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ESSAYS IN WAR-TIME:
FURTHER STUDIES IN
THE TASK OF SOCIAL
HYGIENE

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Содержание

I	4
II	12
III	24
IV	38
V	48
VI	59
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	66

Havelock Ellis

Essays in War-Time: Further Studies in the Task of Social Hygiene

I INTRODUCTION

From the point of view of literature, the Great War of to-day has brought us into a new and closer sympathy with the England of the past. Dr. Woods and Mr. Baltzly in their recent careful study of European Warfare, *Is War Diminishing?* come to the conclusion that England during the period of her great activity in the world has been "fighting about half the time." We had begun to look on war as belonging to the past and insensibly fallen into the view of Buckle that in England "a love of war is, as a national taste, utterly extinct." Now we have awakened to realise that we belong to a people who have been "fighting about half the time."

Thus it is, for instance, that we witness a revival of interest in Wordsworth, not that Wordsworth, the high-priest of Nature among the solitary Lakes, whom we have never forsaken, but the Wordsworth who sang exultantly of Carnage as God's Daughter.

To-day we turn to the war-like Wordsworth, the stern patriot hurling defiance at the enemies who threatened our island fortress, as the authentic voice of England.

But this new sense of community with the past comes to us again and again on every hand when to-day we look back to the records of the past. I chance to take down the *Epistles* of Erasmus, and turn to the letters which the great Humanist of Rotterdam wrote from Cambridge and London four hundred years ago when young Henry VIII had just suddenly (in 1514) plunged into war. One reads them to-day with vivid interest, for here in the supple and sensitive brain of the old scholar we see mirrored precisely the same thoughts and the same problems which exercise the more scholarly brains of to-day. Erasmus, as his Pan-German friends liked to remind him, was a sort of German, but he was, nevertheless, what we should now call a Pacifist. He can see nothing good in war and he eloquently sets forth what he regards as its evils. It is interesting to observe, how, even in its small details as well as in its great calamities, war brought precisely the same experiences four centuries ago as to-day. Prices are rising every day, Erasmus declares, taxation has become so heavy that no one can afford to be liberal, imports are hampered and wine is scarce, it is difficult even to get one's foreign letters. In fact the preparations of war are rapidly changing "the genius of the Island." Thereupon Erasmus launches into more general considerations on war. Even animals, he points out, do not fight, save rarely, and then with only those of other species, and,

moreover, not, like us, "with machines upon which we expend the ingenuity of devils." In every war also it is the non-combatants who suffer most, the people build cities and the folly of their rulers destroys them, the most righteous, the most victorious war brings more evil than good, and even when a real issue is in dispute, it could better have been settled by arbitration. The moral contagion of a war, moreover, lasts long after the war is over, and Erasmus proceeds to express himself freely on the crimes of fighters and fighting.

Erasmus was a cosmopolitan scholar who habitually dwelt in the world of the spirit and in no wise expressed the general feelings either of his own time or ours. It is interesting to turn to a very ordinary, it may be typical, Englishman who lived a century later, again in a period of war and also of quite ordinary and but moderately glorious war. John Rous, a Cambridge graduate of old Suffolk family, was in 1623 appointed incumbent of Santon Downham, then called a town, though now it has dwindled away almost to nothing. Here, or rather at Weeting or at Brandon where he lived, Rous began two years later, on the accession of Charles I, a private diary which was printed by the Camden Society sixty years ago, and has probably remained unread ever since, unless, as in the present case, by some person of antiquarian tastes interested in this remote corner of East Anglia. But to-day one detects a new streak of interest in this ancient series of miscellaneous entries where we find that war brought to the front the very same problems which confront us to-day.

Santon Downham lies in a remote and desolate and salubrious region, not without its attractions to-day, nor, for all its isolation, devoid of ancient and modern associations. For here in Weeting parish we have the great prehistoric centre of the flint implement industry, still lingering on at Brandon after untold ages, a shrine of the archaeologist. And here also, or at all events near by, at Lackenheath, doubtless a shrine also for all men in khaki, the villager proudly points out the unpretentious little house which is the ancestral home of the Kitcheners, who lie in orderly rank in the churchyard beside the old church notable for its rarely quaint mediaeval carvings.

Rous was an ordinary respectable type of country parson, a solid Englishman, cautious and temperate in his opinions, even in the privacy of his diary, something of a country gentleman as well as a scholar, and interested in everything that went on, in the season's crops, in the rising price of produce, in the execution of a youth for burglary or the burning of a woman for murdering her husband. He frequently refers to the outbreak of plague in various parts of the country, and notes, for instance, that "Cambridge is wondrously reformed since the plague there; scholars frequent not the streets and taverns as before; but," he adds later on better information, "do worse." And at the same time he is full of interest in the small incidents of Nature around him, and notes, for instance, how a crow had built a nest and laid an egg in the poke of the topsail of the windmill.

But Rous's Diary is not concerned only with matters of local

interest. All the rumours of the world reached the Vicar of Downham and were by him faithfully set down from day to day. Europe was seething with war; these were the days of that famous Thirty Years' War of which we have so often heard of late, and from time to time England was joining in the general disturbance, whether in France, Spain, or the Netherlands. As usual the English attack was mostly from the basis of the Fleet, and never before, Rous notes, had England possessed so great and powerful a fleet. Soon after the Diary begins the English Expedition to Rochelle took place, and a version of its history is here embodied. Rous was kept in touch with the outside world not only by the proclamations constantly set up at Thetford on the corner post of the Bell Inn—still the centre of that ancient town—but by as numerous and as varied a crop of reports as we find floating among us to-day, often indeed of very similar character. The vicar sets them down, not committing himself to belief but with a patient confidence that "time may tell us what we may safely think." In the meanwhile measures with which we are familiar to-day were actively in progress: recruits or "voluntaries" were being "gathered up by the drum," many soldiers, mostly Irish, were billeted, sometimes not without friction, all over East Anglia, the coasts were being fortified, the price of corn was rising, and even the problem of international exchange is discussed with precise data by Rous.

On one occasion, in 1627, Rous reports a discussion concerning the Rochelle Expedition which exactly counterparts

our experience to-day. He was at Brandon with two gentlemen named Paine and Howlet, when the former began to criticise the management of the expedition, disputing the possibility of its success and then "fell in general to speak distrustfully of the voyage, and then of our war with France, which he would make our King the cause of"; and so went on to topics of old popular discontent, of the great cost, the hazard to ships, etc. Rous, like a good patriot, thought it "foul for any man to lay the blame upon our own King and State. I told them I would always speak the best of what our King and State did, and think the best too, till I had good grounds." And then in his Diary he comments that he saw hereby, what he had often seen before, that men be disposed to speak the worst of State business, as though it were always being mismanaged, and so nourish a discontent which is itself a worse mischief and can only give joy to false hearts. That is a reflection which comes home to us to-day when we find the descendants of Mr. Paine following so vigorously the example which the parson of Downham reprobated.

That little incident at Brandon, however, and indeed the whole picture of the ordinary English life of his time which Rous sets forth, suggest a wider reflection. We realise what has always been the English temper. It is the temper of a vigorous, independent, opinionated, free-spoken yet sometimes suspicious people among whom every individual feels in himself the impulse to rule. It is also the temper of a people always prepared in the face of danger to subordinate these native

impulses. The one tendency and the other opposing tendency are alike based on the history and traditions of the race. Fifteen centuries ago, Sidonius Apollinaris gazed inquisitively at the Saxon barbarians, most ferocious of all foes, who came to Aquitania, with faces daubed with blue paint and hair pushed back over their foreheads; shy and awkward among the courtiers, free and turbulent when back again in their ships, they were all teaching and learning at once, and counted even shipwreck as good training. One would think, the Bishop remarks, that each oarsman was himself the arch-pirate.¹ These were the men who so largely went to the making of the "Anglo-Saxon," and Sidonius might doubtless still utter the same comment could he observe their descendants in England to-day. Every Englishman believes in his heart, however modestly he may conceal the conviction, that he could himself organise as large an army as Kitchener and organise it better. But there is not only the instinct to order and to teach but also to learn and to obey. For every Englishman is the descendant of sailors, and even this island of Britain seemed to men of old like a great ship anchored in the sea. Nothing can overcome the impulse of the sailor to stand by his post at the moment of danger, and to play his sailorly part, whatever his individual convictions may be concerning the expedition to Rochelle or the expedition to the Dardanelles, or even concerning his right to play no part at all. That has ever been the Englishman's impulse in the hour of peril of his island

¹ O'Dalton, *Letters of Sidonius*, Vol. II., p. 149.

Ship of State, as to-day we see illustrated in an almost miraculous degree. It is the saving grace of an obstinately independent and indisciplinable people.

Yet let us not forget that this same English temper is shown not only in warfare, not only in adventure in the physical world, but also in the greater, and—may we not say?—equally arduous tasks of peace. For to build up is even yet more difficult than to pull down, to create new life a still more difficult and complex task than to destroy it. Our English habits of restless adventure, of latent revolt subdued to the ends of law and order, of uncontrollable freedom and independence, are even more fruitful here, in the organisation of the progressive tasks of life, than they are in the organisation of the tasks of war.

