state should for the future be in a position to upset the general tranquillity. Revolutionary France was to be held under by the re-establishment of its ancient dynasty. Hence Louis XVIII was to be restored. The other object was to be obtained by a careful parcelling out of the various territories of Europe, on the basis, so far as possible, of old rights consecrated by treaties. It is unnecessary to go into detail in this matter. We may say summarily that Germany was reconstituted as a Confederation of Sovereign States; Austria received the Presidency of the Federal Diet; in Italy Lombardo-Venetia was erected into a kingdom under Austrian hegemony, while the Low Countries were annexed to the crown of Holland so as to form, under the title of the United Netherlands, an efficient barrier against French aggression northwards. It was troublesome to satisfy Alexander I of Russia because of his ambition to secure for himself the kingdom of Poland. Indeed, as we shall see presently, the personality of Alexander was a permanent stumbling-block to most of the projects of European statesmen. As a whole, it cannot be denied that this particular period of history, between Napoleon's abdication in 1814 and the meeting of the European Congress at Verona in 1882, presented a profoundly distressing picture of international egotism. The ruin of their common enemy, relieving the members of the European family from the necessity of maintaining concord, also released their individual selfishnesses and their long-suppressed mutual jealousies.^[7]

[7] See *The Confederation of Europe*, by Walter Alison Phillips (Longmans), esp. Chapters V and VI. Cf. also *Political and Literary Essays*, by the Earl of Cromer, 2nd series (Macmillan), on *The Confederation of Europe*.

THE HOLY ALLIANCE

The figure of Alexander I dominates this epoch. His character exhibits a very curious mixture of autocratic ambition and a mystical vein of sheer undiluted idealism. Probably it would be true to say that he began by being an idealist, and was forced by the pressure of events to adopt reactionary tactics. Perhaps also, deeply embedded in the Russian nature we generally find a certain unpracticalness and a tendency to mystical dreams, far remote from the ordinary necessities of every day. It was Alexander's dream to found a Union of Europe, and to consecrate its political by its spiritual aims. He retained various nebulous

thinkers around his throne; he also derived much of his crusade from the inspiration of a woman—Baroness von Krüdener, who is supposed to have owed her own conversion to the teaching of a pious cobbler. Even if we have to describe Alexander's dream as futile, we cannot afford to dismiss it as wholly inoperative. For it had as its fruit the so-called Holy Alliance, which was in a sense the direct ancestor of the peace programmes of the Hague, and, through a different chain of ideas, the Monroe Doctrine of the United States. We are apt sometimes to confuse the Holy Alliance with the Grand Alliance. The second, however, was a union of the four Great Powers, to which France was ultimately admitted. The first was not an alliance at all, hardly, perhaps, even a treaty. It was in its original conception a single-hearted attempt to arrange Europe on the principles of the Christian religion, the various nations being regarded as brothers who ought to have proper brotherly affection for one another. We know that, eventually, the Holy Alliance became an instrument of something like autocratic despotism, but in its essence it was so far from being reactionary that, according to the Emperor Alexander, it involved the grant of liberal constitutions by princes to their subjects.

DIPLOMATIC CRITICISM

But just because it bound its signatories to act on certain vague principles for no well-defined ends, it was bound to become the mockery of diplomatists trained in an older school. Metternich, for instance, called it a "loud sounding nothing"; Castlereagh "a piece of sublime mysticism and nonsense," while Canning declared that for his part he wanted no more of "Areopagus and the like of that." What happened on this occasion is what ordinarily happens with well-intentioned idealists who happen also to be amateur statesmen. Trying to regulate practical politics, the Holy Alliance was deflected from its original purpose because its chief author, Alexander I, came under the influence of Metternich and was frightened by revolutionary movements in Italy and within his own dominions. Thus the instrument originally intended to preserve nationalities and secure the constitutional rights of people was converted into a weapon for the use of autocrats only anxious to preserve their own thrones. Nevertheless, though it may have been a failure, the Holy Alliance did not leave itself without witness in the modern world. It tried to regulate ordinary diplomacy in accordance with ethical and spiritual principles; and the dreaming mind of its first founder was reproduced in that later descendant of his who initiated the Hague propaganda of peace.

FAILURE

"These things were written for our ensamples," and we should be foolish indeed if we did not take stock of them with an anxious eye to the future. The main and startling fact is that with every apparent desire for the re-establishment of Europe on better lines, Europe, as a matter of fact, drifted back into the old welter of conflicting nationalities, while the very instrument of peace—the Holy Alliance—was used by autocratic governments for the subjection of smaller nationalities and the destruction of popular freedom. It is accordingly very necessary that we should study the conditions under which so startling a transformation took place. Even in England herself it cannot be said that the people were in any sense benefited by the conclusions of the war. They had borne its burdens, but at its end found themselves hampered as before in the free development of a democracy. Meanwhile, Europe at large presented a spectacle of despotism tempered by occasional popular outbreaks, while in the majority of cases the old fetters were riveted anew by cunning and by no means disinterested hands.

A DECEPTIVE PARALLEL

What we have to ask ourselves is whether the conditions a hundred years ago have any real similarity with those likely to obtain when Europe begins anew to set its house in order. To this, fortunately, we can return a decided negative. We have already shown that the general outlines present a certain similarity, but the parallelism is at most superficial, and in many respects deceptive. A despot has to be overthrown, an end has to be put to a particular form of autocratic regime, and smaller states have to be protected against the exactions of their stronger neighbours—that is the extent of the analogy. But it is to be hoped that we shall commence our labours under much better auspices. The personal forces involved, for instance, are wholly different. Amongst those who took upon themselves to solve the problems of the time is to be found the widest possible divergence in character and aims. On the one side we have a sheer mystic and idealist in the person of Alexander I, with all kinds of visionary characters at his side—La Harpe, who was his tutor, a Jacobin pure and simple, and a fervent apostle of the teachings of Jean Jacques Rousseau; Czartoryski, a Pole, sincerely anxious for the regeneration of his kingdom; and Capo d'Istria, a champion of Greek nationality. To these we have to add the curious figure of the Baroness von Krüdener, an admirable representative of the religious sickliness of the age. "I have immense things to say to him," she said, referring to the Emperor, "the

Lord alone can prepare his heart to receive them." She had, indeed, many things to say to him, but her influence was evanescent and his Imperial heart was hardened eventually to quite different issues.

