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*The Public
Mind*



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THE GREAT ILLUSION

WHY FREEDOM MATTERS

THE PEACE TREATY

THE FRUITS OF VICTORY

THE PRESS AND THE ORGANISATION OF SOCIETY

IF BRITAIN IS TO LIVE, etc.

The Public Mind

its disorders : its exploitation

by

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WHEN we can explain the baser, sillier part of ourselves, then it begins to lose its power over us. . . . We are fools, no doubt, but we wish not to be fools ; it is possible for us to perceive our folly, to discern the causes of it, and by that very discernment to detach ourselves from it, to make it no longer a part of our minds, but something from which they have suffered and begin to recover. Then it is as though we had stimulated our own mental phagocytes against bacilli that have infected the mind from the outside ; we no longer submit ourselves to the disease as if it were health ; but, knowing it to be disease, we begin to recover from it.

CLUTTON-BROCK, in *Essays on Religion*.

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SUMMARY OF ARGUMENT

THE errors of public opinion are more damaging than they used to be, both because they affect government more decisively and because Society has become more vulnerable as it has become more complex. It is increasingly important, therefore, to understand the nature of the Public Mind: the disorders to which it is subject, the way in which political and journalistic demagoguery affect it, the educational or moral deficiencies that need to be corrected.

The object of these essays is, in Part I., to give a picture of the Public Mind—

As it is revealed at an election (Chap. I.) ;

As it was revealed during the War (Chap. II.) ;

And at the Peace (Chap. I.) ;

To show the influence at those crises of Education (Chap. II.) ;

And Organised Religion (Chap. II.) ;

How these manifestations compare with previous experiences in like circumstances (Chap. III.) ;

How universal are certain outstanding emotional factors of Public Opinion (Chaps. IV. and V.).

The purview is concluded by a sketch of the way in which the Public Mind is exploited through the popular Press ; and, since the personal equation in such exploitation is important, by a sketch of the most successful printed-matter merchant of the century (Chap. VI.).

To what conclusion in practical politics does the foregoing point ?

An attempt is made in Part II. to show that—

Dictatorship cannot solve the problem, and that there can be no workable government of any kind fit to face the complexities of modern life unless we make provision to correct the outstanding weaknesses of public judgment.) We may hope to make democracy safe if we face squarely the fact that the voice of the people is usually the voice of Satan. The defence of democracy does not depend upon any proof that popular judgment is necessarily right, but that in the long run it will dictate, even to dictators ; and so, being inevitable, we must make the best of it by—

Adapting the political instruments of democracy to the changed conditions of the modern world (Chap. I.).

Educating more consciously for Social Judgment, for the art, that is, of thinking about common facts correctly (Chap. II.).

Using education to guide “human nature” ; to develop a sense of social obligation to rise at times above instinct, temper, passion ; to assist the mind to realise the moral obligation to be intelligent (Chap. III.).

PART I

A PICTURE OF THE PUBLIC MIND

CHAPTER I

THE BARBER AS MANAGER OF CIVILISATION —IN HIS SPARE TIME

WE are ruled ultimately, of course, by public opinion. Let us take stock, afresh, of the *modus operandi* of that rule, as we know it in Western society: the methods common to most democratic forms.

At certain intervals—regular under systems like that of the United States, irregular under the parliamentary systems prevalent in Europe—the ordinary busy citizen is asked, on a given day, to sit in judgment upon his rulers. The manufacturer, professional man, artisan, butcher, baker, candlestick-maker, barber, in addition to being wise about his own personal affairs, has then to be wise about everybody else's as well; to judge the affairs of the world; to become a statesman dealing with extremely difficult and complex subjects. We are on that occasion rulers of one another: the other men's votes may send your children to their death in war; your vote may help to sent your neighbour's. An ordinary election, whether in Britain or in America, compels the voter to pass judgment upon public questions which become continuously more complex. Each decade adds new problems.

Let us note just a few of those upon which the busy citizen at any ordinary election is now compelled to

pass judgment. There is almost always, in some form or other, the issue of Free Trade and Protection, about which professional economists are themselves in disagreement. When it is presented in a form like that of Imperial Preferences one is compelled to balance considerations of present advantage for Britain against the desirability of aiding, even artificially, the development of countries which may furnish a future field of emigration for people of our speech and culture. Which brings us, of course, to problems of the political relation of Britain to the Dominions, and of these to the rest of the world ; to the future of the Empire, our proper relation to India, to the Orient, and to the government of subject peoples ; and that, of course, involving foreign policy, carries us to questions of military strategy, the desirability of creating this or that naval base ; the maintenance of the Navy or the Air Force, the future of the battleship ; the League of Nations, disarmament, whether they should be opposed or encouraged ; foreign trade and its relation to the American debt and the Gold Standard ; inflation ; deflation ; the relation of currency policy to trade depression and unemployment ; the coal subsidy ; the proper sphere of Trade Unionism ; the relations with Russia ; Socialism ; religious instruction in schools ; the liquor problem ; Church disestablishment ; divorce ; vivisection ; compulsory vaccination. . . .

These are a mere selection from a much larger number of problems just as difficult, with which the aforesaid business man, dentist, butcher, baker, or barber has to deal—in his spare time. ✓

For that is the essence of the method. These complex matters, often of war and peace (of life and death, that is), must necessarily be settled casually and

hurriedly—can only receive a “spare-time” attention. The immense majority of voters are obliged to give most of their attention and energy to the not very easy job of earning a living. Political decisions obviously cannot receive the kind of intensive attention which a man gives to his means of livelihood, his trade or profession, for which he has had a special training. The decisions which, totalled, make public policy, the collective judgments of modern nations, must be made for the most part on the basis of headlines in the newspapers, gulped hurriedly with the morning coffee ; or of casual talk in the train ; or formed by catchy slogans which seem to hit the case, but probably only so seem because they happen to be alliterative, or carry a certain rhythm which causes them to stick in the memory. Not much more is possible in our busy world. Yet the barber who would not presume to bob the hair of the least flapper, or shave any man’s face, without a special preparation for the job, is usually very positive and unqualified in his political opinions, in decisions upon such subjects as Free Trade, the way to deal with Germany, or Ireland, or India ; on unemployment, the school age, the merits of the submarine as against the battleship. Any victim who has suffered much from the talkativeness of the hair-cutting profession might well wish that he could be as sure about any one of those subjects as the politically minded barber seems to be about all of them.

It is hardly necessary to labour the point that the barber’s decision becomes every day more difficult : that the mere march of invention has given him problems of which his grandfather never dreamed. A hundred years ago the foreign exchange rate was important to a few merchants and bankers ; it did

not immediately affect the price of bread and bacon in every village. If mail-coach drivers struck, it was inconvenient to a few travellers, but there was no such menace of immediate starvation as that which followed the strike of a few hundred locomotive drivers, compelling action by the community (through the Government—that is to say, ultimately, the voters) for its protection. When transport was by wagons and horses no elaborate legislation touching franchises, rates, company acts, limited liability was necessary ; but when the railroad came the barber found it necessary to have opinions about those things, to vote on them, to take action deeply concerning his neighbours and their future.

It is noteworthy in this connection that much of the political machinery which we have applied to democratic conditions has come down to us from those simpler times, and that an instrument suitable enough, it may be, for those conditions is being applied to very different conditions.

One realises this particularly in observing the operation of the American "Long Ballot"—the method of choosing a long list of public officials by the naïve device of popular election. In Washington's day, when great cities were unknown, it was perhaps a feasible and common-sense arrangement for the inhabitants of a village to assemble on the green (or, in the case of the famous New England town meetings, in the City Hall) and decide that John would make a good magistrate and James a good policeman. The village had known John and James since childhood. The device was feasible enough.¹ But note what

¹ "If," as Aristotle said, "the citizens of a State are to judge and distribute offices according to merit, then they must know

happens when the device, serviceable enough in these conditions, is applied to the conditions of a modern city like New York or Chicago. The voter receives a long list—sometimes running to hundreds of names—of men whom, save with rare exception, he has never seen, whose qualifications and respective merits he cannot possibly know. They are candidates for such positions as that of judge, city engineer, surveyor, public health officer, keeper of court-house records, sheriff, chief of the police. The elector is asked to state whether, in his view, the posts of (say) officer of health, public bacteriologist, or county-court judge (his mind being necessarily in most cases a complete blank as to the necessary qualifications for such work) would be better filled by John Smith (whom the voter has never seen) or Henry Brown (whom equally the voter has never seen and does not know). And so on, with a list of names and offices resembling in some “Long Ballots” a public directory. The head of a great business or institution, having given a life-time to learning his particular job, is compelled often to devote laborious days to such decisions as whether A, B, or C (whose records he knows) is best fitted for a position with the functions of which he has been for years familiar. The assumption behind the electoral method presumably is that the voter going into a booth becomes endowed with some magic quality enabling him to perform miracles of selection which would baffle the greatest administrators in the world, without any of the preparatory labour which the humblest administrator in his private affairs knows

each other's characters ; where they do not possess this knowledge, both the election to offices and the decision of law suits will go wrong ” (*Politics*, Bk. VII, ch. iv.).

to be indispensable. Yet this outrageous farce has continued for generations ; nor is it a mere oversight or survival like a picturesque bit of ritual come down to us from feudal times. The attempt to change this method has often been bitterly opposed as a movement away from Democracy, a " distrust of the people," a reflection upon their " great heart and sound sense."