That is the spirit in which these essays have been written by an Englishman of English stock in the narrowest sense, whose national and family instincts of independence and warfare have been transmuted into a preoccupation with the more constructive tasks of life. It is a spirit which may give to these little essays—mostly produced while war was in progress—a certain unity which was not designed when I wrote them.

II

EVOLUTION AND WAR

The Great War of to-day has rendered acute the question of the place of warfare in Nature and the effect of war on the human race. These have long been debated problems concerning which there is no complete agreement. But until we make up our minds on these fundamental questions we can gain no solid ground from which to face serenely, or at all events firmly, the crisis through which mankind is now passing.

It has been widely held that war has played an essential part in the evolutionary struggle for survival among our animal ancestors, that war has been a factor of the first importance in the social development of primitive human races, and that war always will be an essential method of preserving the human virtues even in the highest civilisation. It must be observed that these are three separate and quite distinct propositions. It is possible to accept one, or even two, of them without affirming them all. If we wish to clear our minds of confusion on this matter, so vital to our civilisation, we must face each of the questions by itself.

It has sometimes been maintained—never more energetically than to-day, especially among the nations which most eagerly entered the present conflict—that war is a biological necessity.

War, we are told, is a manifestation of the "Struggle for Life"; it is the inevitable application to mankind of the Darwinian "law" of natural selection. There are, however, two capital and final objections to this view. On the one hand it is not supported by anything that Darwin himself said, and on the other hand it is denied as a fact by those authorities on natural history who speak with most knowledge. That Darwin regarded war as an insignificant or even non-existent part of natural selection must be clear to all who have read his books. He was careful to state that he used the term "struggle for existence" in a "metaphorical sense," and the dominant factors in the struggle for existence, as Darwin understood it, were natural suitability to the organic and inorganic environment and the capacity for adaptation to circumstances; one species flourishes while a less efficient species living alongside it languishes, yet they may never come in actual contact and there is nothing in the least approaching human warfare. The conditions much more resemble what, among ourselves, we may see in business, where the better equipped species, that is to say, the big capitalist, flourishes, while the less well equipped species, the small capitalist, succumbs. Mr. Chalmers Mitchell, Secretary of the London Zoological Society and familiar with the habits of animals, has lately emphasised the contention of Darwin and shown that even the most widely current notions of the extermination of one species by another have no foundation in

fact.² Thus the thylacine or Tasmanian wolf, the fiercest of the marsupials, has been entirely driven out of Australia and its place taken by a later and higher animal, of the dog family, the dingo. But there is not the slightest reason to believe that the dingo ever made war on the thylacine. If there was any struggle at all it was a common struggle against the environment, in which the dingo, by superior intelligence in finding food and rearing young, and by greater resisting power to climate and disease, was able to succeed where the thylacine failed. Again, the supposed war of extermination waged in Europe by the brown rat against the black rat is (as Chalmers Mitchell points out) pure fiction. In England, where this war is said to have been ferociously waged, both rats exist and flourish, and under conditions which do not usually even bring them into competition with each other. The black rat (*Mus rattus*) is smaller than the other, but more active and a better climber; he is the rat of the barn and the granary. The brown or Norway rat (*Mus decumanus*) is larger but less active, a burrower rather than a climber, and though both rats are omnivorous the brown rat is more especially a scavenger; he is the rat of sewers and drains. The black rat came to Northern Europe first—both of them probably being Asiatic animals—and has no doubt been to some extent replaced by the brown rat, who has been specially favoured by the modern extension of drains and sewers, which exactly suit his peculiar tastes. But each flourishes in his own environment; neither of them is adapted to

² P. Chalmers Mitchell, *Evolution and the War*, 1915.

the other's environment; there is no war between them, nor any occasion for war, for they do not really come into competition with each other. The cockroaches, or "blackbeetles," furnish another example. These pests are comparatively modern and their great migrations in recent times are largely due to the activity of human commerce. There are three main species of cockroach—the Oriental, the American, and the German (or Croton bug)—and they flourish near together in many countries, though not with equal success, for while in England the Oriental is most prosperous, in America the German cockroach is most abundant. They are seldom found in actual association, each is best adapted to a particular environment; there is no reason to suppose that they fight. It is so throughout Nature. Animals may utilise other species as food; but that is true of even, the most peaceable and civilised human races. The struggle for existence means that one species is more favoured by circumstances than another species; there is not the remotest resemblance anywhere to human warfare.

We may pass on to the second claim for war: that it is an essential factor in the social development of primitive human races. War has no part, though competition has a very large part, in what we call "Nature." But, when we come to primitive man the conditions are somewhat changed; men, unlike the lower animals, are able to form large communities—"tribes," as we call them—with common interests, and two primitive tribes can come into a competition which is acute to the point of warfare

because being of the same, and not of two different, species, the conditions of life which they both demand are identical; they are impelled to fight for the possession of these conditions as animals of different species are not impelled to fight. We are often told that animals are more "moral" than human beings, and it is largely to the fact that, except under the immediate stress of hunger, they are better able to live in peace with each other, that the greater morality of animals is due. Yet, we have to recognise, this mischievous tendency to warfare, so often (though by no means always, and in the earliest stages probably never) found in primitive man, was bound up with his superior and progressive qualities. His intelligence, his quickness of sense, his muscular skill, his courage and endurance, his aptitude for discipline and for organisation—all of them qualities on which civilisation is based—were fostered by warfare. With warfare in primitive life was closely associated the still more fundamental art, older than humanity, of dancing. The dance was the training school for all the activities which man developed in a supreme degree—for love, for religion, for art, for organised labour—and in primitive days dancing was the chief military school, a perpetual exercise in mimic warfare during times of peace, and in times of war the most powerful stimulus to military prowess by the excitement it aroused. Not only was war a formative and developmental social force of the first importance among early men, but it was comparatively free from the disadvantages which warfare later on developed; the hardness of their life and the

obtuseness of their sensibility reduced to a minimum the bad results of wounds and shocks, while their warfare, being free from the awful devices due to the devilry of modern man, was comparatively innocuous; even if very destructive, its destruction was necessarily limited by the fact that those accumulated treasures of the past which largely make civilisation had not come into existence. We may admire the beautiful humanity, the finely developed social organisation, and the skill in the arts attained by such people as the Eskimo tribes, which know nothing of war, but we must also recognise that warfare among primitive peoples has often been a progressive and developmental force of the first importance, creating virtues apt for use in quite other than military spheres.³

The case is altered when we turn from savagery to civilisation. The new and more complex social order while, on the one hand, it presents substitutes for war in so far as war is a source of virtues, on the other hand, renders war a much more dangerous performance both to the individual and to the community, becoming indeed, progressively more dangerous to both, until it reaches such a climax of world-wide injury as we witness to-day. The claim made in primitive societies that warfare is necessary to the maintenance of virility and courage, a claim so fully admitted that only the youth furnished with trophies of heads or scalps can hope to become an accepted lover, is out of date in

³ On the advantages of war in primitive society, see W. MacDougal's *Social Psychology*, Ch. XI.

civilisation. For under civilised conditions there are hundreds of avocations which furnish exactly the same conditions as warfare for the cultivation of all the manly virtues of enterprise and courage and endurance, physical or moral. Not only are these new avocations equally potent for the cultivation of virility, but far more useful for the social ends of civilisation. For these ends warfare is altogether less adapted than it is for the social ends of savagery. It is much less congenial to the tastes and aptitudes of the individual, while at the same time it is incomparably more injurious to Society. In savagery little is risked by war, for the precious heirlooms of humanity have not yet been created, and war can destroy nothing which cannot easily be remade by the people who first made it. But civilisation possesses—and in that possession, indeed, civilisation largely consists—the precious traditions of past ages that can never live again, embodied in part in exquisite productions of varied beauty which are a continual joy and inspiration to mankind, and in part in slowly evolved habits and laws of social amenity, and reasonable freedom, and mutual independence, which under civilised conditions war, whether between nations or between classes, tends to destroy, and in so destroying to inflict a permanent loss in the material heirlooms of Mankind and a serious injury to the spiritual traditions of civilisation.