METTERNICH

Absolutely at the other extreme was a man like Metternich, trained in the old school of politics, wily with the wiliness of a practised diplomatic training, naturally impatient of speculative dreamers, thoroughly practical in the only sense in which he understood the term, that is to say, determined to preserve Austrian supremacy. To a reactionary of this kind the Holy Alliance represented nothing but words. He knew, with the cynicism bred of long experience of mankind, that the rivalries and jealousies between different states would prevent their union in any common purpose, and in the long run the intensity with which he pursued his objects, narrow and limited as it was, prevailed over the large and vague generosity of Alexander's nature. To the same type belonged both Talleyrand and Richelieu, who concentrated themselves on the single task of winning back for France her older position in the European commonwealth—a laudable aim for patriots to espouse, but one which was not likely to help the cause of the Holy Alliance.

CASTLEREAGH AND CANNING

Half-way between these two extremes of unpractical idealists and extremely practical but narrow-minded reactionaries come the English statesmen, Castlereagh, Wellington, and Canning. Much injustice has been done to the first of these. For many critics have been misled by Byron's denunciation of Castlereagh, just as others have spoken lightly of the stubborn conservatism of Wellington, or the easy and half-cynical insouciance of the author of the *Anti-Jacobin*. As a matter of fact, Castlereagh was by no means an opponent of the principles of the Holy Alliance. He joined with Russia, Austria, and Prussia as a not unwilling member of the successive Congresses, but both he and Wellington, true to their national instincts, sought to subordinate all proposals to the interests of Great Britain, and to confine discussions to immediate objects, such as the limitation of French power and the suppression of dangerous revolutionary ideas. They were not, it is true, idealists in the sense in which Alexander I understood the term. And yet, on the whole, both Castlereagh and Canning did more for the principle of nationality than any of the other diplomatists of the

time. The reason why Canning broke with the Holy Alliance, after Troppau, Laibach, and Verona, was because he discerned something more than a tendency on the part of Continental States to crush the free development of peoples, especially in reference to the Latin-American States of South America. It is true that in these matters he and his successor were guided by a shrewd notion of British interest, but it would be hardly just to blame them on this account. "You know my politics well enough," wrote Canning in 1822 to the British Ambassador in St. Petersburg, "to know what I mean when I say that for Europe I should be desirous now and then to read England." Castlereagh was, no doubt, more conciliatory than Canning, but he saw the fundamental difficulty of organising an international system and yet holding the balance between conflicting nations. And thus we get to a result such as seems to have rejoiced the heart of Canning, when he said in 1823 that "the issue of Verona has split the one and indivisible alliance into three parts as distinct as the constitutions of England, France, and Muscovy." "Things are getting back," he added, "to a wholesome state again. Every nation for itself and God for us all. Only bid your Emperor (Alexander I) be quiet, for the time for Areopagus and the like of that is gone by."^[8]

^[8] *The Confederation of Europe*, by W.A. Phillips, p. 280.

EARTHEN VESSELS

If, then, the ardent hopes of a regenerated Europe in the early years of the nineteenth century failed, the result was due in large measure to the fact that the business was committed to wrong hands. The organs for working the change were for the most part autocratic monarchs and old-world diplomatists—the last people in the world likely to bring about a workable millennium. A great crisis demands very careful manipulation. Cynicism must not be allowed to play any part in it. Traditional watchwords are not of much use. Theoretical idealism itself may turn out to be a most formidable stumbling-block. Yet no one can doubt that a solution of the problem, whenever it is arrived at, must come along the path of idealism. Long ago a man of the world was defined as a man who in every serious crisis is invariably wrong. He is wrong because he applies old-fashioned experience to a novel situation—old wine in new bottles—and because he has no faith in generous aspirations, having noted their continuous failure in the past. Yet, after all, it is only faith which can move mountains, and the Holy Alliance itself was not so much wrong in the principles to which it appealed as it was in the personages who signed it. We have noticed already that, like all other great

ideas, it did not wholly die. The propaganda of peace, however futile may be some of the discussions of pacifists, is the heritage which even so wrong-headed a man as Alexander I has left to the world. The idea of arbitration between nations, the solution of difficulties by arguments rather than by swords, the power which democracies hold in their hands for guiding the future destinies of the world—all these in their various forms remain with us as legacies of that splendid, though ineffective, idealism which lay at the root of the Holy Alliance.

SMALL NATIONALITIES

And now after this digression, which has been necessary to clear the ground, and also to suggest apt parallels, let us return to what Mr. Asquith said in Dublin on the ultimate objects of the present war. He borrowed from Mr. Gladstone the phrase "the enthronement of the idea of public right as the governing idea of European politics," and in developing it as applicable to the present situation he pointed out that for us three definite objects are involved. The first, assented to by every publicist of the day, apart from those educated in Germany, is the wholesale obliteration of the notion that states exist simply for the sake of going to war. This kind of militarism, in all its different aspects, will have to be abolished. The next point brings us at once to the heart of some of the controversies raised in 1815 and onwards. "Room," said Mr. Asquith—agreeing in this matter with Mr. Winston Churchill—"room must be found, and kept, for the independent existence and the free development of the smaller nationalities, each with a corporate consciousness of its own." Now this is a plain issue which every one can understand. Not only did we go to war in order to help a small nationality—Belgium—but the very principle of nationality is one of the familiar phrases which have characterised British policy through the greater part of the nineteenth century. Our principle is to live and let live, to allow smaller states to exist and thrive by the side of their large neighbours without undue interference on the part of the latter. Each distinct nationality is to have its voice, at all events, in the free direction of its own future. And, above all, its present and future position must be determined not by the interests of the big Powers, but by a sort of plebiscite of the whole nationality.