It is true that the fight about the " Long Ballot " is perhaps now settled. The pendulum even in America has swung far indeed the other way, with towns adopting more and more the city manager method or Commission government. It is recognised that the barber is not perhaps quite able in his spare time to decide the respective merits of half a dozen candidates for a judgeship, or for a post as engineer or bacteriologist.

But is he any better able to decide such questions as Free Trade and Protection, the merits of the Gold Standard as opposed to a managed currency or a bi-metallic standard ? These are extremely complex questions about which most divergent views are held by specialists and experts who have devoted life-time study to them. Yet he will have to answer them, and we are faced by the problem of enabling him to do that in some form or other ; of helping him to judge as between experts, to apply tests in results where he cannot follow details.

But before we can even start on that task we have to take cognisance of certain characteristics of the public mind as we now know it, and the significance of these characteristics.

Looking back upon the decisions of the nations during these last fifteen years, one is brought face to face with the disturbing phenomenon that just when

the facts were plainest the decisions have been most erroneous and disastrous. It is a characteristic of the most damaging mistakes that they have been about extremely simple things, about facts of universal knowledge. The errors have not been due to the intellectually baffling nature of the problems, but to the flat refusal on the part of whole nations to face self-evident facts, because to face them would have meant abandoning the indulgence of a temper, or appetite, or emotion.

Now, if that is true—and I think the reader will agree in a moment that it is—it would serve no purpose to make a democracy more “educated” in the sense of possessing a wider range of knowledge. If the people can disregard in their collective decisions the facts of which they are already perfectly well aware, they can just as easily disregard that further knowledge with which a wider education in this sense of “knowing things” might endow them.

Let us examine the commonest way in which this disregard by the public of self-evident facts is manifested in politics, at the precise moment when the average citizen ought to be most conscious of his civic responsibility—at an election in fact.

I can illustrate most easily from a personal experience. Some years ago I found myself a parliamentary candidate, having undertaken the task mainly perhaps from the desire to become a little better educated politically by meeting Public Opinion face to face, as it were, and not merely through the printed word.

Tackling the job as seriously as possible, my first step was to seek expert advice as to the proper nursing of a constituency from one who was reputed to be quite the astutest electioneer in the country. In

reply to my various questions as to the best method of winning the "great heart," he delivered a little lecture which ran about as follows :

You might take Willoughby, who sits for a constituency not far from that which you propose to fight, as a model of really successful electioneering. He has the safest seat in England, in a constituency which used to be very fickle. He has made himself absolutely secure. How ? I will tell you. He sits, as you know, for Birchampton—a sizable industrial city. Now you may know also that that city happens to be the birthplace of Miss Tottie Trixie, the music hall star. The town is inordinately, absurdly proud of her : they are people of curious enthusiasms up there and Tottie is one of them. There is not a newsboy that would not know her by sight, would not greet her by her Christian name.

Very well. The first step in Willoughby's astounding political success was to marry that actress. It proved a tremendous electoral asset of course. It is important to realise why, if you want to understand the underlying forces in electioneering. The great objective in an election is to get into personal and sympathetic touch with those who might vote against you. It is easy enough to get enthusiastic meetings of your own supporters. But that won't help you very much : they would vote for you anyway. 'The thing to do is to reach the other side in some way : to let them see that you are a human being, and a decent sort of chap after all. Well, Willoughby could always get the other side to come to his meetings. Why ? Because his wife, the famous Tottie Trixie, was always there on the platform, making, indeed, most of the speeches and giving an entertainment as good as she gives at the Follies. Whenever Willoughby holds a meeting, the whole town, quite irrespective of political opinion, turns out to it. And as she really is rather amusing and has a most taking "way with her," why those present, even if they don't like Willoughby's politics, remember that after all he is the husband of the most famous woman Birchampton ever produced—and the prettiest in England. And that's only the beginning. You know the man's military record ? He killed seven Germans with his own hands, a

fact of which Tottie never fails to remind the audience and of which he could not very well remind the audience himself. And something still more important. Willoughby is a big upstanding fellow (stupid as a wooden image, but a great athlete). Well, he does not confine his interest in the City football team to ceremonial kick-offs at matches; he becomes an actual member of the team and plays exceedingly well, and on one crucial occasion when a cup-tie decision was involved managed to kick three goals against Manchester United. That of course put the lid on it. After that the election became a mere formality. A seat which his party could never count on holding has become a walk-over for *him*. Turn that man out of Birchampton? Not on your life. Whoever attempts it is going to fail. Tottie will see to that.

My informant may have pulled my leg a little in his somewhat too picturesque attempt to drive home his points. But will anyone who knows anything of politics deny that factors something like those he enumerated weigh enormously in the normal electoral fight?

Let us see what such a story means with reference to the generalisation of a moment ago—that the commonest error made by the public in its political decisions is to ignore the self-evident fact, the truth of which it is perfectly well aware; that sometimes the worst errors into which nations fall are self-evident errors, plain to the least-informed intelligence, if intelligence of any kind is applied.

Those elections that placed the footballer in his seat happened at a time when Britain was going through the gravest crisis she had known since the Industrial Revolution, perhaps the gravest crisis she has ever known. The country's capacity to feed its population at all, its position in the world, the kind of life

that the next generation would lead, its liability to new wars, to unemployment of the acutest kind, to poverty, low wages, appalling housing conditions, were all involved in those elections. Every vote was important. The need for getting all possible support for the right policy as against the wrong was vital.

Well, what weighed with ten or twenty thousand adult men and women at that time of crisis in that particular constituency? What really weighed was the fact that one of the candidates had married a pretty actress, had killed seven Germans, and had kicked three goals.

I suggest two things: first, that the capacity to marry actresses, kill Germans, or kick goals is no qualification for dealing with the appallingly urgent problems of foreign trade, an inflated currency, public debt, better housing, and the appeasement of Europe; and, secondly, that it is open to the least educated, the meanest intelligence, the waitress or the charwomen, to see that that capacity is no qualification for dealing with those things. The one fact which was plain and undoubted, self-evident, was the one fact which was completely disregarded. The minds of the thousands fell into the trap of a quite irrelevant sympathy; not a sympathy bad in itself; good, indeed, in itself, but disastrous, catastrophic, when allowed to determine decisions to which it is completely irrelevant, when used to justify escape from reason.

Let us delve a little farther into the psychology of elections.

Feeling that the authority just quoted had done rather less than justice to the average voter, I set about a serious two or three years' education of the constituency which had been assigned to me. In

the course of that campaign of education I made certain discoveries. One of them was this: If you are dealing with a population racked by unemployment, suffering from low wages, bad housing, economic insecurity, danger of war, then the things which it is extremely difficult to get them interested in are more stable employment, better housing, higher wages, general economic security, the maintenance of peace. That sounds mere paradoxical extravagance. Obviously, you may object, people who suffer from low wages, who do not get enough to eat, who see their children suffer, will be interested in finding a cure. Well, it can be put to a very simple test. In an average industrial city, where the conditions just recited are common, announce two meetings: one to be addressed by the greatest authorities in the country on problems of unemployment, foreign trade, currency, housing, peace; and the other for the same evening, to be addressed on those subjects by, shall we say, Master Jackie Coogan or Mary Pickford. Which would have the larger audience—among the unemployed? There cannot be any question about it. The attendance at the first meeting will bear about the same relation to the attendance at the second, that the circulation of a highbrow weekly does to the circulation of *Tit-Bits*, or the *Saturday Evening Post*, or other popular illustrated papers of a type which, the world over, is now becoming so common. (When Mary Pickford or Charles Chaplin comes to London the history of Europe seems to stop. The emphasis of news passes altogether from such things as German Reparations or Ruhr invasions, and nearly all that one can learn at those times of yesterday's history of the world is the number of

persons Charlie shook hands with, or what Mary said about the London shops.)