It is possible to go further and to declare that warfare is in contradiction with the whole of the influences which build up and organise civilisation. A tribe is a small but very closely knit

unity, so closely knit that the individual is entirely subordinated to the whole and has little independence of action or even of thought. The tendency of civilisation is to create webs of social organisation which grow ever larger, but at the same time looser, so that the individual gains a continually growing freedom and independence. The tribe becomes merged in the nation, and beyond even this great unit, bonds of international relationship are progressively formed. War, which at first favoured this movement, becomes an ever greater impediment to its ultimate progress. This is recognised at the threshold of civilisation, and the large community, or nation, abolishes warfare between the units of which it is composed by the device of establishing law courts to dispense impartial justice. As soon as civilised society realised that it was necessary to forbid two persons to settle their disputes by individual fighting, or by initiating blood-feuds, or by arming friends and followers, setting up courts of justice for the peaceable settlement of disputes, the death-blow of all war was struck. For all the arguments that proved strong enough to condemn war between two individuals are infinitely stronger to condemn war between the populations of two-thirds of the earth. But, while it was a comparatively easy task for a State to abolish war and impose peace within its own boundaries—and nearly all over Europe the process was begun and for the most part ended centuries ago—it is a vastly more difficult task to abolish war and impose peace between powerful States. Yet at the point at which we stand to-day civilisation can make no further progress

until this is done. Solitary thinkers, like the Abbé de Saint-Pierre, and even great practical statesmen like Sully and Penn, have from time to time realised this fact during the past four centuries, and attempted to convert it into actuality. But it cannot be done until the great democracies are won over to a conviction of its inevitable necessity. We need an international organisation of law courts which shall dispense justice as between nation and nation in the same way as the existing law courts of all civilised countries now dispense justice as between man and man; and we further need, behind this international organisation of justice, an international organisation of police strong enough to carry out the decisions of these courts, not to exercise tyranny but to ensure to every nation, even the smallest, that measure of reasonable freedom and security to go about its own business which every civilised nation now, in some small degree at all events, already ensures to the humblest of its individual citizens. The task may take centuries to complete, but there is no more urgent task before mankind to-day.⁴

These considerations are very elementary, and a year or two ago they might have seemed to many—though not to all of us—merely academic, chiefly suitable to put before schoolchildren. But now they have ceased to be merely academic; they have indeed acquired a vital actuality almost agonisingly intense. For

⁴ It is doubtless a task beset by difficulties, some of which are set forth, in no hostile spirit, by Lord Cromer, "Thinking Internationally," *Nineteenth Century*, July, 1916; but the statement of most of these difficulties is enough to suggest the solution.

one realises to-day that the considerations here set forth, widely accepted as they are, yet are not generally accepted by the rulers and leaders of the greatest and foremost nations of the world. Thus Germany, in its present Prussianised state, through the mouths as well as through the actions of those rulers and leaders, denies most of the conclusions here set forth. In Germany it is a commonplace to declare that war is the law of Nature, that the "struggle for existence" means the arbitration of warfare, that it is by war that all evolution proceeds, that not only in savagery but in the highest civilisation the same rule holds good, that human war is the source of all virtues, the divinely inspired method of regenerating and purifying mankind, and every war may properly be regarded as a holy war. These beliefs have been implicit in the Prussian spirit ever since the Goths and Vandals issued from the forests of the Vistula in the dawn of European history. But they have now become a sort of religious dogma, preached from pulpits, taught in Universities, acted out by statesmen. From this Prussian point of view, whether right or wrong, civilisation, as it has hitherto been understood in the world, is of little consequence compared to German militaristic Kultur. Therefore the German quite logically regards the Russians as barbarians, and the French as decadents, and the English as contemptibly negligible, although the Russians, however yet dominated by a military bureaucracy (moulded by Teutonic influences, as some maliciously point out), are the most humane people of Europe, and the French the natural leaders of

civilisation as commonly understood, and the English, however much they may rely on amateurish methods of organisation by emergency, have scattered the seeds of progress over a large part of the earth's surface. It is equally logical that the Germans should feel peculiar admiration and sympathy for the Turks, and find in Turkey, a State founded on military ideals, their own ally in the present war. That war, from our present point of view, is a war of States which use military methods for special ends (often indeed ends that have been thoroughly evil) against a State which still cherishes the primitive ideal of warfare as an end in itself. And while such a State must enjoy immense advantages in the struggle, it is difficult, when we survey the whole course of human development, to believe that there can be any doubt about the final issue.

For one who writes as an Englishman, it may be necessary to point out clearly that that final issue by no means involves the destruction, or even the subjugation, of Germany. It is indeed an almost pathetic fact that Germany, which idealises warfare, stands to gain more than any country by an assured rule of international peace which would save her from warfare. Placed in a position which renders militaristic organisation indispensable, the Germans are more highly endowed than almost any people with the high qualities of intelligence, of receptiveness, of adaptability, of thoroughness, of capacity for organisation, which ensure success in the arts and sciences of peace, in the whole work of civilisation. This is amply demonstrated by the immense

progress and the manifold achievements of Germany during forty years of peace, which have enabled her to establish a prosperity and a good name in the world which are now both in peril. Germany must be built up again, and the interests of civilisation itself, which Germany has trampled under foot, demand that Germany shall be built up again, under conditions, let us hope, which will render her old ideals useless and out of date. We shall then be able to assert as the mere truisms they are, and not as a defiance flung in the face of one of the world's greatest nations, the elementary propositions I have here set forth. War is not a permanent factor of national evolution, but for the most part has no place in Nature at all; it has played a part in the early development of primitive human society, but, as savagery passes into civilisation, its beneficial effects are lost, and, on the highest stages of human progress, mankind once more tends to be enfolded, this time consciously and deliberately, in the general harmony of Nature.

III

WAR AND EUGENICS

In dealing with war it is not enough to discuss the place of warfare in Nature or its effects on primitive peoples. Even if we decide that the general tendency of civilisation is unfavourable to war we have scarcely settled matters. It is necessary to push the question further home. Primitive warfare among savages, when it fails to kill, may be a stimulating and invigorating exercise, simply a more dangerous form of dancing. But civilised warfare is a different kind of thing, to a very limited extent depending on, or encouraging, the prowess of the individual fighting men, and to be judged by other standards. *What precisely is the measurable effect of war, if any, on the civilised human breed?* If we want to know what to do about war in the future, that is the question we have to answer.

"Wars are not paid for in war-time," said Benjamin Franklin, "the bill comes later." Franklin, who was a pioneer in many so fields, seems to have been a pioneer in eugenics also by arguing that a standing army diminishes the size and breed of the human species. He had, however, no definite facts wherewith to demonstrate conclusively that proposition. Even to-day, it cannot be said that there is complete agreement among biologists as to the effect of war on the race. Thus

we find a distinguished American zoologist, Chancellor Starr Jordan, constantly proclaiming that the effect of war in reversing selection is a great overshadowing truth of history; warlike nations, he declares, become effeminate, while peaceful nations generate a fiercely militant spirit.⁵ Another distinguished American scientist, Professor Ripley, in his great work, *The Races of Europe*, likewise concludes that "standing armies tend to overload succeeding generations with inferior types of men." A cautious English biologist, Professor J. Arthur Thomson, is equally decided in this opinion, and in his recent Galton Lecture⁶ sets forth the view that the influence of war on the race, both directly and indirectly, is injurious; he admits that there may be beneficial as well as deteriorative influences, but the former merely affect the moral atmosphere, not the hereditary germ plasm; biologically, war means wastage and a reversal of rational selection, since it prunes off a disproportionately large number of those whom the race can least afford to lose. On the other hand, another biologist, Dr. Chalmers Mitchell, equally opposed to war, cannot feel certain that the total effect of even a great modern war is to deteriorate the stock, while in Germany, as we know, it is the generally current opinion, scientific

⁵ D.S. Jordan, *War and the Breed*, 1915; also articles on "War and Manhood" in the *Eugenics Review*, July, 1910, and on "The Eugenics of War" in the same Review for Oct., 1913.

⁶ J. Arthur Thomson, "Eugenics and War," *Eugenics Review*, April, 1915. Major Leonard Darwin (*Journal Royal Statistical Society*, March, 1916) sets forth a similar view.

and unscientific, equally among philosophers, militarists, and journalists, that not only is war "a biological necessity," but that it is peace, and not war, which effeminates and degenerates a nation. In Germany, indeed, this doctrine is so generally accepted that it is not regarded as a scientific thesis to be proved, but as a religious dogma to be preached. It is evident that we cannot decide this question, so vital to human progress, except on a foundation of cold and hard fact.

Whatever may be the result of war on the quality of the breed, there can be little doubt of its temporary effect on the quantity. The reaction after war may create a stimulating influence on the birth-rate, leading to a more or less satisfactory recovery, but it seems clear that the drafting away of a large proportion of the manhood of a nation necessarily diminishes births. At the present time English Schools are sending out an unusually small number of pupils into life, and this is directly due to the South-African War fifteen years ago. Still more obvious is the direct effect of war, apart from diminishing the number of births, in actually pouring out the blood of the young manhood of the race. In the very earliest stage of primitive humanity it seems probable that man was as untouched by warfare as his animal ancestors, and it is satisfactory to think that war had no part in the first birth of man into the world. Even the long Early Stone Age has left no distinguishable sign of the existence of warfare.⁷ It was not until the transition to the Late Stone Age,

⁷ It is true that in the Gourdon cavern, in the Pyrenees, representing a very late and

the age of polished flint implements, that we discern evidences of the homicidal attacks of man on man. Even then we are concerned more with quarrels than with battles, for one of the earliest cases of wounding known in human records, is that of a pregnant young woman found in the Cro-magnon Cave whose skull had been cut open by a flint several weeks before death, an indication that she had been cared for and nursed. But, again at the beginning of the New Stone Age, in the caverns of the Beaumes-Chaudes people, who still used implements of the Old Stone type, we find skulls in which are weapons of the New Stone type. Evidently these people had come in contact with a more "civilised" race which had discovered war. Yet the old pacific race still lingered on, as in the Belgian people of the Furfooz type who occupied themselves mainly with hunting and fishing, and have their modern representatives, if not their actual descendants, in the peaceful Lapps and Eskimo.⁸

It was thus at a late stage of human history, though still so primitive as to be prehistoric, that organised warfare developed. At the dawn of history war abounded. The earliest literature of the Aryans—whether Greeks, Germans, or Hindus—is nothing but a record of systematic massacres, and the early history of the Hebrews, leaders in the world's religion and morality, is

highly developed stage of Magdalenian culture, there are indications that human brains were eaten (Zaborowski, *L'Homme Préhistorique*, p. 86). It is surmised that they were the brains of enemies killed in battle, but this remains a surmise.