SOME PLAIN ISSUES

Applying such principles to Europe as it exists to-day, and as it is likely to exist to-morrow, we arrive at certain very definite conclusions. The independence of

Belgium must be secured, so also must the independence of Holland and Denmark. Alsace and Lorraine must, if the inhabitants so wish, be restored to France, and there can be little doubt that Alsace at all events will be only too glad to resume her old allegiance to the French nation. The Duchies of Schleswig-Holstein must also decide whether they would like to be reunited to Denmark. And we are already aware that the Tsar has promised to give independence to the country of Poland—a point which forms a curious analogy with the same offer originally proposed by the Tsar's ancestor, Alexander I. Of course, these do not exhaust by any means the changes that must be forthcoming. Finland will have to be liberated; those portions of Transylvania which are akin to Roumania must be allowed to gravitate towards their own stock. Italy must arrogate to herself—if she is wise enough to join her forces with those of the Triple Entente—those territories which come under the general title of "unredeemed Italy"—the Trentino and Trieste, to say nothing of what Italy claims on the Adriatic littoral. Possibly the greatest changes of all will take place in reference to the Slavs. Servia and Montenegro will clearly wish to incorporate in a great Slav kingdom a great many of their kinsmen who at present are held in uneasy subjection by Austria.^[9] Nor must we forget how these same principles apply to the Teutonic States. If the principle of nationality is to guide us, we must preserve the German nation, even though we desire to reduce its dangerous elements to impotence. Prussia must remain the home of all those Germans who accept the hegemony of Berlin, but it does not follow that the southern states of the German Empire—who have not been particularly fond of their northern neighbours—should have to endure any longer the Prussian yoke. Lastly, the German colonies can hardly be permitted to remain under the dominion of the Kaiser.^[10] Here are only a few of the changes which may metamorphose the face of Europe as a direct result of enforcing the principle of nationalities.

^[9] The entrance of Turkey into the quarrel of course brings new factors into the ultimate settlement.

^[10] Cf. *Who is Responsible?* by Cloudesley Brereton (Harrap), Chapter IV, "The Settlement."

EUROPEAN PARTNERSHIP

But there is a further point to which Mr. Asquith referred, one which is more important than anything else, because it represents the far-off ideal of European peace and the peace of the world. "We have got to substitute by a slow and

gradual process," said Mr. Asquith, "instead of force, instead of the clash of compelling ambition, instead of groupings and alliances, a real European partnership, based on the recognition of equal right and established and enforced by a common will." There we have the whole crux of the situation, and, unfortunately, we are forced to add, its main difficulty. For if we desire to summarise in a single sentence the rock on which European negotiations from 1815 to 1829 ultimately split, it was the union of two such contradictory things as independent nationalities and an international committee or system of public law. Intrinsicly the two ideas are opposed, for one suggests absolute freedom, and the other suggests control, superintendence, interference. If the one recognises the entire independence of a nationality within its own limits, the other seeks to enforce something of the nature of a European police to see that every nation does its duty. It is true, of course, that this public will of Europe must be incorporated in a kind of parliament, to which the separate nations must send their representatives, and that thus in a fashion each nation will have its proper say in any of the conclusions arrived at. But here the difficulty starts anew owing to the relative size, and therefore the relative importance of the different states constituting the union. If all alike are given an equivalent vote, it is rather hard on the big states, which represent larger numbers and therefore control larger destinies. If, on the other hand, we adopt the principle of proportional representation, we may be pretty certain that the larger states will press somewhat heavily on the smaller. For instance, suppose that some state violates, or threatens to violate, the public law of the world. In that case the Universal Union must, of course, try to bring it to reason by peaceful means first, but if that should fail, the only other alternative is by force of arms. If once we admit the right of the world-organisation to coerce its recalcitrant members, what becomes of the sovereign independence of nations? That, as we have said, was the main difficulty confronting the European peace-maker of a hundred years ago, and, however we may choose to regard it, it remains a difficulty, we will not say insuperable, but at all events exceedingly formidable, for the European peace-makers of the twentieth century. The antithesis is the old antithesis between order and progress; between coercion and independence; between the public voice, or, if we like to phrase it so, the public conscience, and the arbitrariness and irresponsibility of individual units. Or we might put the problem in a still wider form. A patriot is a man who believes intensely in the rights of his own nationality. But if we have to form a United States of Europe we shall have gradually to soften, diminish, or perhaps even destroy the narrower conceptions of patriotism. The ultimate evolution of democracy in the various peoples means the mutual recognition of their common interests, as

against despotism and autocracy. It is clear that such a process must gradually wipe out the distinction between the different peoples, and substitute for particularism something of universal import. In such a process what, we ask once more, becomes of the principle of nationality, which is one of our immediate aims? In point of fact, it is obvious that, from a strictly logical standpoint, the will of Europe, or the public right of Europe, and the free independence of nationalities are antithetical terms, and will continue to remain so, however cunningly, by a series of compromises, we may conceal their essential divergence. That is the real problem which confronts us quite as obstinately as it did our forefathers after the destruction of the Napoleonic power. And it will have to be faced by all reformers, whether they are pacifists or idealists, on ethical or political grounds.

A MORAL FOR PACIFISTS

What is the outcome of the foregoing considerations? The only moral at present which I am disposed to draw is one which may be addressed to pacifists in general, and to all those who avail themselves of large and generous phrases, such as "the public will of Europe," or "the common consciousness of civilised states." The solution of the problem before us is not to be gained by the use of abstract terms, but by very definite and concrete experience used in the most practical way to secure immediate reforms. We demand, for instance, the creation of what is to all intents and purposes an international federal system applied to Europe at large. Now it is obvious that a federal system can be created amongst nations more or less at the same level of civilisation, inspired by much the same ideals, acknowledging the same end of their political and social activity. But in what sense is this true of Europe as we know it? There is every kind of diversity between the constituent elements of the suggested federation. There is no real uniformity of political institutions and ideals. But in order that our object may be realised it is precisely this uniformity of political institutions and ideals amongst the nations which we require. How is a public opinion formed in any given state? It comes into being owing to a certain community of sentiments, opinions, and prejudices, and without such community it cannot develop. The same thing holds true of international affairs. If we desiderate the public voice of Europe, or the public conscience of Europe, Europe must grow to be far more concordant than it is at present, both in actual political institutions and in those inspiring ideals which form the life-blood of institutions. How many states, for instance, recognise or put into practice a really representative system

of government?