It may be objected that the unemployed have not the education to follow understandingly a lecture on the relation of foreign policy or deflation to unemployment, and thus prefer Charlie Chaplin or Tottie Trixie. But at his meeting, or among the voters for Tottie's husband, you will find as large a proportion of the "educated" as of the "uneducated." Indeed, political interest and political understanding, the capacity to discuss intelligently a subject like currency, is certainly greater in organisations like the I.L.P. or an average Co-operative Society, mainly of working-class origin, than it is in *bourgeois* political organisations. The jazz mind is not solely or mainly a working-class mind.

This, then, is what "education" seems to have done for the mind of the mass. The trivial things are the interesting things; and the vital things, the problems of social life and death, are to the average mind so dull and wearisome that it can only be driven to give some shadow of attention to them by a heavy sense of duty.

It may be urged that these instances are themselves too trivial. In the rather dusty business of party politics, it may be said, the public will rightly enough be relatively indifferent to candidates, feeling probably that both are self-seeking adventurers and that we might as well vote for an amusing one as for a dull one; and that, for that matter, Mary Pickford knows as much as the Prime Minister about unemployment. It is not in elections, we are told, that the real mind and heart of the people are touched. But when the issues are really grave and plain, then a deep sense

of rightness will be stirred and the voice of the people will in verity be the voice of God.

Well, take a circumstance which was grave enough in all conscience : the opening of the War in 1914. Was the voice of the people the voice of God then ? I mean the voice of the German people, when seventy millions of the most educated people of the Western world stood behind their government (at least, such for ten years has been our passionate conviction and the basis of the ultimate peace which we made with them) when that government launched upon civilisation what we have agreed to call the greatest crime of history. Again, you may object that I am taking unfair examples ; that " Huns " are exceptional ; that, as our newspapers, politicians, public men, bishops, pastors, teachers so persistently taught us for ten years, Germans stand in a special category " outside the frontiers of civilisation " if not indeed of humanity, since they are in the habit of boiling down their dead for glycerine, of cutting off babies' hands for amusement. Have we not had numberless witnesses to these facts ? Have not our educated men again and again given support to their credibility ? How, therefore, can I cite a collective decision of the German nation as illustrative of what " the voice of the people " may be—whether of God or of Satan ?

Very well, we will confine our cases to Allied decisions.

Was the voice of the people the voice of God when the British, the French, the Italian, the American peoples came to make peace ? The occasion then was grave, too. Nearly a whole generation of youth had given their lives to give us the victory we were then using because we had told them during four years

that the victory which their deaths would bring was to be used to give mankind a new hope, to wipe away old evils that turned men into butchers and the world into a slaughter-house. How did we fulfil our side of the contract with them ?

About the treaty we then made we can assuredly say this : If we were making it to-day it would be a very different document. Is it really necessary to labour the point that it would be different ? Have we not, indeed, radically altered as much of it as can readily be altered—particularly the economic clauses ? Would we not now oppose many of the provisions, territorial and other, for which, in common with our Allies, we then clamoured ? How strange do some of the slogans of the settlement now sound ! “ Whole Cost of the War,” “ Hang the Kaiser,” “ Punishment of all War Criminals ”—and other things which figured in Mr. Lloyd George’s “ points ” in 1918. Instead of maintaining the early demands for “ entire cost,” a demand which, in addition to being futile and fatuous, involved violating the solemn agreement of honour on the faith of which the enemy laid down his arms, we have become the protagonists of moderation, refusing participation in Ruhr invasions, lending Germany large sums, floating many German industrial loans in London. The Kaiser was the enemy of mankind, Antichrist for whom no punishment could be too great ; we demanded his surrender for punishment. When in June 1926 the German people are asked by referendum to say whether the Kaiser’s private property shall be forfeit (incidentally, as a potential though indirect asset for Reparations) and there is a considerable poll in favour of such course, *The Times* is shocked at such harshness and comments :

It is of great significance that more than 14,000,000 men and women of the foremost and most highly educated race of Europe should have supported such a violation of natural morality.¹

In describing this action, as it does, as "barefaced robbery," *The Times* seems to have overlooked the fact that we have anticipated the German population in the confiscation of German Royal property. Article 257 of the Versailles Treaty, dealing with the German State property subject to seizure, reads :

For the purposes of this Article, the property and possession of the German Empire and the German States shall be deemed to include all the property of the Crown, the Empire, or the States, and the private property of the former German Emperor and other Royal personages.

We have acted under that provision in South-West Africa, confiscating the possessions of a German Royal Family Trust under which—such are the curious incidents of these things—H.R.H. Prince of Connaught, a former Governor General of the Union, is a beneficiary. If *The Times*, nevertheless, would regard this confiscation of royal property as barefaced robbery, though in this case we, as beneficiaries under the Treaty, happen to be the robbers, how would it describe the confiscation (under Article 297 of the Treaty) by the British Government of the plantations of thousands of German colonists in German East Africa, in many cases the outcome of a life's work, and the expulsion of the colonist after this confiscation of his private property without one penny of compensation ?² Yet this reduction of colonists, in many cases elderly,

¹ June 11, 1926.

² In 1918 *The Times* warmly upheld Sir Eric Geddes (he of the squeaking pips), part of whose policy of squeezing Germany was to take every bit of property belonging to Germans in neutral

to poverty was carried out so ruthlessly that when completed the colony was described by an Englishman who visited it as "an empty shell." Obviously to-day we should not want to do that sort of thing, even to Kaisers, and as to lesser criminals we have just forgotten all about them.¹

Verily, the Treaty would be a different document if written to-day.

But why? Were not the facts which would guide us to-day available then? They were just as available, just as visible, if we had wanted to see them. We did not want to see them. It is not the facts which have altered; it is our mood and temper.²

I have said above that at election time the average voter is not interested in such things as a better income, improved conditions of life, or larger opportunities for his children; that he will usually drop any pretence even of interest in them if he can turn instead to a piece of entertainment like a speech

and Allied countries, all her gold and silver, all the jewels of her citizens, all the contents of her picture galleries and libraries, and to sell the proceeds for the Allies' benefit. "I would strip Germany as she has stripped Belgium." In extenuation of Sir Eric, it may be explained that in an earlier speech he had incurred the grave displeasure of the then proprietor of *The Times* by admitting in a moment of injudicious candour that it might not prove possible to extract from Germany the whole cost of the War. An indiscretion of this kind was enough to kill a man politically in 1918, and Sir Eric had to re-establish his orthodoxy.

¹ The list drawn up at Paris includes the President of the German Republic and several officials now walking about unmolested in London and Paris.

² It will not do to ascribe the defects of the Treaty of Versailles to the wickedness of statesmen tricking the public. It was in full accord with the public opinion of the time, including American public opinion. We know now, by such revelations as those of Lloyd George's secret memorandum, Nitti's book, Wilson's difficulties, that the statesmen would have avoided some of the worst errors if they had not been compelled for the safety of their political positions to feed the hungry emotions of the public.

from Jackie Coogan or a football match. Usually, of course, the process by which we turn our politics into entertainment, diversion, is a little more subtle and disguised than by the importation of movie artists or music hall actresses into them.

Thus, it would be exactly true to say that in the election of 1918 the electorate as a whole were not interested at all in promoting the country's welfare, protecting it against the repetition of evils like those through which it had just passed: re-establishing its trade, reconstructing its industry. No one who can really recall the temper of that time would honestly say that most people were then sufficiently introspective or rational to consider what would be the effect upon the country of the policy for which they clamoured.

There had been four years of bitter war and appalling losses—of a propaganda which did not even pretend to tell the truth since its object was to make us hate the enemy and so want to go on fighting him. For four years it had permitted nothing good to be said of the enemy and nothing evil of our Allies or ourselves. The result was that the average man was consumed with a blazing passion of retaliation. The one thing he wanted, the one thing in which he was really interested, was the satisfaction of that passion. One had only to attend any ordinary election meeting of the time to realise that it was simply comic to expect a rational consideration of welfare from people under the dominion of feelings such as these. A violent lust was upon us, and we were perfectly ready to sacrifice country, our children's future security, and everything else to satisfy it.

I call to mind one meeting. Both candidates were to address it. The first, not electorally very expert,

tried to awaken his audience to the gravity of the decision which they were to make. The peace about to be made would determine whether the hopes of a new world would be realised. He spoke of the need of England—densely populated, dependent for its food on foreign trade, facing a difficult period of reconstruction—for a stabler Europe than we had known in the past. One could hear the audience getting fidgety. A woman shouted warningly, "No Pacifism"; cheers greeted her interjection. The candidate attempted to explain the mechanism of indemnity payments: the amount of the indemnity could not at best be more than the difference between what Germany sold abroad and what she bought. To pay much, she must expand greatly her foreign trade. Again murmurs, and finally a voice, raucous but voluble, from the back of the hall:

Dry up on all this and tell us plainly whether you favour making Germany pay the 'ole cost of the War and 'anging the Kayzer.