⁸ Zaborowski, *L'Homme Préhistorique*, pp. 121, 139; Lapouge, *Les Sélections Sociales*, p. 209.

complacently bloodthirsty. Lapouge considers that in modern times, though wars are fewer in number, the total number of victims is still about the same, so that the stream of bloodshed throughout the ages remains unaffected. He attempted to estimate the victims of war for each civilised country during half a century, and found that the total amounted to nine and a half millions, while, by including the Napoleonic and other wars of the beginning of the nineteenth century, he considered that that total would be doubled. Put in another form, Lapouge says, the wars of a century spill 120,000,000 gallons of blood, enough to fill three million forty-gallon casks, or to create a perpetual fountain sending up a jet of 150 gallons per hour, a fountain which has been flowing unceasingly ever since the dawn of history. It is to be noted, also, that those slain on the battlefield by no means represent the total victims of a war, but only about half of them; more than half of those who, from one cause or another, perished in the Franco-Prussian war, it is said, were not belligerents. Lapouge wrote some ten years ago and considered that the victims of war, though remaining about absolutely the same in number through the ages, were becoming relatively fewer. The Great War of to-day would perhaps have disturbed his calculations, unless we may assume that it will be followed by a tremendous reaction against war. For when the war had lasted only nine months, it was estimated that if it should continue at the present rate (and as a matter of fact its scale has been much enlarged) for another twelve months, the

total loss to Europe in lives destroyed or maimed would be ten millions, about equal to five-sixths of the whole young manhood of the German Empire, and nearly the same number of victims as Lapouge reckoned as the normal war toll of a whole half-century of European "civilisation." It is scarcely necessary to add that all these bald estimates of the number of direct victims to war give no clue to the moral and material damage—apart from all question of injury to the race—done by the sudden or slow destruction of so large a proportion of the young manhood of the world, the ever widening circles of anguish and misery and destitution which every fatal bullet imposes on humanity, for it is probable that for every ten million soldiers who fall on the field, fifty million other persons at home are plunged into grief or poverty, or some form of life-diminishing trouble.

The foregoing considerations have not, however, brought us strictly within the field of eugenics. They indicate the great extent to which war affects the human breed, but they do not show that war affects the quality of the breed, and until that is shown the eugenist remains undisturbed.

There are various circumstances which, at the outset, and even in the absence of experimental verification, make it difficult, or impossible, that even the bare mortality of war (for the eugenical bearings of war are not confined to its mortality) should leave the eugenist indifferent. For war never hits men at random. It only hits a carefully selected percentage of "fit" men. It tends, in other words, to strike out, temporarily, or in

a fatal event, permanently, from the class of fathers, precisely that percentage of the population which the eugenist wishes to see in that class. This is equally the case in countries with some form of compulsory service, and in countries which rely on a voluntary military system. For, however an army is recruited, it is only those men reaching a fairly high standard of fitness who are accepted, and these, even in times of peace are hampered in the task of carrying on the race, which the less fit and the unfit are free to do at their own good pleasure. Nearly all the ways in which war and armies disturb the normal course of affairs seem likely to interfere with eugenical breeding, and none to favour it. Thus at one time, in the Napoleonic wars, the French age of conscription fell to eighteen, while marriage was a cause of exemption, with the result of a vast increase of hasty and ill-advised marriages among boys, certainly injurious to the race. Armies, again, are highly favourable to the spread of racial poisons, especially of syphilis, the most dangerous of all, and this cannot fail to be, in a marked manner, dysgenic rather than eugenic.

The Napoleonic wars furnished the first opportunity of testing the truth of Franklin's assertion concerning the disastrous effect of armies on the race, by the collection of actual and precise data. But the significance of the data proved unexpectedly difficult to unravel, and most writers on the subject have been largely occupied in correcting the mistakes of their predecessors. Villermé in 1829 remarked that the long series of French wars up to 1815 must probably reduce the height of the French people,

though he was unable to prove that this was so. Dufau in 1840 was in a better position to judge, and he pointed out in his *Traité de Statistique* that, comparing 1816 and 1835, the number of young men exempted from the army had doubled in the interval, even though the regulation height had been lowered. This result, however, he held, was not so alarming as it might appear, and probably only temporary, for it was seemingly due to the fact that, in 1806 and the following years, the male population was called to arms in masses, even youths being accepted, so that a vast number of precocious marriages of often defective men took place. The result would only be terrible, Dufau believed, if prolonged; his results, however, were not altogether reliable, for he failed to note the proportion of men exempted to those examined. The question was investigated more thoroughly by Tschuriloff in 1876.⁹ He came to the conclusion that the Napoleonic wars had no great influence on stature, since the regulation height was lowered in 1805, and abolished altogether for healthy men in 1811, and any defect of height in the next generation is speedily repaired. Tschuriloff agreed, however, that, though the influence of war in diminishing the height of the race is unimportant, the influence of war in increasing physical defects and infirmities in subsequent generations is a very different matter. He found that the physical deterioration of war manifested itself chiefly in the children born eight years afterwards, and therefore in the recruits twenty-eight years after

⁹ *Revue d'Anthropologie*, 1876, pp. 608 and 655.

the war. He regarded it as an undoubted fact that the French army of half a million men in 1809 increased by 3 per cent. the proportion of hereditarily infirm persons. He found, moreover, that the new-born of 1814, that is to say the military class of 1834, showed that infirmities had risen from 30 per cent. to 45.8 per cent., an increase of 50 per cent. Nor is the *status quo* entirely brought back later on, for the bad heredity of the increased number of defectives tends to be still further propagated, even though in an attenuated form. As a matter of fact, Tschuriloff found that the proportion of exemptions from the army for infirmity increased enormously from 26 per cent. in 1816-17, to 38 per cent. in 1826-27, declining later to 34 per cent. in 1860-64, though he is careful to point out that this result must not be entirely ascribed to the reversed selection of wars. There could, however, be no doubt that most kinds of infirmities became more frequent as a result of military selection. Lapouge's more recent investigation into the results of the Franco-Prussian war of 1870 were of similar character; when examining the recruits of 1892-93 he found that these "children of the war" were inferior to those born earlier, and that there was probably an undue proportion of defective individuals among their fathers. It cannot be said that these investigations finally demonstrate the evil results of war on the race. The subject is complicated, and some authorities, like Collignon in France and Ammon in Germany,—both, it may be well to note, army surgeons,—have sought to smooth down and explain away the dysgenic effects

of war. But, on the whole, the facts seem to support those probabilities which the insight of Franklin first clearly set forth.

It is interesting in the light of these considerations on the eugenic bearings of warfare to turn for a moment to those who proclaim the high moral virtues of war as a national regenerator.

It is chiefly in Germany that, for more than a century past, this doctrine has been preached.¹⁰ "War invigorates humanity," said Hegel, "as storms preserve the sea from putrescence." "War is an integral part of God's Universe," said Moltke, "developing man's noblest attributes." "The condemnation of war," said Treitschke, "is not only absurd, it is immoral."¹¹ These brave sayings scarcely bear calm and searching examination at the best, but, putting aside all loftier appeals to humanity or civilisation, a "national

¹⁰ In France it is almost unknown except as preached by the Syndicalist philosopher, Georges Sorel, who insists, quite in the German manner, on the purifying and invigorating effects of "a great foreign war," although, very unlike the German professors, he holds that "a great extension of proletarian violence" will do just as well as war.

¹¹ The recent expressions of the same doctrine in Germany are far too numerous to deal with. I may, however, refer to Professor Fritz Wilke's *Ist der Krieg sittlich berechtigt?* (1915) as being the work of a theologian and Biblical scholar of Vienna who has written a book on the politics of Isaiah and discussed the germs of historical veridity in the history of Abraham. "A world-history without war," he declares, "would be a history of materialism and degeneration"; and again: "The solution is not 'Weapons down!' but 'Weapons up!' With pure hands and calm conscience let us grasp the sword." He dwells, of course, on the supposed purifying and ennobling effects of war and insists that, in spite of its horrors, and when necessary, "War is a divine institution and a work of love." The leaders of the world's peace movement are, thank God! not Germans, but merely English and Americans, and he sums up, with Moltke, that war is a part of the moral order of the world.

regenerator" which we have good reason to suppose enfeebles and deteriorates the race, cannot plausibly be put before us as a method of ennobling humanity or as a part of God's Universe, only to be condemned on pain of seeing a company of German professors pointing the finger to our appalling "Immorality," on their drill-sergeant's word of command.