COMPULSORY ARBITRATION

If we turn to the programme of the pacifists, we shall be confronted by similar difficulties. Pacifism, as such, involves an appeal to all the democracies, asking them to come into line, as it were, for the execution of certain definite projects intended to seek peace and ensure it. The first stage of the peace movement is the general recognition of the principle of arbitration between states. That first period has, we may take it, been already realised. The second stage is the recognition of compulsory arbitration. When, in 1907, the second Hague Conference was held, this principle was supported by thirty-two different states, representing more than a thousand million human beings. Something like three or four hundred millions remained not yet prepared to admit the principle in its entirety. I may remark in passing that the verbal acceptance of a general principle is one thing, the application, as we have lately had much reason to discover, is quite another. We may recognise, however, that this second stage of the pacifist programme has, undoubtedly, made large advances. But of course it must necessarily be followed by its consequence, a third stage which shall ensure respect for, and obedience to arbitration verdicts. Recalcitrant states will have to be coerced, and the one thing that can coerce them is an international police administered by an international executive power. That is to say, we must have a parliament of parliaments, a universal parliament, the representatives of which must be selected by the different constituent members of the United States of Europe. When this has been done, and only when this has been done, can we arrive at a fourth stage, that of a general disarmament. In the millennium that is to be it is only the international police which shall be allowed to use weapons of war in order to execute the decrees of the central parliament representing the common European will.

DEMOCRATIC UNANIMITY

Here we have all the old difficulties starting anew, and especially the main one—democratic unanimity. How far the democracies of the European Commonwealth can work in unison is one of the problems which the future will have to solve. At present they, obviously, do not do so. The Social Democrats of Germany agreed to make war on the democrats of other countries. Old instincts were too strong for them. For it must always be remembered that only so far as a cosmopolitan

spirit takes the place of narrow national prejudices can we hope to reach the level of a common conscience, or a common will of Europe. And are we prepared to say that national prejudices *ought* to be obliterated and ignored? The very principle of nationality forbids it.

I do not wish, however, to end on a note of pessimism. The mistake of the pacifist has all along been the assumption that bellicose impulses have died away. They have done nothing of the kind, and are not likely to do so. But, happily, all past experience in the world's history shows us that ideas in a real sense govern the world, and that a logical difficulty is not necessarily a practical impossibility. In this case, as in others, a noble and generous idea of European peace will gradually work its own fulfilment, if we are not in too much of a hurry to force the pace, or imagine that the ideal has been reached even before the preliminary foundations have been laid.



CHAPTER III

SOME SUGGESTED REFORMS

It is an obvious criticism on the considerations which have been occupying us in the preceding chapters that they are too purely theoretical to be of any value. They are indeed speculative, and, perhaps, from one point of view come under the edge of the usual condemnation of prophecy. Prophecy is, of course, if one of the most interesting, also one of the most dangerous of human ingenuities, and the usual fate of prophets is, in nine cases out of ten, to be proved wrong. Moreover, it is possible that there may come an issue to the present war which would be by far the worst which the human mind can conceive. It may end in a deadlock, a stalemate, an impasse, because the two opposing forces are so equal that neither side can get the better of the other. If peace has to be made because of such a balance between the opposing forces as this, it would be a calamity almost worse than the original war. German militarism would still be unsubdued, the Kaiser's pretensions to universal sovereignty, although clipped, would not be wiped out, and we should find remaining in all the nations of the earth a sort of sullen resentment which could not possibly lead to anything else than a purely temporary truce. The only logical object of war is to make war impossible, and if merely an indecisive result were achieved in the present war, it would be as certain as anything human can be that a fresh war would soon arise. At the present moment we confess that there is an ugly possibility of this kind, and that it is one of the most formidable perils of future civilisation.

AN IGNOBLE PACIFICATION

It is so immensely important, however, that the cause of the Allies should prevail not for their own sakes alone, but for the sake of the world, that it is difficult to imagine their consenting to an ignoble pacification. The Allies have signed an important document, in order to prove their solidarity, that no one of them will sign peace without the sanction of the other partners. Let us suppose that the rival armies have fought each other to a standstill; let us suppose that France is exhausted; let us further suppose that the German troops, by their mobility and their tactical skill, are able to hold the Russians in the eastern sphere of war. We

can suppose all these things, but what we cannot imagine even for a moment is that Great Britain—to confine ourselves only to our own case—will ever consent to stop until she has achieved her object. America may strive to make the combatants desist from hostilities, partly because she is a great pacific power herself, and partly because it is a practical object with her as a commercial nation to secure tranquil conditions. Yet, even so, there would be no answer to the question which most thoughtful minds would propound: Why did we go to war, and what have we gained by the war? If we went to war for large cosmic purposes, then we cannot consent to a peace which leaves those ultimate purposes unfulfilled. I think, therefore, we can put aside this extremely uncomfortable suggestion that the war may possibly end in a deadlock, because, in the last resort, Great Britain, with her fleet, her sister dominions over the seas, her colonies, and her eastern ally Japan, will always, to use the familiar phrase, have "something up her sleeve," even though continental nations should reach a pitch of absolute exhaustion.