That practically ended the first candidate's speech. The opposing candidate who followed knew his business. He began his speech with these words:

I am for hanging the Kaiser.

After the rather unexciting economic arguments of his opponent this battle-cry was a relief, and met with cheers that raised the roof. They were even louder when he added:

I am for making Germany pay the whole cost of the War, whatever hair-splitting lawyers may prate about the Armistice engagements.¹

¹ *The Times* leading article of December 8, 1918, entitled "Making Germany Pay" says: "There is too much suspicion of interests

And his initial triumph was ably followed up. The speaker, referring to the fact that he had given two sons to his country, related how one of them had been told by a French officer of the finding, by a friend of that officer (who had told the officer, who had told the son, who had told the father), of a crucified Canadian in one of the trenches from which the Germans had been driven. No details were spared. And then, on an even more solemn note, came descriptions, read from the undeniable, indubitable printed word of British newspapers, of the boiling down of the dead, the cutting off of the children's hands. . . . The orator played with the emotions of that audience as a harpist upon strings.

There could not be much doubt when he sat down which of the two candidates would be elected.

Yet . . . after all . . . what *had* these extremely moving and electorally effective stories to do with the problem of maintaining the country's welfare, of preventing that unemployment and collapse of trade which obviously threatened and against which not a few (this present writer among them) were doing their best to warn the public? The subject-matter of the candidate's speech had, of course, nothing to do with these things. But it made certain his election.

As a good politician he realised, of course, that the "big" public was not interested in the country's

concerned to let the Germans off lightly, whereas the only possible motive in determining their capacity to pay must be the interests of the Allies." And the political correspondent in that issue writes: "It is the candidate who deals with the issues of to-day; who adopts Mr. Barnes' phrase about 'hanging the Kaiser' and plumps for the payment of the cost of the War by Germany, who rouses his audience and strikes the notes to which they are most responsive."

welfare : in anything so " dry " as trade, employment, education, currency. At most times an election audience would be bored stiff by the discussion of such subjects. And in moods like that which marked the election of 1918, just previous to the Peace Conference, they simply would not listen to anything so cold-blooded and rationalised as the question whether we had undertaken to limit our indemnity claim to certain well-defined costs ; or whether, even if we were morally entitled to make the claim, it would be advantageous to the material interests of Great Britain to attempt to enforce it. The understanding of these issues did not need any particular education or special knowledge. Yet the mass of the voters refused to consider them for a moment ; the mere statement of them provoked anger, irritation, a fierce resentment, as threatening to defraud the public of the satisfaction of its passions. The relevant facts of the settlement, the proclaimed objects of the War, were lost sight of in an irrelevant hostility ; as in the more trivial case of the election of the footballer, the relevant facts were lost sight of in an irrelevant sympathy.

Four days before going to the polls in that election, Mr. Lloyd George (at Bristol) laid down the principles of his indemnity policy. They were : (1) We have an absolute right to demand the whole cost of the War ; (2) We propose to demand the whole cost of the War ; (3) A committee appointed by the Cabinet believe that it can be done.

Now, among the estimates then being made of the whole cost of the War, the most moderate placed it at somewhere about twenty-four thousand million pounds. This would mean an annual payment for interest alone (apart from sinking fund) of one thousand

two hundred million pounds. The Dawes Plan calls for less than one-tenth of this amount.

At the Conference some such figure as twenty-four thousand millions was actually mentioned. Lloyd George was asked just what it meant, since it could never be collected. He is reported to have replied : "Twenty-four thousand millions ! My dear fellow, if the election had gone on another fortnight, it would have been fifty thousand millions."

All those figures were "electoral" figures.

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I am dealing here with events that are not yet ten years old. And yet I am conscious of the psychological impossibility of making the man of 1926 realise in any vivid sense how he felt and thought and acted in 1918. It serves little purpose to recall the mere external event. That does not reach the essence of the thing. A friend of mine in France once tried to write a history of the Dreyfus Case and brought it to me for my opinion. He had carefully catalogued all the occurrences of that extraordinary ten years : the condemnation, the degradation, the exile to the Devil's Island, the demand for revision, what this public man did, what that other said—all careful, exact, full. But when I handed it back to him and said : "You have told of nearly every event that happened except the one event—the tone and colour and intensity of the tumult which that case provoked in the minds and hearts of men. You have told the facts, but you have not written a history of the Dreyfus Case." Sadly he agreed. So now I have the same sense of failure to bring home the nature of our feelings in that time : to make Philip sober see how he looked

and acted in his debauch, how men really did take leave of their senses, denied the self-evident, affirmed monstrous and impossible propositions, lauded evil and called it good. Something in us, the internal censor, emotional exhaustion, merciful forgetfulness, time, causes us, not to wipe out the whole drawing, but to pass over it a sponge which makes it foggy, indistinct ; the beastly detail gets merged into a general obscurity and we deny that that detail was in fact what it was.

I remember suggesting to my friend who wrote the history of the Dreyfus Case that the small things of that time would tell the story better than the big ones : the fact that a candidate for directorship of the Opera was ruled out and lost the position because it became noised about that he was a Dreyfusard ; that a group of papers for weeks harped on the fact that a particular politician's mother was English and that that explained his advocacy of revision. (For, of course, as M. de Freycinet explained at Rennes, and as everybody knew, England was the most important contributor to the Syndicate of Treason which had engineered the revision campaign.) So, now, the fact that if you go to Charing Cross station you will find the word *Fahrkarten* blotted out from above the booking-office perhaps tells more than many historical documents would : we were revolted then at the very sight of a German word, though half the words we use, and all the homely ones—man and God, and father and mother, and flesh and blood—are German words. I turn over my note-book to find similar signs that will record the time when men, educated men, took leave of sense and reason. Here are the papers printing long letters protesting violently against giving Christian

burial to the Germans brought down in a destroyed Zeppelin. Half a page devoted to a debate in Parliament about leaving an elderly German archæologist in charge of ancient documents in a museum. Questions in Parliament: Were German officers brought from the coast permitted to travel in first-class railway carriages? There is a great slaughter, it appears, of dachshunds, though one correspondent with qualms wants to be quite sure that the dogs really did originally come from Germany. The *Evening News* prints lists of those who had undertaken to help feed the children of interned Germans, harrying with headlines ("Hun-coddlers" was the invention for the occasion) Quakers and others who had been guilty of, explains the *Evening News*, "feeding the tiger's cubs with bits of cake." (One would have supposed that patriotism would prompt us to take a certain pride in the fact that Englishmen did not make war on children left in their midst. But war-time Press patriotism¹ is not of that kind. This is "a scandal that must be stopped" like the Christian burial of Germans.) When

¹ And perhaps peace-time as well. The smart paragraphist of the *Evening Standard*, replying, in the issue of September 18, 1926, to an alleged statement by Dr. Norwood to the effect that the British air raids and poison gas had slaughtered as many women and children as the German efforts of that kind, writes: "What he said is not an indictment of British humanity, but a tribute to British efficiency in making up lost ground. For that the Germans were the first to use poison gas and to bomb defenceless towns is incontestable. I suppose Dr. Norwood would admit that in war one cannot turn the other cheek." Is it, then, militarily efficient to kill enemy children? Alive they consume his food and render the blockade more effective; dead they relieve the enemy of a burden. Punishment? But . . . was it the babies who did the bombing? To undermine enemy *moral*? Is the father who has had a child killed by the enemy likely to fight less fiercely than before? Few are so sentimentally averse to facing facts as the "realist" who writes contemptuously of sentiment—and the Sermon on the Mount.

an English admiral refers to dead German sailors as "brave enemies," a veritable storm breaks. One popular English novelist protests volubly; and another reminds us that "an officer of standing records how he himself beheld the carcase of a little child hanging up on hooks in a butcher's shop" in Belgium. She plainly believed it. Why not? Had not even "pacifist and pro-German" papers within a few weeks of the outbreak of war dwelt upon little poignant details of girls with their breasts hacked off¹ and the handless babies. And at intervals Mr. Pemberton Billing and his black book; of the thousands of Englishmen in the Kaiser's pay or power, the hundred thousand Russians, the corpse factory. . . .

American notes reveal exactly similar idiocies. An amendment to the Espionage Act punishes with twenty years' imprisonment "any language intended to bring the form of government of the United States . . . or the flag . . . or the uniform . . . into contempt, scorn, contumely, or disrepute . . . or suggest the doing of any of the acts or things . . . enumerated . . ." ² An excessive punishment for the suggestion that the new-made Wall Street general looked an ass in his new uniform, or for pushing home

¹ *Daily News*, September 14, 1914: "The poor thing was very pretty and only about nineteen and had only her skirt on."