At the same time, this glorification of the regenerating powers of war quite overlooks the consideration that the fighting spirit tends to destroy itself, so that the best way to breed good fighters is not to preach war, but to cultivate peace, which is what the Germans have, in actual practice, done for over forty years past. France, the most military, and the most gloriously military, nation of the Napoleonic era, is now the leader in anti-militarism, altogether indifferent to the lure of military glory, though behind no nation in courage or skill. Belgium has not fought for generations, and had only just introduced compulsory military service, yet the Belgians, from their King and their Cardinal-Archbishop downwards, threw themselves into the war with a high spirit scarcely paralleled in the world's history, and Belgian commercial travellers developed a rare military skill and audacity. All the world admires the bravery with which the Germans face death and the elaborate detail with which they organise battle, yet for all their perpetual glorification of war there is no sign that they fight with any more spirit than their enemies. Even if we were to feel ourselves bound to accept war as "an integral part of God's Universe," we need not trouble

ourselves to glorify war, for, when once war presents itself as a terrible necessity, even the most peaceable of men are equal to the task.

This consideration brings us to those "moral equivalents of war" which William James was once concerned over, when he advocated, in place of military conscription, "a conscription of the whole youthful population to form for a certain number of years a part of the army enlisted against *Nature*."¹² Such a method of formally organising in the cause of civilisation, instead of in the cause of savagery, the old military traditions of hardihood and discipline may well have its value. But the present war has shown us that in no case need we fear that these high qualities will perish in any vitally progressive civilisation. For they are qualities that lie in the heart of humanity itself. They are not created by the drill-sergeant; he merely utilises them for his own, as we may perhaps think, disastrous ends. This present war has shown us that on every hand, even in the unlikeliest places, all the virtues of war have been fostered by the cultivation of the arts and sciences of peace, ready to be transformed to warlike ends by men who never dreamed of war. In France we find many of the most promising young scientists, poets, and novelists cheerfully going forth to meet their death. On the other side, we find a Kreisler, created to be the joy of the world, ready to be trampled to death beneath the hoofs of Cossack horses. The friends of Gordon Mathison, the best student ever turned out from the Medical

¹² William James, *Popular Science Monthly*, Oct., 1910.

Faculty of the Melbourne University and a distinguished young physiologist who seemed to be destined to become one of the first physicians of his time, viewed with foreboding his resolve to go to the front, for "Wherever he was he had to be in the game," they said; and a few weeks later he was killed at Gallipoli on the threshold of his career. The qualities that count in peace are the qualities that count in war, and the high-spirited man who throws himself bravely into the dangerous adventures of peace is fully the equal of the hero of the battlefield, and himself prepared to become that hero.¹³

It would seem, therefore, on the whole, that when the eugenicist takes a wide survey of this question, he need not qualify his disapproval of war by any regrets over the loss of such virtues as warfare fosters. In every progressive civilisation the moral equivalents of war are already in full play. Peace, as well as war, "develops the noblest attributes of man"; peace, rather than war, preserves the human sea from putrescence; it is the

¹³ We still often fall into the fallacy of over-estimating the advantages of military training—with its fine air of set-up manliness and restrained yet vitalised discipline—because we are mostly compelled to compare such training with the lack of training fostered by that tame, dull sedentary routine of which there is far too much in our present phase of civilisation. The remedy lies in stimulating the heroic and strenuous sides of civilisation rather than in letting loose the ravages of war. As Nietzsche long since pointed out (*Human, All-too-Human*, section 442), the vaunted national armies of modern times are merely a method of squandering the most highly civilised men, whose delicately organised brains have been slowly produced through long generations; "in our day greater and higher tasks are assigned to men than *patria* and *honor*, and the rough old Roman patriotism has become dishonourable, at the best behind the times."

condemnation of peace, rather than the condemnation of war, which is not only absurd but immoral. We are not called upon to choose between the manly virtues of war and the effeminate degeneracy of peace. The Great War of to-day may perhaps help us to realise that the choice placed before us is of another sort. The virtues of daring and endurance will never fail in any vitally progressive community of men, alike in the causes of war and of peace.¹⁴ But on the one hand we find those virtues at work in the service of humanity, creating ever new marvels of science and of art, adding to the store of the precious heirlooms of the race which are a joy to all mankind. On the other hand, we see these same virtues in the service of savagery, extinguishing those marvels, killing their creators, and destroying every precious treasure of mankind within reach. That—it seems to be one of the chief lessons of this war—is the choice placed before us who are to-day called upon to build the world of the future on a firmer foundation than our own world has been set.

¹⁴ The Border of Scotland and England was in ancient times, it has been said, "a very Paradise for murderers and robbers." The war-like spirit was there very keen and deeds of daring were not too scrupulously effected, for the culprit knew that nothing was easier and safer than to become an outlaw on the other side of the Border. Yet these were the conditions that eventually made the Border one of the great British centres of genius (the Welsh Border was another) and the home of a peculiarly capable and vigorous race.

IV

MORALITY IN WARFARE

There are some idealistic persons who believe that morality and war are incompatible. War is bestial, they hold, war is devilish; in its presence it is absurd, almost farcical, to talk about morality. That would be so if morality meant the code, for ever unattained, of the Sermon on the Mount. But there is not only the morality of Jesus, there is the morality of Mumbo Jumbo. In other words, and limiting ourselves to the narrower range of the civilised world, there is the morality of Machiavelli and Bismarck, and the morality of St. Francis and Tolstoy.

The fact is, as we so often forget, and sometimes do not even know, morality is fundamentally custom, the *mores*, as it has been called, of a people. It is a body of conduct which is in constant motion, with an exalted advance-guard, which few can keep up with, and a debased rearguard, once called the black-guard, a name that has since acquired an appropriate significance. But in the substantial and central sense morality means the conduct of the main body of the community. Thus understood, it is clear that in our time war still comes into contact with morality. The pioneers may be ahead; the main body is in the thick of it.

That there really is a morality of war, and that the majority of civilised people have more or less in common a certain

conventional code concerning the things which may or may not be done in war, has been very clearly seen during the present conflict. This moral code is often said to be based on international regulations and understandings. It certainly on the whole coincides with them. But it is the popular moral code which is fundamental, and international law is merely an attempt to enforce that morality.

The use of expanding bullets and poison gases, the poisoning of wells, the abuse of the Red Cross and the White Flag, the destruction of churches and works of art, the infliction of cruel penalties on civilians who have not taken up arms—all such methods of warfare as these shock popular morality. They are on each side usually attributed to the enemy, they are seldom avowed, and only adopted in imitation of the enemy, with hesitation and some offence to the popular conscience, as we see in the case of poison gas, which was only used by the English after long delay, while the French still hesitated. The general feeling about such methods, even when involving scientific skill, is that they are "barbarous."

As a matter of fact, this charge of "barbarism" against those methods of warfare which shock our moral sense must not be taken too literally. The methods of real barbarians in war are not especially "barbarous." They have sometimes committed acts of cruelty which are revolting to us to-day, but for the most part the excesses of barbarous warfare have been looting and burning, together with more or less raping of women, and these

excesses have been so frequent within the last century, and still to-day, that they may as well be called "civilised" as "barbarous." The sack of Rome by the Goths at the beginning of the fifth century made an immense impression on the ancient world, as an unparalleled outrage. St. Augustine in his *City of God*, written shortly afterwards, eloquently described the horrors of that time. Yet to-day, in the new light of our own knowledge of what war may involve, the ways of the ancient Goths seem very innocent. We are expressly told that they spared the sacred Christian places, and the chief offences brought against them seem to be looting and burning; yet the treasure they left untouched was vast and incalculable and we should be thankful indeed if any belligerent in the war of to-day inflicted as little injury on a conquered city as the Goths on Rome. The vague rhetoric which this invasion inspired scarcely seems to be supported by definitely recorded facts, and there can be very little doubt that the devastation wrought in many old wars exists chiefly in the writings of rhetorical chroniclers whose imaginations were excited, as we may so often see among the journalists of to-day, by the rumour of atrocities which have never been committed. This is not to say that no devastation and cruelty have been perpetrated in ancient wars. It seems to be generally agreed that in the famous Thirty Years' War, which the Germans fought against each other, atrocities were the order of the day. We are constantly being told, in respect of some episode or other of the war of to-day, that "nothing like it has been seen since the Thirty

Years' War." But the writers who make this statement, with an off-hand air of familiar scholarship, never by any chance bring forward the evidence for this greater atrociousness of the Thirty Years' War,¹⁵ and one is inclined to suspect that this oft-repeated allusion to the Thirty Years' War as the acme of military atrocity is merely a rhetorical flourish.

In any case we know that, not so many years after the Thirty Years' War, Frederick the Great, who combined supreme military gifts with freedom from scruple in policy, and was at the same time a great representative German, declared that the ordinary citizen ought never to be aware that his country is at war.¹⁶ Nothing could show more clearly the military ideal, however imperfectly it may sometimes have been attained, of the old European world. Atrocities, whether regarded as permissible or as inevitable, certainly occurred. But for the most part wars were the concern of the privileged upper class; they were rendered necessary by the dynastic quarrels of monarchs and were carried out by a professional class with aristocratic traditions and a more or less scrupulous regard to ancient military etiquette. There are many stories of the sufferings of the soldiery in old times, in the midst of abundance, on account of military respect for civilian property. Von der Goltz remarks that "there

¹⁵ In so far as it may have been so, that seems merely due to its great length, to the fact that the absence of commissariat arrangements involved a more thorough method of pillage, and to epidemics.