A NEW EUROPE

It follows then that, even if we admit the purely speculative character of our argument, it is not only right and proper, but absolutely necessary that we should prepare ourselves for something which we can really describe as a new Europe. Thoughtful minds ought imaginatively to put themselves in the position of a spectator of a reconstituted world, or rather of a world that waits to be reconstituted. It is necessary that this should be done, because so many older prejudices have to be swept away, so many novel conceptions have to be entertained. Let us take only a single example. If we look back over history, we shall see that all the great nations have made themselves great by war. There is a possible exception in the case of Italy, whose present greatness has flowed from loyal help rendered her by other kindred nations, and by realising for herself certain large patriotic ideals entertained by great minds. But for the majority of nations it is certainly true that they have fought their way into the ranks of supreme powers. From this the deduction is easy that greatness depends on the possession of formidable military power. Indeed, all the arguments of those who are very anxious that we should not reduce our armaments is entirely based on this supposition. The strong man armed keepeth his goods in peace; his only fear is that a stronger man may come with better arms and take away his possessions. Now if the new Europe dawns not indeed for those who are past middle age—for they will have died before its realisation—but for the younger generation for

whose sake we are bearing the toil and burden of the day, the one thing which is absolutely necessary is that the index of greatness must no longer be found in armies and navies. Clearly it will take a long time for men to get used to this novel conception. Inveterate prejudices will stand in the way. We shall be told over and over again that peace-lovers are no patriots; that imperialism demands the possible sacrifice of our manhood to the exigencies of war; and that the only class of men who are ever respected in this world are those who can fight. And so, even though we have had ocular demonstration of the appalling ruin which militarism can produce, we may yet, if we are not careful, forget all our experience and drift back into notions which are not really separable from precisely those ideas which we are at present reprobating in the German nation. The real test is this: Is, or is not, war a supreme evil? It is no answer to this question to suggest that war educes many splendid qualities. Of course it does. And so, too, does exploration of Polar solitudes, or even climbing Alpine or Himalayan heights. Either war is a detestable solution of our difficulties, or it is not. If it is not, then we have no right whatsoever to object to the Prussian ideal. But if it is, let us call it by its proper name. Let us say that it is devil's work, and have done with it.

EVIL OF ARMAMENTS

We are trying not only to understand what Europe will be like if, as we hope, this war ends successfully for the Allies, but what sort of new Europe it will be in the hands of the conquerors to frame. Those who come after us are to find in that new Europe real possibilities of advance in all the higher kinds of civilisation. Not only are the various states to contain sane and healthy people who desire to live in peace with their neighbours, but people who will desire to realise themselves in science, in philosophic thought, in art, in literature. What is an indispensable condition for an evolution of this sort? It must be the absence of all uneasiness, the growth of a serene confidence and trust, the obliteration of envy, jealousy, and every kind of unreasonableness. The cause, above all others, which has produced an opposite condition of things, which has created the unfortunate Europe in which we have hitherto had to live, is the growth and extension of armaments. The main factor, then, in our problem is the existence of such swollen armaments as have wasted the resources of every nation and embittered the minds of rival peoples. How are we to meet this intolerable evil of armaments?

ABSENCE OF PROVOCATION

In the first place, let us remark that on our supposition—the eventual victory of the Allies—one of the great disturbing elements will have been put out of the field. Europe has hitherto been lulled into an uneasy and fractious sleep by the balance of two great organisations. Under the happiest hypothesis the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente will have disappeared into the deep backward and abysm of time. For all practical purposes there will be no Triple Alliance, and therefore no Triple Entente to confront it. With Austria wiped out of the map for all purposes of offence, and Germany restricted within modest dimensions, the three powers of the Triple Entente—Great Britain, France, and Russia—can do what they like, and as they are sworn friends and allies they can take their own steps undisturbed by fears of hostile combinations. Why should these three allies consent any further to keep up bloated armaments? It is against their own interests and against the interests of the world. So long as Germany existed as a power and developed her own ambitions, we were always on the edge of a catastrophe. With the conquest of Germany that nightmare will have gone. And observe some of the consequences which must inevitably follow. It was against the menace of Germany that France had to pass her three years' law of military service: in the absence of the German army France can reduce as she pleases her military establishment. It was against the menace of a German fleet that we had to incur an outlay of millions of pounds: in the absence of the German fleet we, too, can do what we please. It is certain also that Russia, so long as the deep-seated antagonism between Teuton and Slav remained, was under strong compulsion to reform and reinforce her army.

FEAR OF RUSSIA

There may, it is true, remain in some minds a certain fear about Russia, because it is difficult to dispel the old conception of a great despotic Russian autocracy, or, if we like to say so, a semi-eastern and half-barbarous power biding her time to push her conquests both towards the rising and the setting sun. But many happy signs of quite a new spirit in Russia have helped to allay our fears. It looks as if a reformed Russia might arise, with ideas of constitutionalism and liberty and a much truer conception of what the evolution of a state means. At the very beginning of the war the Tsar issued a striking proclamation to the Poles, promising them a restoration of the national freedom which they had lost a century and a half previously. This doubtless was a good stroke of policy, but

also it seemed something more—a proof of that benevolent idealism which belongs to the Russian nature, and of which the Tsar himself has given many signs. Of the three nations who control the Poles, the Austrians have done most for their subjects: at all events, the Poles under Austrian control are supposed to be the most happy and contented. Then come the Russian Poles. But the Poles under German government are the most miserable of all, mainly because all German administration is so mechanical, so hard, in a real sense so inhuman. But this determination of the Tsar to do some justice to the Polish subjects is not the only sign of a newer spirit we have to deal with. There was also a proclamation promising liberty to the Jews—a very necessary piece of reform—and giving, as an earnest of the good intentions of the Government, commissions to Jews in the army. Better than all other evidence is the extraordinary outburst of patriotic feeling in all sections of the Russian people. It looks as if this war has really united Russia in a sense in which it has never been united before. When we see voluntary service offered on the part of those who hitherto have felt themselves the victims of Russian autocracy, we may be pretty certain that even the reformers in the great northern kingdom have satisfied themselves that their long-deferred hopes may at length gain fulfilment. Nor ought we to forget that splendid act of reform which has abolished the Imperial monopoly of the sale of vodka. If by one stroke of the pen the Tsar can sacrifice ninety-three millions of revenue in order that Russia may be sober, it is not very extravagant to hope that in virtue of the same kind of benevolent despotism Russia may secure a liberal constitution and the Russian people be set free.^[11]

[11] See *Our Russian Ally*, by Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace (Macmillan).