² The Amendment has since been repealed. Professor Zechariah Chafee, of the Harvard Law School, gives a few samples of punishment under the law as it stood: For saying "I am for the people and the Government is for the profiteers" a girl was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment. For questioning the legality of the American invasion of Russia without declaration of war, sentences of twenty years' imprisonment were imposed. Under the Minnesota State law it was held a crime to discourage women from knitting by the remark "No soldier ever sees those socks." Professor Chafee adds: "After the next war, critical thinking in this country will be practically impossible."—*The Next War*, published by the Harvard Alumni Bulletin Press.

the argument that the Constitution would work better if most senators were dead.

A Columbia professor proposes a Bill making it a penal offence to teach the German language to any American citizen;¹ such teaching shall only be by special licence granted after careful investigation as to whether the student is one hundred per cent. chemically pure American. . . . Did the director of the Boston Symphony Orchestra refuse to play "The Star Spangled Banner?" Are there GERMANS in the orchestra? The headlines scream at one. And that microbe is at work on this side too. "Boche Music Must Go" shouts the *Mail*,² because it is "Wily Pro-Germanism," a subtle form of German propaganda. "Wherever they have penetrated during the War," writes a contributor, "one of their first cards has been to organise concerts." Sir Henry Wood is castigated by a correspondent because he conducted a concert which included Wagner. Mr. Diaghileff joins in. "German music is suffocating miasma," Brahms a "putrefying corpse," "Beethoven a mummy," and, "as for Schumann, I see in him nothing but a homesick dog howling at the moon." And here, to vary things, a Christian clergyman violently fulminating against the insult to his parish which the bringing of some starving Austrian children constituted.

And here are copies of *John Bull*—Bottomley's *John Bull*. We have forgotten Bottomley, the man whose weekly fulminations had more readers, far more readers, than the articles of any other journalist

¹ For several years after 1917, in nearly all the American high schools the teaching of German was strictly prohibited.

² May 31, 1919.

whatsoever. The man who, during the war, was a force which governments feared ; who was spoken of more than once as a possibility for the Premiership ; who had his followers and henchmen in the House of Commons ; whose recruiting speeches were paid for at the rate of two hundred pounds apiece ; who for years was by far the most " popular " figure in the country ; whose articles clergymen read as sermons and Lord Rothermere published in his Sunday papers. . . .

Normally, four permanent dishes make up his journalistic menu : pornography, the Royal Family, horse-racing, and, by far the greatest of all, Patriotism. Had a German in a prison camp been accorded a Christian burial ? Violent protest at such a scandal ; articles made up of words which were noises rather than words. " Hellish Huns," " God Cursed Germhuns " (a pun repeated twenty times in one article), Damnable Bastards . . . Baby Killers, Cutters-off of Children's Hands—all usually to the approval of some clergyman or others writing letters. Had some public man refused to send away an old German servant ? The same kind of explosion : a rampage, a lynching. Had some other public man presumed to plead for workable terms of peace instead of the " extermination of the Germhun vermin ? "—then his father could not have been married to his mother. Nothing was too mean, too base as an instrument of this demagoguery. And as a means of circulation for his paper, of money-making, popularity, a seat in Parliament, the deference of bishops and titled folk, it worked successfully—oh ! how successfully. No one seemed to mind, and Mr. Bottomley might well have ended in the House of Lords but for a slip-up about money matters.

Here is a note made at the time touching this particular factor of the public mind of the period :

It is one of the astonishing blindnesses of those who profess to play some part in shaping our democracy that they do not seem to realise the momentum of the passions which are thus fed and strengthened. Our political, religious, and literary leaders have nothing to say when the Bottomleys, day after day or week after week, in papers that circulate by millions, paint the Germans—seventy millions of them, men, women, and children alike—as obscene animals. And then the leaders profess to be astonished when this public, educated in that fashion, decline to allow the Germans to be treated as human beings when it comes to making peace. The man in the street here is much more logical than his leaders. For years our papers have been so selecting news as to give colour to the supposition that Germans are not human beings at all : corpse factories, spitting of babies on bayonets. Germany alone responsible for the War, no atrocities in war but German atrocities—for years it all passed, although plenty of educated folk in private would admit it to be unutterable rubbish. But not a word in public from the respectable eminences ; no princes of the Church called a halt to this method. But if that presentation of the case were to be taken at its face value, then the peace is far too mild. Indeed, there is only one solution that would really be adequate to the situation : the asphyxiation of the whole German race. And while Mr. Bottomley just fell short of the influence which might have enabled him to compel the application of that remedy, he was powerful enough to block the way to anything short of it which could be effective. One would like to ask some of our leaders who “saw no harm” in this sort of thing just what they expected the peace to be like.

A certain vicious circle is established. The fact of printing habitually only half the truth—leaving out, that is, everything good done by the enemy and everything bad done by ourselves—creates a passion so strong that we simply won't hear anything that might be said for the enemy ; the pandering

to this passion strengthens it and causes it to reach heights which crave its daily dose of atrocities as drug, until you finally get a public which is not sane, and in that state of insanity makes treaties which will send our children into the cauldron of some new war—to start the process afresh in some intensified form.

Those who saw no harm in Bottomley, saw him day by day reducing the only religion we had—Patriotism—to a cruel and mean vindictiveness. Patriotism, illumined by some honest facing of the whole truth about the War and the enemy, might have been made an impulse of chivalry. “England does not do some things”—starve enemy children, make war on the helpless and feeble. But we know what the psychological law, just indicated, can do. If you make day by day these suggestions of treachery, of cunning, of cowardice, of obscenity, apply them to a whole people, men, women, and children alike, then in the end it will become “Patriotism” to clamour for the killing of little children by bombs or by blockades: to hound as traitors those who showed a little decent human pity for the suffering and lonely ones in our midst, to harry old women who have spent a lifetime in England, to seize their small savings, to drive from public life the politician who may have the courage to object to these things, to encourage the baiting of the conscientious objector, to disseminate silly and lying stories of plots and spies, to make of this country, which used to boast about being the most liberal in the world, quite one of the worst in its *anti-foreigner* legislation. This was what, in the able hands of Mr. Bottomley, Patriotism came to mean.

And this commercial exploitation of what are perhaps among the meanest and basest, as they are certainly at this particular juncture of the world's history the most dangerous and anti-social, instincts in our defective human nature, is regarded with the completest complacency by our moral leaders. If Mr. Bottomley had confined himself to this means of money-making instead of yielding to his early taste for lotteries, he could have accumulated great wealth and have given to the nation a race of hereditary legislators. And most of those who now call Heaven to witness his villainies would not have had a word to say.

Keynes put the matter at that time, in so far as it touches the politician, in these terms :

Mr. Lloyd George took the responsibility for a Treaty of Peace that was not wise, which was partly impossible, and which endangered the life of Europe. He may defend himself by saying that he knew that it was not wise and was partly impossible and endangered the life of Europe ; but that public passions and public ignorance play a part in the world of which he who aspires to lead a democracy must take account ; that the Peace of Versailles was the best momentary settlement which the demands of the mob and the characters of the chief actors conjoined to permit ; and for the life of Europe, that he had spent his skill and strength for two years in avoiding or moderating the dangers. . . . The public history of the two years which have followed the Peace exhibit him as protecting Europe from as many of the evil consequences of his own Treaty as it lay in his power to prevent, with a craft few could have bettered, preserving the peace though not the prosperity of Europe, seldom expressing the truth, yet often acting under its influence. He would claim, therefore, that by devious paths, a faithful servant of the possible, he was serving Man.

But that claim would ignore a good deal—the fact, for instance, that by “ talking as much folly as the public demand,” the statesmen increase the power of the folly which they have to meet.

This picture of the public mind will be criticised as lop-sided, as giving undue prominence to what is, after all, but one element in collective behaviour. As against the blindnesses, irrationalisms, meannesses, cruelties, falsehoods, and insincerities which the study of collective behaviour so often reveals, we must balance, I shall be told, the nobler qualities, the sound sense of men in so much of their lives—the patience,

generosities, magnanimities. The evil is, relatively to the rest, a small amount.

Well, the reefs and shoals shown on a navigator's chart indicate what is but a tiny proportion of the ocean's whole area. But it is to that tiny proportion that the good seaman gives nearly all his attention. The whole object of these pages is not to dwell on the phases of human conduct which are naturally sound, but on the points at which, socially, it breaks down. The "naturally" good and social tendencies can be left to themselves; it is the anti-social that we need to watch. We may say, indeed, that in normal times mankind jogs along pretty well, and that this is the main thing. But that is something like saying of a motor-car driver that he is a good chauffeur except in traffic difficulties, when he is pretty certain to cause nasty smashes.