¹⁶ Treitschke, *History of Germany* (English translation by E. and C. Paul), Vol. I., p. 87.

was a time when the troops camped in the cornfields and yet starved," and states that in 1806 the Prussian main army camped close to huge piles of wood and yet had no fires to warm themselves or cook their food.¹⁷

The legend, if legend it is, of the French officer who politely requested the English officer opposite him to "fire first" shows how something of the ancient spirit of chivalry was still regarded as the accompaniment of warfare. It was an occupation which only incidentally concerned the ordinary citizen. The English, especially, protected by the sea and always living in open undefended cities, have usually been able to preserve this indifference to the continental wars in which their kings have constantly been engaged, and, as we see, even in the most unprotected European countries, and the most profoundly warlike, the Great Frederick set forth precisely the same ideal of war.

The fact seems to be that while war is nowadays less chronic than of old, less prolonged, and less easily provoked, it is a serious fallacy to suppose that it is also less barbarous. We imagine that it must be so simply because we believe, on more or less plausible

¹⁷ Von der Goltz, *The Nation in Arms*, pp. 14 *et seq.* This attitude was a final echo of the ancient Truce of God. That institution, which was first definitely formulated in the early eleventh century in Roussillon and was soon confirmed by the Pope in agreement with nobles and barons, was extended to the whole of Christendom before the end of the century. It ordained peace for several days a week and on many festivals, and it guaranteed the rights and liberties of all those following peaceful avocations, at the same time protecting crops, live-stock, and farm implements.

grounds, that our life generally is growing less barbarous and more civilised. But war, by its very nature, always means a relapse from civilisation into barbarism, if not savagery.¹⁸ We may sympathise with the endeavour of the European soldiers of old to civilise warfare, and we may admire the remarkable extent to which they succeeded in doing so. But we cannot help feeling that their romantic and chivalrous notions of warfare were absurdly incongruous.

The world in general might have been content with that incongruity. But Germany, or more precisely Prussia, with its ancient genius for warfare, has in the present war taken the decisive step in initiating the abolition of that incongruity by placing warfare definitely on the basis of scientific barbarism. To do this is, in a sense, we must remember, not a step backwards, but a step forward. It involved the recognition of the fact that War is not a game to be played for its own sake, by a professional caste, in accordance with fixed rules which it would be dishonourable to break, but a method, carried out by the whole organised manhood of the nation, of effectively attaining an end desired by the State, in accordance with the famous statement of Clausewitz that war is State policy continued by a different

¹⁸ It is interesting to observe how St. Augustine, who was as familiar with classic as with Christian life and thought, perpetually dwells on the boundless misery of war and the supreme desirability of peace as a point at which pagan and Christian are at one; "Nihil gratius soleat audiri, nihil desiderabilius concupisci, nihil postremo possit melius inveniri ... Sicut nemo est qui gaudere nolit, ita nemo est qui pacem habere nolit" (*City of God*, Bk. XIX., Chs. 11-12).

method. If by the chivalrous method of old, which was indeed in large part still their own method in the previous Franco-German war, the Germans had resisted the temptation to violate the neutrality of Luxemburg and Belgium in order to rush behind the French defences, and had battered instead at the Gap of Belfort, they would have won the sympathy of the world, but they certainly would not have won the possession of the greater part of Belgium and a third part of France. It has not alone been military instinct which has impelled Germany on the new course thus inaugurated. We see here the final outcome of a reaction against ancient Teutonic sentimentality which the insight of Goldwin Smith clearly discerned forty years ago.¹⁹ Humane sentiments and civilised traditions, under the moulding hand of Prussian leaders of Kultur, have been slowly but firmly subordinated to a political realism which, in the military sphere, means a masterly efficiency in the aim of crushing the foe by overwhelming force combined with panic-striking "frightfulness." In this conception, that only is moral which served these ends. The horror which this "frightfulness" may be expected to arouse, even among neutral nations, is from the German point of view a tribute of homage.

The military reputation of Germany is so great in the world, and likely to remain so, whatever the issue of the present war, that we are here faced by a grave critical issue which concerns the future of the whole world. The conduct of wars has been transformed before our eyes. In any future war the example of

¹⁹ *Contemporary Review*, 1878.

Germany will be held to consecrate the new methods, and the belligerents who are not inclined to accept the supreme authority of Germany may yet be forced in their own interests to act in accordance with it. The mitigating influence of religion over warfare has long ceased to be exercised, for the international Catholic Church no longer possesses the power to exert such influence, while the national Protestant churches are just as bellicose as their flacks. Now we see the influence of morality over warfare similarly tending to disappear. Henceforth, it seems, we have to reckon with a conception of war which accounts it a function of the supreme State, standing above morality and therefore able to wage war independently of morality. Necessity—the necessity of scientific effectiveness—becomes the sole criterion of right and wrong.

When we look back from the standpoint of knowledge which we have reached in the present war to the notions which prevailed in the past, they seem to us hollow and even childish. Seventy years ago, Buckle, in his *History of Civilisation*, stated complacently that only ignorant and unintellectual nations any longer cherished ideals of war. His statement was part of the truth. It is true, for instance, that France is now the most anti-military of nations, though once the most military of all. But, we see, it is only part of the truth. The very fact, which Buckle himself pointed out, that efficiency has in modern times taken the place of morality in the conduct of affairs, offers a new foundation for war when war is urged on scientific principle for

the purpose of rendering effective the claims of State policy. To-day we see that it is not sufficient for a nation to cultivate knowledge and become intellectual, in the expectation that war will automatically go out of fashion. It is quite possible to become very scientific, most relentlessly intellectual, and on that foundation to build up ideals of warfare much more barbarous than those of Assyria.

The conclusion seems to be that we are to-day entering on an era in which war will not only flourish as vigorously as in the past, although not in so chronic a form, but with an altogether new ferocity and ruthlessness, with a vastly increased power of destruction, and on a scale of extent and intensity involving an injury to civilisation and humanity which no wars of the past ever perpetrated. Moreover, this state of things imposes on the nations which have hitherto, by their temper, their position, or their small size, regarded themselves as nationally neutral, a new burden of armament in order to ensure that neutrality. It has been proclaimed on both sides that this war is a war to destroy militarism. But the disappearance of a militarism that is only destroyed by a greater militarism offers no guarantee at all for any triumph of Civilisation or Humanity.

What then are we to do? It seems clear that we have to recognise that our intellectual leaders of old who declared that to ensure the disappearance of war we have but to sit still and fold our hands while we watch the beneficent growth of science and intellect were grievously mistaken. War is still one of the active

factors of modern life, though by no means the only factor which it is in our power to grasp and direct. By our energetic effort the world can be moulded. It is the concern of all of us, and especially of those nations which are strong enough and enlightened enough to take a leading part in human affairs, to work towards the initiation and the organisation of this immense effort. In so far as the Great War of to-day acts as a spur to such effort it will not have been an unmixed calamity.

V

IS WAR DIMINISHING?

The cheerful optimism of those pacifists who looked for the speedy extinction of war has lately aroused much scorn. There really seem to have been people who believed that new virtues of loving-kindness are springing up in the human breast to bring about the universal reign of peace spontaneously, while we all still continued to cultivate our old vices of international greed, suspicion, and jealousy. Dr. Frederick Adams Woods, in the challenging and stimulating study of the prevalence of war in Europe from 1450 to the present day which he has lately written in conjunction with Mr. Alexander Baltzly, easily throws contempt upon such pacifists. All their beautiful arguments, he tells us in effect, count for nothing. War is to-day raging more furiously than ever in the world, and it is even doubtful whether it is diminishing. That is the subject of the book Dr. Woods and Mr. Baltzly have written: *Is War Diminishing?*

The method adopted by these authors is to count up the years of war since 1450 for each of the eleven chief nations of Europe possessing an ancient history, and to represent the results by the aid of charts. These charts show that certainly there has been a great falling off in war during the period in question. Wars, as there presented to us, seem to have risen to a climax in the

century 1550-1650 and to have been declining ever since. The authors, themselves, however, are not quite in sympathy with their own conclusion. "There is only," Dr. Woods declares, "a moderate amount of probability in favour of declining war." He insists on the fact that the period under investigation represents but a very small fraction of the life of man. He finds that if we take England several centuries further back, and compare its number of war-years during the last four centuries with those during the preceding four centuries, the first period shows 212 years of war, the second shows 207 years, a negligible difference, while for France the corresponding number of war-years are 181 and 192, an actual and rather considerable increase. There is the further consideration that if we regard not frequency but intensity of war—if we could, for instance, measure a war by its total number of casualties—we should doubtless find that wars are showing a tendency to ever-increasing gravity. On the whole, Dr. Woods is clearly rather discontented with the tendency of his own and his collaborator's work to show a diminution of war, and modestly casts doubt on all those who believe that the tendency of the world's history is in the direction of such a diminution.