MILITARY AUTOCRACY

The end of a great war, however, has one inevitable result, that it leaves a military autocracy in supreme control of affairs. The armies which have won the various campaigns, the generals who have led them, the Commanders-in-Chief who have carried out the successful strategy, these are naturally left with almost complete authority in their hands. Wellington, for instance, a hundred years ago, held an extraordinarily strong position in deciding the fate of Europe. And so, too, did the Russian Tsar, whose armies had done so much to destroy the legend of Napoleonic invincibility. Similar conditions must be expected on the present occasion. And, perhaps, the real use of diplomats, if they are prudent and level-headed men, is to control the ambitions of the military element, to adopt a wider outlook, to consider the ultimate consequences rather than the immediate effects of things. It would indeed be a lamentable result if a war which was intended to destroy militarism in Europe should end by setting up militarism in high places.

LIMITATION OF ARMAMENTS

Thus we seem to see still more clearly than before that the size of armaments in Europe constitutes a fundamental problem with which we have to grapple. Every soldier, as a matter of course, believes in military armaments, and is inclined to exaggerate their social and not merely their offensive value. Those of us who are not soldiers, but who are interested in the social and economic development of the nation, know, on the contrary, that the most destructive and wasteful form of expenditure is that which is occupied with armaments grown so bloated that they go far to render the most pressing domestic reforms absolutely impossible. How, then, can we limit the size of armaments? What provision can we make to keep in check that desire to fortify itself, to entrench itself in an absolutely commanding position, which inherently belongs to the military mind? In the case of both navies and armies something depends on geographical conditions, and something on financial possibilities. The first represents, as it were, the minimum required for safety; the second the maximum burden which a state can endure without going into bankruptcy.^[12] Our own country, we should say, requires fleets, so far as geographical conditions are concerned, for the protection of her shores, and, inasmuch as she is a scattered empire, we must have our warships in all the Seven Seas. France, in her turn, requires a navy

which shall protect her in the Mediterranean, and especially render access easy to her North African possessions. On the supposition that she is good friends with England, she does not require ships in the North Sea or in the English Channel, while, vice versa, England, so long as France is strong in the Mediterranean, need only keep quite small detachments at Gibraltar, Malta, and elsewhere. Russia must have a fleet for the Baltic, and also a fleet in the Black Sea. Beyond that her requirements assuredly do not go. Italy's activities are mainly in the Mediterranean. Under the supposition that she is conquered, Germany stands in some danger of losing her navy altogether.

[12] Brailsford's *War of Steel and Gold*: Chap. IX.

PROTECTION OF COMMERCE

It is obvious, therefore, that if we confine ourselves purely to geographical conditions, and adhere to the principle that navies are required for the protection of coasts, we can at once reduce, within relatively small limits, the building of armoured ships. The reason why large navies have hitherto been necessary is because it has been assumed that they do not merely protect coasts, but protect lines of commerce. We have been told, for instance, that inasmuch as we cannot feed our own population, and our national food comes to us from Canada, America, the Argentine, Russia, and elsewhere, we must possess a very large amount of cruisers to safeguard the ships that are conveying to us our daily bread. If we ask why our ships must not only protect our shores, but our merchandise—the latter being for the most part a commercial enterprise worked by individual companies—the answer turns on that much-discussed principle, the Right of Capture at Sea, which was debated at the last Hague Conference, and as a matter of fact stoutly defended both by Germany and ourselves. If we look at this doctrine—the supposed right that a power possesses to capture the merchandise of private individuals who belong to an enemy country in times of war—we shall perhaps feel some surprise that a principle which is not admitted in land warfare should still prevail at sea. According to the more benevolent notions of conducting a campaign suggested, and indeed enforced by Hague Conventions and such like, an army has no right to steal the food of a country which it has invaded. It must pay for what it takes. Well-conducted armies, as a matter of fact, behave in this fashion: the necessity of paying for what they take is very strictly enforced by responsible officers. Why, therefore, at sea an opposite state of affairs should prevail is really not easy to understand. Most of the enemy's merchant ships which have been captured in the recent war belong

to private individuals, or private companies. But they are taken, subject to the decision of Prize Courts, as part of the spoils of a successful maritime power. I am aware that the question is an exceedingly controversial one, and that Great Britain has hitherto been very firm, or, perhaps, I might be allowed to say, obstinate in upholding the law of capture at sea. But I also know that a great many competent lawyers and politicians do not believe in the validity of such a principle, and would not be sorry to have it abolished.^[13] At all events, it is clear enough that if it were abolished one of the main arguments for keeping up a strong navy would fall to the ground. We should then require no patrol of cruisers in the Atlantic, in the Pacific, and in the Mediterranean. One thing at least is certain, that if we can ever arrive at a time when a real Concert of Europe prevails, one of the first things which it must take in hand is a thorough examination of the extent of defensive force which a nation requires as a minimum for the preservation of its independence and liberty.

[13] Notably Lord Loreburn, in his *Capture at Sea* (Methuen).

TRADE IN ARMAMENTS

Certainly one crying evil exists which ought to be dealt with promptly and effectively in accordance with the dictates of common sense as well as common morality. I refer to the trade in armaments carried on by private companies, whose only interest it is to foment, or perhaps actually to produce, war scares in order that munitions of war may be greedily purchased. A notorious example is furnished by the great works at Essen owned by Krupp. In the same position are the great French works at Creusot, owned by Schneider, and those of our own English firms, Armstrongs, Vickers, John Brown, and Cammell Laird. These are all successful concerns, and the shareholders have reaped large profits. I believe that at Creusot the dividends have reached twenty per cent., and Armstrongs yield rarely less than ten per cent. It is necessary to speak very plainly about industries of this kind, because, however we like to phrase it, they represent the realisation of private profit through the instruments of death and slaughter. It would be bad enough if they remained purely private companies, but they really represent the most solid public organisations in the world. We know the intimate relations between Krupp and the German Government, and doubtless also between Messrs. Schneider and the French Government. This sordid manufacture of the instruments of death constitutes a vast business, with all kinds of ramifications, and the main and deadly stigma on it is that it is bound to encourage and promote war. Let me quote some energetic sentences from Mr.