CHAPTER II

DOES THE PROFESSOR HELP, OR THE PARSON ?

I HAVE insisted so far that the truths which were habitually disregarded or defied in that time were for the most part self-evident truths. It was not knowledge which was lacking. What was lacking was the sort of discipline, a certain sense of moral obligation to the truth, which enables us to rise above our passions for a moment and honestly face a fact that is unpleasant, a fact, for instance, which, if faced, may deprive us of the satisfaction of some emotional appetite, such as vengeance, or show what we call our moral indignation to be ill-grounded. If, in moments of passion, intelligence can only operate by virtue of a certain moral discipline, then education in the sense of greater knowledge will not of itself save us. And that will also explain why the educated elements were as bad as the rest, as much part of the mob as the others. "Learning" as we know it may, indeed, make the thing worse, for it may be used to justify our passion to ourselves.

If one examines any of the typical cases of mass error such as those dealt with in this book—the political folly of the Crimean War, the absurdities of American Anglophobia, the atrocities of negrophobia, the wrong-headedness of the Dreyfus affair, the

“Germanic superman” nonsense of pre-war Prussianism, the silliness of post-war Reparations demands—one finds the greatest lights of literature at one with the mass. Here one sees a Kingsley or a Tennyson lauding the spirit which drew England into the Crimean War, pouring contempt and scorn upon those who would have stayed her hand; there the lights of French literature ranged on the side of the military power against the civil authority in the Dreyfus affair; elsewhere a Treitschke voicing Germanic world domination; or a Swinburne or a Kipling becoming the poet and literary protagonist of some of the most doubtful forms of later British Imperialism, as we find a d’Annunzio the protagonist of the most mischievous of Italian political tendencies.

It is no part of my argument, of course, to imply that no educated people were included among those, in the sum-total happily a very large number both in Europe and America, who spoke and wrote against the follies of the war-time settlement. My point is that the educated class showed no larger proportion of such than the “uneducated”: the Universities, the Clubs, the Churches were not more immune from the contagion of unreason than any average Trade Union or Odd Fellows’ Society. If that be true—and no one with knowledge of the ground would deny it—of what avail was the learning in this particular trouble?

There were two items of policy at that time deeply marked by this refusal to face the self-evident. The first was the parallel demand that Germany should be made to pay these vast indemnities *and* be prevented from increasing her competition in foreign trade. It is not necessary to have read a line of technical

economics to realise that these are mutually exclusive demands. How shall Germany get this money we demand, except by selling goods?

Here is an assembly of French academicians, senators and writers discussing Reparations. They are agreed on two things: (1) Germany shall restore the devastation of France; (2) Germany shall not be permitted to export to France anything whatsoever—she shall restore by “money.” M. Tardieu—cultivated, widely read, educated—writes to this effect to *The Times*: “We cannot accept the risk of German industrial revival, *therefore* we must compel her to pay mountainous indemnities.” And it is evident on its face that Germany can only pay mountainous indemnities if she is industrially developed.

If only M. Tardieu were unlearned, he would see, as, for instance, an untutored savage would see immediately, that a group of persons could not go on delivering you wealth (goods or services, that is) if you forbade them to make goods or perform services; or that you could not receive them if you refused to receive them. But being learned and literary, full of wonderful ideas about nationality and the spirit of history and group-consciousness, it is impossible to convince him that if you don’t receive goods, you don’t receive them.

But the second item of policy, common at that time, was still more striking as illustrating our refusal to face self-evident truth for fear that we might be deprived of our emotional satisfactions. This item was the demand for the punishment of “Germany” as a single, consciously guilty “person”; wrong, and aware that “she” was wrong. Great lights of literature in America, Britain, France lent the weight

of their names to the support of the policy of securing from Germany a formal written admission of "her" guilty responsibility for the War, and the consequent justice of a severely punitive peace, the punishment, that is to say, of seventy million of men, women and children who did not choose their political allegiance ; who make part of the German State for the same reason that we make part of the British ; who had very little control over their Government (it was largely because they were not a democracy that we were fighting them) ; and who, in a few years' time, would be made up mainly of people who were children when Belgium was invaded. Yet all, peasants and aristocrats, Catholics and Protestants, Socialists and Junkers would fittingly be punished in the "person" of Germany.

That we had thus taken a convenient figure of speech, a symbol, and made of it in our minds a reality, as though in fact there were a person named Germany, whom we could dislike or like, praise or blame, capable of catching a cold in its head and being cured (we were always saying that we could not bring "her" into the League of Nations because "she" had not repented ; with what organ does a federative republic repent ?) ; that we had set up this fiction in order to be able to indulge our passion of retaliation, was just as little seen by the literate as by the unlearned. Indeed, the "effigies" which Nationalism has set up are rather in a special sense the creation of the literary minded. If, to one of these literary folk, one were to put the question "Don't you loathe people who live in odd-numbered houses ?" he would, of course, retort that you could not make an entity or personality of such a category ; that all sorts of

people, opposites, wicked and good, humane and cruel, lived therein, and that consequently you could not attach like or dislike to them all. But is that less true of the millions who inhabit the area we call "Germany"? Indeed, many, as we know, profess to see into the secrets of "her" heart and to know that "her" pretended repentance is no repentance, and know perfectly well what "she" will do half a century hence. Thus Mr. Coulson Kernahan, the author, writes to the *Daily Mail*:¹

. . . Germany, in her so-called "changed heart," hates us as never before. But for us her greed and bestial blood-lust for power would have triumphed. She at least will not forget. She will set to work, first to capture trade and to build up wealth and power economically, and to foment disunion among the Allies—possibly to entice and to bribe the teeming millions of Russia and of the coloured races to become her thralls. Then, "when her hour comes, she will strike" . . . when I am in my grave—unless Britain set herself to remember—Britain will have cause to weep that Britons forgot.

Mr. Kernahan knows what Germany will do when he is dead, but if you were to ask him what his own country will do next year at the general election, he could not tell you to save his immortal soul.

As little did the educated classes, or our moral leaders, seem to react against an amazing ethical fallacy which was current at the period of the settlement as justifying the terms of peace. Whenever at the time of the peace-making, or indeed until about 1922, one pointed out the one-sidedness and injustice of certain elements in the Versailles settlement, the

¹ In the same way a correspondent writes to the same paper (April 22, 1919) to "warn" Englishmen against the "kindness" shown by Germans. It is all their artfulness. He knows.

retort which was taken as so conclusive as to close the discussion was this: "That is the sort of thing Germany would have done if *she* had won." This was regarded popularly as the complete and final answer to any criticism of our policy.

Let us examine it. The policy of Germany towards other nations, the conduct of German rulers and officers, made Germany an enemy of civilisation and caused the wrath of God to descend upon her. That fact—the fact that the wrath of God had descended upon Germany—contained for Britain a great lesson. What is that lesson? We were told it was this: that we should imitate German policy, adopt German conduct as our own. And the reason France was right a little later was that she was acting as Germany would have acted, had Germany won the War. "Above all," says a great newspaper proprietor, with all the emphasis of italics and heavy type—"above all we should ask ourselves how the Germans would have treated France and Britain if they had won the War."

We should ask ourselves that question presumably for the purpose of avoiding anything resembling the German policy? Not at all. We should ask ourselves what Germany would have done, for the purpose of doing that thing ourselves, as our means of preserving peace. Again, this is an extremely simple issue; right conclusions concerning it demand no special knowledge, nothing that is not within the grasp of all of us. Yet learning did not save our educated classes from falling into the trap with the rest.¹

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¹ Some soldiers saw this point before the *litterati*. Among the signatories of the Treaty General Smuts was the first to repudiate it. And General Sir Ian Hamilton spoke, let us hope, for many

Not long ago it fell to the lot of the present writer to go through a number of "War Books" produced in the early part of the War—British, French, German, American. They deal, of course, with the issues of the War, political and social; with the nature of the enemy's cause, his character and conduct (particularly in atrocities); with nationalism and internationalism; with the value of the small State; with the dangers which threaten civilisation and freedom; with the States which in history have shown themselves to be the champions of these things; with the character of Russian, German, French, and British civilisation, and so on.

Many of the books bear the very greatest names in literature and learning. They all profess to be serious and permanent literature, the application of ripe learning to the most vital problems of life and society, very far removed from the hasty judgments of journalism or of the unlettered and inexperienced. Not one of the books is twenty years old.