An honest and careful record of facts, however, is always valuable. Dr. Woods' investigation will be found useful even by those who are by no means anxious to throw cold water over the too facile optimism of some pacifists, and this little book suggests lines of thought which may prove fruitful in various directions, not always foreseen by the authors.

Dr. Woods emphasises the long period in the history of the human race during which war has flourished. He seems to suggest that war, after all, may be an essential and beneficial element in human affairs, destined to endure to the end, just as it has been present from the beginning. But has it been present from the beginning? Even though war may have flourished for many thousands of years—and it was certainly flourishing at the dawn of history—we are still very far indeed from the dawn of human life or even of human civilisation, for the more our knowledge of the past grows the more remote that dawn is seen to be. It is not only seen to be very remote, it is seen to be very important. Darwin said that it was during the first three years of life that a man learnt most. That saying is equally true of humanity as a whole, though here one must translate years into hundreds of thousands of years. But neither infant man nor infant mankind could establish themselves firmly on the path that leads so far if they had at the very outset, in accordance with Dr. Woods' formula for more recent ages, "fought about half the time." An activity of this kind which may be harmless, or even in some degree beneficial at a later stage, would be fatally disastrous at an early stage. War, as Mankind understands war, seems to have no place among animals living in Nature. It seems equally to have had no place, so far as investigation has yet been able to reveal, in the life of early man. Men were far too busy in the great fight against Nature to fight against each other, far too absorbed in the task of inventing methods of self-preservation to have much

energy left for inventing methods of self-destruction. It was once supposed that the Homeric stories of war presented a picture of life near the beginning of the world. The Homeric picture in fact corresponds to a stage in human barbarism, certainly in its European manifestation, a stage also passed through in Northern Europe, where, nearly fifteen hundred years ago, the Greek traveller, Posidonius, found the Celtic chieftains in Britain living much like the people in Homer. But we now know that Homer, so far from bringing before us a primitive age, really represents the end of a long stage of human development, marked by a slow and steady growth in civilisation and a vast accumulation of luxury. War is a luxury, in other words a manifestation of superfluous energy, not possible in those early stages when all the energies of men are taken up in the primary business of preserving and maintaining life. So it was that war had a beginning in human history. Is it unreasonable to suppose that it will also have an end?

There is another way, besides that of counting the world's war-years, to determine the probability of the diminution and eventual disappearance of war. We may consider the causes of war, and the extent to which these causes are, or are not, ceasing to operate. Dr. Woods passingly realises the importance of this test and even enumerates what he considers to be the causes of war, without, however, following up his clue. As he reckons them, they are four in number: racial, economic, religious, and personal. There is frequently a considerable amount of doubt concerning the cause of a particular war, and no doubt the

causes are usually mixed and slowly accumulative, just as in disease a number of factors may have gradually combined to bring on the sudden overthrow of health. There can be no doubt that the four causes enumerated have been very influential in producing war. There can, however, be equally little doubt that nearly all of them are diminishing in their war-producing power. Religion, which after the Reformation seemed to foment so many wars, is now practically almost extinct as a cause of war in Europe. Economic causes which were once regarded as good and sound motives for war have been discredited, though they cannot be said to be abolished; in the Middle Ages fighting was undoubtedly a most profitable business, not only by the booty which might thus be obtained, but by the high ransoms which even down to the seventeenth century might be legitimately demanded for prisoners. So that war with France was regarded as an English gentleman's best method of growing rich. Later it was believed that a country could capture the "wealth" of another country by destroying that country's commerce, and in the eighteenth century that doctrine was openly asserted even by responsible statesmen; later, the growth of political economy made clear that every nation flourishes by the prosperity of other nations, and that by impoverishing the nation with which it traded a nation impoverishes itself, for a tradesman cannot grow rich by killing his customers. So it came about that, as Mill put it, the commercial spirit, which during one period of European history was the principal cause of war, became one of

its strongest obstacles, though, since Mill wrote, the old fallacy that it is a legitimate and advantageous method to fight for markets, has frequently reappeared.²⁰ Again, the personal causes of war, although in a large measure incalculable, have much smaller scope under modern conditions than formerly. Under ancient conditions, with power centred in despotic monarchs or autocratic ministers, the personal causes of war counted for much. In more recent times it has been said, truly or falsely, that the Crimean War was due to the wounded feelings of a diplomatist. Under modern conditions, however, the checks on individual initiative are so many that personal causes must play an ever-diminishing part in war.

The same can scarcely be said as regards Dr. Woods' remaining cause of war. If by racialism we are to understand nationalism, this has of late been a serious and ever-growing provocative of war. Internationalism of feeling is much less marked now than it was four centuries ago. Nationalities have developed a new self-consciousness, a new impulse to regain their old territories or to acquire new territories. Not only Pan-Germanism, Pan-Slavism, and British Imperialism, like all other imperialisms, but even the national ambitions of some smaller Powers have acquired a new and dangerous energy. They are

²⁰ It has been argued (as by Filippi Carli, *La Ricchezza e la Guerra*, 1916) that the Germans are especially unable to understand that the prosperity of other countries is beneficial to them, whether or not under German control, and that they differ from the English and French in believing that economic conquests should involve political conquests.

not the less dangerous when, as is indeed most frequently the case, they merely represent the ambition, not of the people as a whole, but merely of a military or bureaucratic clique, of a small chauvinistic group, yet noisy and energetic enough to win over unscrupulous politicians. A German soldier, a young journalist of ability, recently wrote home from the trenches: "I have often dreamed of a new Europe in which all the nations would be fraternally united and live together as one people; it was an end which democratic feeling seemed to be slowly preparing. Now this terrible war has been unchained, fomented by a few men who are sending their subjects, their slaves rather, to the battlefield, to slay each other like wild beasts. I should like to go towards these men they call our enemies and say, 'Brothers, let us fight together. The enemy is behind us.' Yes, since I have been wearing this uniform I feel no hatred for those who are in front, but my hatred has grown for those in power who are behind." That is a sentiment which must grow mightily with the growth of democracy, and as it grows the danger of nationalism as a cause of war must necessarily decrease.

There is, however, one group of causes of war, of the first importance, which Dr. Woods has surprisingly omitted, and that is the group of political causes. It is by overlooking the political aspects of war that Dr. Woods' discussion is most defective. Supposed political necessity has been in modern times perhaps the very chief cause of war. That is to say that wars are largely waged for what has been supposed to be the protection, or

the furtherance, of the civilised organisation which orders the temporal benefits of a nation. This is admirably illustrated by all three of the great European wars in which England has taken part during the past four centuries: the war against Spain, the war against France, and the present war against Germany. The fundamental motive of England's participation in all these wars has been what was conceived to be the need of England's safety, it was essentially political. A small island Power, dependent on its fleet, and yet very closely adjoining the continental mainland, is vitally concerned in the naval developments of possibly hostile Powers and in the military movements which affect the opposite coast. Spain, France, and Germany all successively threatened England by a formidable fleet, and they all sought to gain possession of the coast opposite England. To England, therefore, it seemed a measure of political self-defence to strike a blow as each fresh menace arose. In every case Belgium has been the battlefield on land. The neutrality of Belgium is felt to be politically vital to England. Therefore, the invasion of Belgium by a Great Power is to England an immediate signal of war. It is not only England's wars that have been mainly political; the same is true of Germany's wars ever since Prussia has had the leadership of Germany. The political condition of a country without natural frontiers and surrounded by powerful neighbours is a perpetual source of wars which, in Germany's case, have been, by deliberate policy, offensively defensive.

When we realise the fundamental importance of the political

causation of warfare, the whole problem of the ultimate fate of war becomes at once more hopeful. The orderly growth and stability of nations has in the past seemed to demand war. But war is not the only method of securing these ends, and to most people nowadays it scarcely seems the best method. England and France have fought against each other for many centuries. They are now convinced that they really have nothing to fight about, and that the growth and stability of each country are better ensured by friendship than by enmity. There cannot be a doubt of it. But where is the limit to the extension of that same principle? France and Germany, England and Germany, have just as much to lose by enmity, just as much to gain by friendship, and alike on both sides.

The history of Europe and the charts of Mr. Baltzly clearly show that this consideration has really been influential. We find that there is a progressive tendency for the nations of Europe to abandon warfare. Sweden, Denmark, and Holland, all vigorous and warlike peoples, have long ceased to fight. They have found their advantage in the abandonment of war, but that abandonment has been greatly stimulated by awe of their mightier neighbours. And therein, again, we have a clue to the probable course of the future.

For when we realise that the fundamental political need of self-preservation and good order has been a main cause of warfare, and when we further realise that the same ends may be more satisfactorily attained without war under the influence of

a sufficiently firm external pressure working in harmony with the growth of internal civilisation, we see that the problem of fighting among nations is the same as that of fighting among individuals. Once upon a time good order and social stability were maintained in a community by the method of fighting among the individuals constituting the community. No doubt all sorts of precious virtues were thus generated, and no doubt in the general opinion no better method seemed possible or even conceivable. But, as we know, with the development of a strong central Power, and with the growth of enlightenment, it was realised that political stability and good order were more satisfactorily maintained by a tribunal, having a strong police force behind it, than by the method of allowing the individuals concerned to fight out their quarrels between themselves.