H.G. Wells on this point: "Kings and Kaisers must cease to be commercial travellers of monstrous armament concerns.... I do not need to argue, what is manifest, what every German knows, what every intelligent educated man in the world knows. The Krupp concern and the tawdry Imperialism of Berlin are linked like thief and receiver; the hands of the German princes are dirty with the trade. All over the world statecraft and royalty have been approached and touched and tainted by these vast firms, but it is in Berlin that the corruption is centred, it is from Berlin that the intolerable pressure to arm and still to arm has come."^[14]

What is the obvious cure for this state of things? It stares us in the face. Governments alone should be allowed to manufacture weapons. This ought not to be an industry left in private hands. If a nation, through its accredited representatives, thinks it is necessary to arm itself, it must keep in its own hands this lethal industry. Beyond the Government factories there clearly ought to be no making of weapons all over Europe and the world.

^[14] There are one or two pamphlets on this subject which are worth consulting, especially *The War Traders*, by G.H. Perris (National Peace Council, St. Stephen's House, Westminster), and *The War Trust Exposed*, by J.F. Walton Newbold (the National Leader Press, Manchester). See also *The War of Steel and Gold*, by H.N. Brailsford, Chapter II, "Real Politics," p. 89. The sentences quoted from Mr. Wells come from *The War that will end War* (F. and C. Palmer), p. 39.

FINANCIAL INTERESTS

It has already been remarked that the conditions which limit and control the size of armaments are partly geographical and partly financial, and that while the former represent the minimum, the latter stand for the maximum of protective force. I need say nothing further about the geographical conditions. Every one who studies a map can see for himself what is required by a country anxious to protect its shores or its boundaries. If we suppose that armaments are strictly limited to the needs of self-defence, and if we further assume that in the new Europe countries are not animated by the strongest dislikes against one another, but are prepared to live and let live (a tolerably large assumption, I am aware), we can readily imagine a steady process of curtailment in the absolutely necessary armament. Further, if Great Britain gave up its doctrine of the Right of Capture at Sea (and if Great Britain surrendered it, we may be pretty sure that, after Germany has been made powerless, no other country would wish to retain it), the supposed necessity of protecting lines of commerce would disappear and

a further reduction in cruisers would take place. I cannot imagine that either America or Japan would wish to revive the Right of Capture theory if we ourselves had given it up. And they are the most important maritime and commercial nations after ourselves.^[15]

The financial conditions, however, deserve study because they lead straight to the very heart of the modern bellicose tendencies. In an obvious and superficial sense, financial conditions represent the maximum in the provision of armaments, because ultimately it becomes a question of how much a nation can afford to spend without going bankrupt or being fatally hampered in its expenditure on necessary social reforms. This, however, is not perhaps the most significant point. Financial conditions act much more subtly than this. Why has it grown so imperative on states to have large armies or large navies, or both? Because—so we have been told over and over again—diplomacy cannot speak with effect unless it is backed by power. And what are the main occasions on which diplomacy has to speak effectively? We should be inclined to answer off-hand that it must possess this stentorian power when there is any question about national honour—when the country for whom it speaks is insulted or bullied, or defrauded of its just rights; when treaties are torn up and disregarded; when its plighted word has been given and another nation acts as though no such pledge had been made; when its territory is menaced with invasion and so forth.

^[15] As a matter of fact, the United States are opposed to the Capture at Sea principle.

PROTECTION OF FINANCIERS

But these justifiable occasions do not exhaust the whole field. Sometimes diplomacy is brought to bear on much more doubtful issues. It is used to support the concession-hunter, and to coerce a relatively powerless nation to grant concessions. It backs up a bank which has financed a company to build railroads or develop the internal resources of a country; or to exploit mines or oil-fields, or to do those thousand-and-one things which constitute what is called "peaceful penetration." Think of the recent dealings with Turkey,^[16] and the international rivalry, always suspicious and inflammatory, which has practically divided up her Asiatic dominions between European States—so that Armenia is to belong to Russia, Syria to France, Arabia to Great Britain, and Anatolia and I know not what besides to Germany! Think of the competition for the carrying out of railways in Asia Minor and the constant friction as to which power has obtained, by fair means or foul, the greatest influence! Or let us remember the recent

disputes as to the proper floating of a loan to China and the bickering about the Five-Power Group and the determination on the part of the last named that no one else should share the spoil! Or shall we transfer our attention to Mexico, where the severe struggle between the two rival Oil Companies—the Cowdray group and the American group—threw into the shade the quarrel between Huerta and Carranza? These are only a few instances taken at random to illustrate the dealings of modern finance. Relatively small harm would be done if financiers were allowed to fight out their own quarrels. Unfortunately, however, diplomacy is brought in to support this side or that: and ambassadors have to speak in severe terms if a Chinese mandarin does not favour our so-called "nationals," or if corrupt Turkish officials are not sufficiently squeezable to suit our "patriotic" purposes. Our armaments are big not merely to protect the nation's honour, but to provide large dividends for speculative concerns held in private hands.

[16] Turkey has now thrown in her lot with Germany.

INVESTING MONEY ABROAD

The truth is, of course, that the honourable name of commerce is now used to cover very different kinds of enterprise. We used to export goods; now we export cash. Wealthy men, not being content with the sound, but not magnificent interest on home securities, take their money abroad and invest in extremely remunerative—though of course speculative—businesses in South Africa, or South America, concerned with rubber, petroleum, or whatnot. Often they subscribe to a foreign loan—in itself a perfectly legitimate and harmless operation, but not harmless or legitimate if one of the conditions of the loan is that the country to which it is lent should purchase its artillery from Essen or Creusot, or its battleships from our yards. For that is precisely one of the ways in which the traffic in munitions of war goes on increasing and itself helps to bring about a conflagration. Financial enterprise is, of course, the life-blood of modern states. But why should our army and navy be brought in to protect financiers? Let them take their own risks, like every other man who pursues a hazardous path for his own private gain. Private investment in foreign securities does not increase the volume of a nation's commerce. The individual may make a colossal fortune, but the nation pays much too dearly for the enrichment of financiers if it allows itself to be dragged into war on account of their "*beaux yeux*."