Of quite a large proportion of them one would say that the authors would certainly be extremely embarrassed if they were to-day confronted with the judgments that they passed only a decade ago. This does not merely refer to German professors or

of his colleagues when he wrote "Fatal Versailles! Not a line—not one line in your treaty to show that those boys, our friends who were dead, had been any better than the emperors; not one line to stand for the kindness of England; not a word to bring back some memory of the generosity of her sons." Which may offset Sir Percy Scott's declaration that "the whole civilised world" will approve the peace terms and agree "that as liars from the Kaiser downwards they are unparalleled . . . as thieves and wanton destroyers of property they have out-done the savage race of Huns they are descended from . . . they have no honour and the world has been foolish in treating them as a civilised race; they are barbarians."

divines who were signatories of famous manifestoes ; it refers equally to British and French writers about Tsarist Russia and its character and policy ; to French analysis of British policy, and British of French ; to works dealing with the relative advantages of complete and incomplete victory ; to treatises and pamphlets upon self-determination, democracy, and militarism ; to what American authors wrote as neutrals touching the new project of a League of Nations.

The startling result of the survey prompted a comparison over a somewhat wider space of time, and an examination of the judgments delivered twenty, thirty, or forty years ago by French learning upon such things as British character and policy, and by British on German character and policy, and the relative merits of French and German influence in the world.

The reader can, of course, guess the result of such a comparison. It is not only that in 1915, on certain matters of historical fact, German learning pronounces one judgment and British and French learning a flatly contradictory one, but that British learning—in the sense of the British writers of academic authority—in 1915 contradicts British learning of 1870 or 1890 as flatly as French judgment of 1915 does that of twenty years ago.¹ Sometimes the contradictions are expressed by the same person.

During America's year of military co-operation with

¹ Not usually, however, with the *naïveté* of Sir (then Mr.) Edmund Gosse, who, lecturing in 1916 on "the great changes that are to follow the War—an intellectual entente between this country and France"—said :

"We for our part shall make no further mental excursions beyond the Rhine. I have worshipped my Goethe and Heine, but I have no wish to open one volume of their works ever again" (reported in the *Westminster Gazette*, November 30, 1916).

Britain there was a movement in the American academic world for the revision of American school histories. For generations, presumably, American historians had not been telling the truth. Why was it left, then, until the particular year of 1917 to appoint committees to deal with so grave an educational fact? But in 1917 several American writers show quite clearly that the anti-British colouring of American history had been due to German intrigue. So some text-books were actually altered, while others were withdrawn from use. This was in 1918. In 1920 I find reports in a Philadelphia newspaper of a movement for *altering back* the histories—a sudden discovery, again synchronising with a change in the popular attitude, that the historians were telling the truth after all.¹

¹ Two years ago the Senate of the State of New York passed, by a vote of 35 to 9, a measure entitled the Higgins Patriotic Text-Book Bill. This Bill laid down minute requirements for educational boards regarding history text-books which might be used in the State schools. Any book which “fails to emphasise the scope of the victory of the United States in any of its wars” was to be banned. The Higgins Bill did not make direct mention of the British in its text, but it mentioned “acts of oppression” charged in the Declaration of Independence. No book would be permitted to be used if (among other things)

- (1) it falsifies, distorts, doubts, or denies the acts of oppression recited in the Declaration of Independence;
- (2) it fails, in dealing with the period, to refer in the text to the principal acts of oppression as set forth in the Declaration of Independence.

Finally, any book which “belittles, ridicules, doubts or denies, or which, if a text-book dealing with the Revolutionary period, omits to mention the services and sacrifices of American patriots by which national independence was won, or which emphasises or enlarges upon the possible human failings or shortcomings of such patriots without giving at least equal prominence to their virtues and merits,” would be barred from the public schools. This measure failed to secure a passage through the Lower Chamber of the New York State Legislature; but the fact that it could obtain

The process is deliciously epitomised in the astounding incident to which Professor Chafee, of Harvard University, has called attention.¹ Soon after American entrance into the War a moving-picture producer was sentenced to ten years in prison for a film about the American Revolution which depicted British soldiers, disguised as Indians, bayoneting women and children in the Wyoming massacre, because, the judge said, it might "make us a little bit slack in our loyalty to Great Britain." Mr. Griffith's film, "America," produced with the help of soldiers lent by the American Government, shows British soldiers, disguised as Indians, bayoneting women and children in the Wyoming massacre.

It is true that the writers of film plots are not historians, academic lights. But one does not see why the historians should not become film-plot writers, so well do standard histories fit the national mood. It is obvious that the English and French school books cannot both be right about the Napoleonic Wars. Read an average English account of the Battle of Waterloo and you get a clear statement of quite simple and understandable events; read an

a huge majority in the Senate of the leading Eastern State is significant.

In Chicago a campaign has recently been waged by a group of women called the Illinois Society of the Daughters of 1812, whose object it is to combat the propaganda which they allege is being put forward in order to "lessen the heroic measure of the men who have made history for the United States." The aim of the Society is to bring pressure upon the superintendants of schools to purge the schools of all history books which in any way reflect on the character of well-known figures in American history. Any book which suggests that the makers of America were human, and subject therefore to human failings, ought in the eyes of these ladies to be rigorously excluded from the schools.

¹ In an address before that university published in *The Next War* (Harvard Alumni Bulletin Press), p. 57.

average French account and you get an equally clear statement of simple and understandable events. And the two accounts are in flat contradiction, the one with the other; while the German accounts give still a third version. It is hardly too much to say that nearly all of the existing French and British histories of the diplomatic and political events which led to the Great War will within a generation be scrapped as utterly untrustworthy.

Presumably, indeed, the historians might plead that in war-time at least they are conscribed persons like the rest, and that their science is at the service of the State. Indeed, where does one's duty as a patriot end? If the truth happens to be inconvenient to the cause of one's country, should it be told? If we may ask, with General Mercier, what justice has to do with patriotism, may we not ask in an age of rival propagandas, what impartiality has to do with nationalist history-writing, what truth has to do with war and its politics? "Indifference to truth," writes the author of the article on Propaganda in the new edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "is a characteristic of propaganda. Truth is valuable only so far as it is effective." Our propaganda had therefore "the legitimate objects not only of concealing what it was useful to conceal, but of making suggestions which might deceive." And he observes: "The suspicions aroused by an admitted propaganda lessen its effectiveness, from which it follows that much of the work has to be furtive."

The war books of the historians deal with matters of historical fact. When we come to the other writers who treat of such things as the estimate of national character or the relative merits of political or philo-

sophical principles, the instability of judgment is greater still. One finds much American academic writing in 1915 pacifist and internationalist in tone ; in 1920 work emanating from the same source has become nationalist, anti-pacifist, militarist.

But we Europeans need not be supercilious, for we have passed extremely inconvenient judgments on each other's culture. It is European learning which condemns European learning, the while both sides fail to provide any prophylactic against the moral and intellectual errors which menace European civilisation.

During the early years of the War, in tracts and books and on recruiting platforms before the lads of our villages, our British professors explained what the German professors stood for : a system of philosophy which repudiated Right and would impose the most appalling of tyrannies ; a system which would destroy freedom, virtue, the spiritual life of mankind. The German had challenged all these. His nature was revealed in the burning of great libraries, the wanton destruction of beautiful and ancient buildings. Yet this judgment itself raises fundamental questions as to what "education" does for the maintenance of civilisation. For we are obliged to admit that the Prussian system had behind it vast stores of erudition, the advocacy of professors, writers, philosophers, aware not only of their own past and culture, but of ours ; learned beyond most in Europe, and, if knowledge could give wisdom at all, able to judge whether this democracy and freedom which (in the view of *our* professors) they desired to destroy was inferior to the system which they would substitute. Our professors, presumably, would agree in this : that the great learning of the German did not make

him wise; it left him blind to visible fact. The Englishman would remind us, doubtless, that the aggressive military Chauvinism which grew up in Germany before the War often, indeed, found its forcing-bed in the universities, under the direction of historians, professors, men of letters.

And if literary and academic culture as we know it must take a big share of responsibility for the development of nationalist fanaticisms which now devastate Europe, the failure of learning is hardly less noteworthy in the case of a new fanaticism now added to the old, that of Moscow. The real artisans of the Moscow system, with its terrors, were not the illiterate, but were amazingly learned products of an educational system common to most of Europe.

* * * * *

A similar phenomenon is to be noted when we turn to the war record of those whose special province is moral teaching, the clergy. How comes it that pastors and masters who, by their knowledge of history, are more aware than the busy man of the market-place of the errors into which nations are so very apt to fall, especially in war-time, give normally no warning of those errors?