Fighting between national groups of individuals stands on precisely the same footing as fighting between individuals. The political stability and good order of nations, it is beginning to be seen, can be more satisfactorily maintained by a tribunal, having a strong police force behind it, than by the method of allowing the individual nations concerned to fight out quarrels between themselves. The stronger nations have for a large part imposed this peace upon the smaller nations of Europe to the great benefit of the latter. How can we impose a similar peace upon the stronger nations, for their own benefit and for the benefit of the whole world? To that task all our energies must be directed.

A long series of eminent thinkers and investigators, from

Comte and Buckle a century ago to Dr. Woods and Mr. Baltzly to-day, have assured us that war is diminishing and even that the war-like spirit is extinct. It is certainly not true that the war-like spirit is extinct, even in the most civilised and peaceful peoples, and we need not desire its extinction, for it is capable of transformation into shapes of the finest use for humanity. But the vast conflagration of to-day must not conceal from our eyes the great central fact that war is diminishing, and will one day disappear as completely as the mediaeval scourge of the Black Death. To reach this consummation all the best humanising and civilising energies of mankind will be needed.

VI

WAR AND THE BIRTH-RATE

During recent years the faith had grown among progressive persons in various countries, not excluding Germany, that civilisation was building up almost impassable barriers against any great war. These barriers were thought to be of various kinds, even apart from the merely sentimental and humanitarian developments of pacific feeling. They were especially of an economic kind, and that on a double basis, that of Capital and that of Labour. It was believed, on the one hand, that the international ramifications of Capital, and the complicated commercial and financial webs which bind nations together, would cause so vivid a realisation of the disasters of war as to erect a wholesomely steadying effect whenever the danger of war loomed in sight. On the other hand, it was felt that the international unity of interest among the workers, the growth of Labour's favourite doctrine that there is no conflict between nations, but only between classes, and even the actual international organisation and bonds of the workers' associations, would interpose a serious menace to the plans of war-makers. These influences were real and important. But, as we know, when the decisive moment came, the diplomatists and the militarists were found to be at the helm, to steer the ship of State in

each country concerned, and those on board had no voice in determining the course. In England only can there be said to have been any show of consulting Parliament, but at that moment the situation had already so far developed that there was little left but to accept it. The Great War of to-day has shown that such barriers against war as we at present possess may crumble away in a moment at the shock of the war-making machine.

We are to-day forced to undertake a more searching inquiry into the forces which, in civilisation, operate against war. I wish to call attention here to one such influence of fundamental character, which has not been unrecognised, but possesses an importance we are often apt to overlook.

"A French gentleman, well acquainted with the constitution of his country," wrote Thicknesse in 1776,²¹ "told me above eight years since that France increased so rapidly in peace that they must necessarily have a war every twelve or fourteen years to carry off the refuse of the people." Recently a well-known German Socialist, Dr. Eduard David, member of the Reichstag and a student of the population question, setting forth the same great truth (in *Die Neue Generation* for November, 1914) states that it would have been impossible for Germany to wage the present war if it had not been for the high German birth-rate during the past half-century. And the impossibility of this war would, for Dr. David, have been indeed tragic.

A more distinguished social hygienist, Professor Max Gruber,

²¹ Ralph Thicknesse, *A Year's Journey Through France and Spain*, 1777, p. 298.

of Munich, who took a leading part in organising that marvellous Exposition of Hygiene at Dresden which has been Germany's greatest service to real civilisation in recent years, lately set forth an identical opinion. The war, he declares, was inevitable and unavoidable, and Germany was responsible for it, not, he hastens to add, in any moral sense, but in a biological sense, because in forty-four years Germans have increased in numbers from forty millions to eighty millions. The war was, therefore, a "biological necessity."

If we survey the belligerent nations in the war we may say that those which took the initiative in drawing it on, or at all events were most prepared to welcome it, were Russia, Austria, Germany, and Serbia. We may also note that these include nearly all the nations in Europe with a high birth-rate. We may further note that they are all nations which—putting aside their cultural summits and taking them in the mass—are among the most backward in Europe; the fall in the birth-rate has not yet had time to permeate them. On the other hand, of the belligerent peoples of to-day, all indications point to the French as the people most intolerant, silently but deeply, of the war they are so ably and heroically waging. Yet the France of the present, with the lowest birth-rate and the highest civilisation, was a century ago the France of a birth-rate higher than that of Germany to-day, the most militarist and aggressive of nations, a perpetual menace to Europe. For all those among us who have faith in civilisation and humanity, and are unable to believe that war can ever be a

civilising or humanising method of progress, it must be a daily prayer that the fall of the birth-rate may be hastened.

It seems too elementary a point to insist on, yet the mists of ignorance and prejudice are so dense, the cataract of false patriotism is so thick, that for many even the most elementary truths cannot be discerned. In most of the smaller nations, indeed, an intelligent view prevails. Their smallness has, on the one hand, rendered them more open to international culture, and, on the other hand, enabled them to outgrow the illusions of militarism; there is a higher standard of education among them; their birth-rates are low and they accept that fact as a condition of progressive civilisation. That is the case in Switzerland, as in Norway, and notably in Holland. It is not so in the larger nations. Here we constantly find, even in those lands where the bulk of the population are civilised and reasonably level-headed, a small minority who publicly tear their hair and rage at the steady decline in the birth-rate. It is, of course, only the declining birth-rate of their own country that they have in view; for they are "patriots," which means that the fall of the birth-rate in all other countries but their own is a source of much gratification. "Woe to us," they exclaim in effect, "if we follow the example of these wicked and degenerate peoples! Our nation needs men. We have to populate the earth and to carry the blessings of our civilised culture all over the world. In executing that high mission we cannot have too much cannon-fodder in defending ourselves against the jealousy and aggression of other nations.

Let us promote parentage by law; let us repress by law every influence which may encourage a falling birth-rate; otherwise there is nothing left to us but speedy national disaster, complete and irremediable." This is not caricature,²² though these apostles of "race-suicide" may easily arouse a smile by the verbal ardour of their procreative energy. But we have to recognise that in Germany for years past it has been difficult to take up a serious periodical without finding some anxiously statistical article about the falling birth-rate and some wild recommendations for its arrest, for it is the militaristic German who of all Europeans is most worried by this fall; indeed Germans often even refuse to recognise it. Thus to-day we find Professor Gruber declaring that if the population of the German Empire continues to grow at the rate of the first five years of the present century, at the end of the century it will have reached 250,000,000. By such a vast increase in population, the Professor complacently concludes, "Germany will be rendered invulnerable." We know what that means. The presence of an "invulnerable" nation among nations that are "vulnerable" means inevitable aggression and war, a perpetual menace to civilisation and humanity. It is not along that line that hope can be found for the world's future, or even Germany's future, and Gruber conveniently neglects to estimate what, on his basis, the population of Russia will be at the end of the

²² The last twelve words quoted are by Miss Ethel Elderton in an otherwise sober memoir (*Report on the English Birth-rate*, 1914, p. 237) which shows that the birth control movement has begun, just where we should expect it to begin, among the better instructed classes.

century. But Gruber's estimate is altogether fallacious. German births have fallen, roughly speaking, about one per thousand of the population, every year since the beginning of the century, and it would be equally reasonable to estimate that if they continue to fall at the present rate (which we cannot, of course, anticipate) births will altogether have ceased in Germany long before the end of the century. The German birth-rate reached its climax forty years ago (1871-1880) with 40.7 per 1,000; in 1906 it was 34 per 1,000; in 1909, 31 per 1,000; in 1912, 28 per 1,000; in an almost measurable period of time, in all probability long before the end of the century, it will have reached the same low level as that of France, when there will be little difference between the "invulnerability" of France and of Germany, a consummation which, for the world's sake, is far more devoutly to be wished than that anticipated by Gruber.

We have to remember, moreover, that this tendency is by no means, as we are sometimes tempted to suppose, a sign of degeneration or of decay; but, on the contrary, a sign of progress. When we survey broadly that course of zoological evolution of which we are pleased to regard Man as the final outcome, we note that on the whole the mighty stream has become the less productive as it has advanced. We note the same of the various lines taken separately. We note, also, that intelligence and all the qualities we admire have usually been most marked in the less prolific species. Progress, roughly speaking, has proved incompatible with high fertility. And the reason is not far to seek.

If the creature produced is more evolved, it is more complex and more highly organised, and that means the need for much time and much energy. To attain this, the offspring must be few and widely spaced; it cannot be attained at all under conditions that are highly destructive. The humble herring, which evokes the despairing envy of our human apostles of fertility, is largely composed of spawn, and produces a vast number of offspring, of which few reach maturity. The higher mammals spend their lives in the production of a small number of offspring, most of whom survive. Thus, even before Man began, we see a fundamental principle established, and the relationship between the birth-rate and the death-rate in working order. All progressive evolution may be regarded as a mechanism for concentrating an ever greater amount of energy in the production of ever fewer and ever more splendid individuals. Nature is perpetually striving to replace the crude ideal of quantity by the higher ideal of quality.

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