IDEAL AIMS

It is time to gather together in a summary fashion some of the considerations which have been presented to us in the course of our inquiry. We have gone to war partly for direct, partly for indirect objects. The direct objects are the protection of small nationalities, the destruction of a particularly offensive kind of militarism in Germany, the securing of respect for treaties, and the preservation of our own and European liberty. But there are also indirect objects at which we have to aim, and it is here, of course, that the speculative character of our inquiry is most clearly revealed. Apart from the preservation of the smaller nationalities, Mr. Asquith has himself told us that we should aim at the organisation of a Public Will of Europe, a sort of Collective Conscience which should act as a corrective of national defects and as a support of international morality. Nothing could well be more speculative or vague than this, and we have already seen the kind of difficulties which surround the conception, especially the conflict between a collective European constraint and an eager and energetic patriotism. We must not, however, be deterred by the nebulous character of some of the ideals which are floating through our minds. Ideals are always nebulous, and always resisted by the narrow sort of practical men who suggest that we are metaphysical dreamers unaware of the stern facts of life. Nevertheless, the actual progress of the world depends on the visions of idealists, and when the time comes for the reconstitution of Europe on a new basis we must already have imaginatively thought out some of the ends towards which we are striving. We must also be careful not to narrow our conceptions to the level of immediate needs—that is not the right way of any reform. Our conceptions must be as large and as wide and as philanthropical as imagination can make them; otherwise Europe will miss one of the greatest opportunities that it has ever had to deal with, and we shall incur the bitterest of all disappointments—not to be awake when the dawn appears.

GREATNESS OF STATES

What, then, are some of those nebulous visions which come before the minds of eager idealists? We have got to envisage for ourselves a new idea of what constitutes greatness in a state. Hitherto we have measured national greatness by military strength, because most of the European nations have attained their present position through successful war. So long as we cherish a notion like this, so long shall we be under the heel of a grinding militarism. We have set out as crusaders to destroy Prussian militarism, and in pursuit of this quest we have invoked, as a matter of necessity, the aid of our militarists. But when their work

is done, all peoples who value freedom and independence will refuse to be under the heel of any military party. To be great is not, necessarily, to be strong for war. There are other qualities which ought to enter into the definition, a high standard of civilisation and culture—not culture in the Prussian sense, but that which we understand by the term—the great development and extension of knowledge, room for the discoveries of science, quick susceptibility in the domain of art, the organisation of literature—all these things are part and parcel of greatness, as we want to understand it in the future. It is precisely these things that militarism, as such, cares nothing for. Therefore, if we are out for war against militarism, the whole end and object of our endeavour must be by means of war to make war impossible. Hence it follows, as a matter of course, that the new Europe must take very serious and energetic steps to diminish military establishments and to limit the size of armaments. If once the new masters of Europe understand the immense importance of reducing their military equipment, they have it in their power to relieve nations of one of the greatest burdens which have ever checked the social and economic development of the world. Suggestions have already been made as to the reduction of armaments, and, although such schemes as have been set forward are, in the truest sense, speculative, it does not follow that they, or something like them, cannot hereafter be realised. Nor yet in our conception of greatness must we include another false idea of the past. If a nation is not necessarily great because it is strong for war, neither is it necessarily great because it contains a number of cosmopolitan financiers trying to exploit for their own purposes various undeveloped tracts of the world's surface. These financiers are certainly not patriots because, amongst other things, they take particular care to invest in foreign securities, the interest of home investments not being sufficient for their financial greed. It will not be the least of the many benefits which may accrue to us after the end of this disastrous war if a vulgar and crude materialism, based on the notion of wealth, is dethroned from its present sovereignty over men's minds. The more we study the courses of this world's history, the more certainly do we discover that a love of money is the root of most of the evils which beset humanity.

APOSTLES OF THE NEW ERA

As we survey the possible reforms which are to set up a new and better Europe on the ruin of the old, we naturally ask ourselves with some disquietude: Who are the personalities, and what are the forces required for so tremendous a change? Who are sufficient for these things? Are kings likely to be saviours of

society? Past experience hardly favours this suggestion. Will soldiers and great generals help us? Here, again, we may be pardoned for a very natural suspicion. Every one knows that a benevolent despotism has much to recommend it. But, unfortunately, the benevolent are not usually despotic, nor are despots as a rule benevolent. Can diplomatists help us? Not so far as they continue to mumble the watchwords of their ancient mystery: they will have to learn a new set of formulæ, or more likely, perhaps, they will find that ordinary people, who have seen to what a pass diplomacy has brought us, may work out for themselves some better system. Clearly the tasks of the future will depend on the co-operation of intelligent, far-sighted philanthropic reformers in the various states of the world, who will recognise that at critical periods of the world's history they must set to work with a new ardour to think out problems from the very beginning. We want fresh and intelligent minds, specially of the younger idealists, keen, ardent, and energetic souls, touched with the sacred fire, erecting the fabric of humanity on a novel basis. Democracy will have a great deal to do in the new Europe. It, too, had better refurbish its old watchwords. It has got to set itself patiently to the business of preventing future wars by the extension of its sympathies and its clear discernment of all that imperils its future development and progress. Above all, it has got to solve that most difficult problem of creating a Public Will and a Common Conscience in Europe, a conscience sensitive to the demands of a higher ethics, and a will to enforce its decrees against obstructives and recalcitrants. We do not see our way clear as yet, it is true. But we have a dim idea of the far-seen peaks towards which we must lift up our eyes. It is the greatest enterprise which humanity has ever been called upon to face, and, however difficult, it is also the most splendid.

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