The history of nearly all war, from the most remote to the most recent, reveals one hackneyed peculiarity. Even when they start on both sides with great professions of "no hate against the enemy people," that attitude undergoes a rapid change as the result of stories of atrocities for which the whole enemy people are held to be responsible. Half a dozen cases, if only of the right degree of obscenity and horror, will suffice to place the enemy people outside the pale, to

close our minds, to make impossible any sane and responsible attitude, and any workable peace.¹

The German pastors who made so much of the barbarities inflicted by Belgians upon German wounded are merely paraphrasing what Confederate clergymen said of the conduct of the Northern troops, or, for that matter, what the Hebrew priests in the pre-Christian Era said of their enemies. We insisted that German atrocities were something quite special to this War. But during the Boer War, not only was our Press full of the treacherous crimes against women and children, but the erstwhile Radical and Republican Swinburne embodied the accusations in a poem, and "retaliated" by reference to the "whelps and dams of murderous foes." The moral dangers inseparable from the assumption of tribal and collective responsibility, which is implied in the war-time exploitation of atrocities, are as plainly writ in the history of every war as is the fact of the atrocities themselves. The atrocity phenomenon is so invariable that one could, with perfect assurance, on the first day of any war, say exactly what accusations would be made continually by each side against the other.

Now, one would suppose that the mere familiarity which academic education gives with this invariable circumstance of war would secure for those who know something more of history than the busy man of the market-place a measure of immunity from the naïve credulity (the belief that only the enemy behaves like that) which alone could make these atrocity stories engender the crude tribal passions which they

¹ The stupendous political effect of this systematic lying in causing the victor to make a peace certain (unless changed to precipitate one day the whole process anew), is dealt with in later chapters.

do ; and, further, that those responsible in any way for moral leadership would use their knowledge to warn the people as a whole against falling into the fatal traps which gather about the atrocities of the enemy and his assumed collective responsibility for them. But, in fact, it is extremely difficult to find any real difference between the moral reaction to atrocities of the bishop who comes from Balliol and that of Mr. Bottomley and his readers. Cultured American divines who have managed during half a century to produce vast quantities of didactic literature without a single reference to the burning alive of negroes in time of profound peace and in the presence of thousands of " good orderly citizens," blaze instantly into poetic fury at the reported ill-treatment of an American soldier by his German captor. Presumably the divine (I have in mind a very popular one, who during the War " specialised " in German atrocities, collecting suitable photographs) has put to himself the question : on which of these two matters, the burning of negroes and the enemy treatment of prisoners, does the American conscience need most stirring ? He would seem to have judged that on the matter of lynching, the treatment of America's own " subject nationality," his nation's conscience is sufficiently awake, and that where national feeling needed stimulus was in condemnation of the enemy.

These moods of revolt against rational restraint of conduct—for that is what it amounts to—in all cases seem to be marked by curious similarities of argument. Previous to a war, we always hear a great deal—particularly from religious teachers—of the virtues of war as a moral tonic, as a corrective of sloth, luxury

self-indulgence. The list of those who, in the years 1900 to 1914, invoked the moral advantages of war is an astonishing one.¹ I sometimes wonder if these teachers ever, after a war, read the sermons, articles, lectures, books put forth before a war on its spiritual and moral advantages. No one, as far as I know, has written a single book or delivered a single sermon

¹ "We were all tranquilly feeding, good as gold, in the deep and pleasant meadows of the long Victorian peace when from some of the frailest animals in the pasture there rose a plaintive bleat for war. It was the very lambs that began it. 'Shall we never have carnage?' Stevenson, the consumptive, sighed to a friend. Henley, the cripple, wrote a longing 'Song of the Sword.' Out of the weak came forth violence. Bookish men began to hug the belief that they had lost their way in life; they felt that they were Neys or Nelsons *manqués*, or cavalry leaders lost to the world. 'If I had been born a corsair or a pirate,' thought Mr. Tappetit, musing among the ninepins, 'I should have been all right.' Fragile dons became connoisseurs, *faute de mieux*, of prize-fighting; they talked, nineteen to the dozen, about the still, strong man and 'straight-flung words and few,' adored 'naked force,' averred they were not cotton-spinners all, and deplored the cankers of a quiet world and a long peace. Some of them entered quite hotly, if not always expertly, into the joys and sorrows of what they called 'Tommies,' and chafed at the many rumoured refusals of British inn-keepers to serve them, little knowing that only by these great acts of renunciation on the part of licensees has many a gallant private been saved from falling into that morgue an 'officer house,' and having his beer congealed in the glass by the refrigerative company of colonels. . . .

"The father and mother of this virilistic movement among the well-read were Mr. Andrew Lang, the most donnish of wits, and one of the wittiest. . . . A nursling of Lang's was the wittier Kipling, then a studious youth exuding Border ballads and Bret Harte from every pore, but certified to carry about him, on paper, the proper smell of blood and tobacco. . . . Deep answered unto deep. In Germany, too, the pibrochs of the professors were rending the skies, and poets of C4 medical grade were tearing the mask from the hideous face of peace. The din throughout the bookish parts of Central and Western Europe suggested to an irreverent mind a stage with a quaint figure of some short-sighted pedagogue of tradition coming upon it, round-shouldered, curly-toed, print-fed, physically inept, to play the part of the war-horse in Job, swallowing the ground with fierceness and rage, and 'saying among the trumpets "Ha, ha!"'—C. E. Montague, in *Disenchantment* (Ch: to & Windus), pp. 212-214.

since the War to point out how far the War has justified this pre-war philosophy. We have had a flood of exhortation in the opposite sense. Not a day passes but we are reminded of the increase of crime, the growth of sensualism, luxury, which marks the post-war period. And considering that there were certainly some hundreds of publicists—bishops, professors, journalists, generals, admirals—all telling us what a spiritually superior place Britain would be after the War, it is really to be regretted that these same people do not disinter some of these pre-war exhortations and examine them in the light of the prevailing moral conditions.

In what has been written above, I have assumed, of course, that the contributions made by the clergy (as by others, for that matter) to the public mind of war-time are made sincerely. If we are to assume that the Churches and the *litterati* are lending themselves to the national propaganda maintained for war purposes, then, indeed, "there are no words." The Reverend G. A. Studdert-Kennedy, who was a famous military chaplain during the War, writes :¹

On the efficiency of the propaganda department everything else depends. At a moment's notice, every "civilised" nation must be ready with projectors to let loose upon the people clouds of poisonous lies. . . .

They must be made to weep with slush and sentiment that they may not see, to choke with indignation and to cringe with fear, that they may not think. Strong but subtle irritants to stir them to hatred must be invented.

Years afterwards the truth may come out, but the lies have served their purpose and people soon forget. They will be just as ready to believe that Russians torture women as they

were to believe that Germans melted down their dead for glycerine, if Russia should happen to be the enemy.

It must not be supposed that all this is done deliberately and out of cynical wickedness. If it were, it would be easy to cope with it. . . .

The knowledge that it is for the country's sake obliterates the distinction between truth and falsehood. Therein lie the horror of nationalist passion ; it has the power of turning good into evil, evil into good. All is grist that comes to its mill. . . . A filthy joke or a splendid poem, it does not matter which, so long as they win the War. "*Kamerad!* I have a wife and four children ; kill the b—, he might have four more"—(loud laughter)—or "Land of Hope and Glory, Mother of the Free," one is as good as the other.

Good is not good, evil is not evil ; it is all the same. God Himself is as dead as mutton unless He can help to win the War.

Speaking of Armistice Day celebrations Mr. Studdert-Kennedy has a passage which is particularly notable :

Armistice Day can be taken over by the subconscious gas factory, and made into a projector of subtle poison for the peoples' minds. There are thousands of people who assume without thought that its proper use is to strengthen the nationalist passion. They assume that the "Glorious Dead" are all British, or at most the dead of the Allied Nations, and that the armies are still drawn up face to face in Paradise. . . .

Who are the glorious dead ? If the glorious dead in whose memory we bow our heads in silence on November 11th include that great unnumbered, and wellnigh innumerable, host of all nations who fell in the brutal, bloody shambles caused by an outbreak of madness all over the world between 1914-1918, and we bow our heads in honour of their gallantry and in sorrow and shame for the crude and filthy theatre that sin provided for its display, then Armistice Day may be a blessing.

But if the Father's House in which there are many mansions is supposed to have special accommodation reserved for the

glorious Allies, and a notice posted up—Germans and Austrians not allowed, and Russians only admitted on oath of loyalty to the Czar, and on condition of an undertaking to pay their debts—then Armistice Day becomes a department of the poison gas and glory factory in preparation for the next war.

If the Princes of the Church had spoken thus during the War we should not have “lost the peace.”

CHAPTER III

WAS IT BETTER WHEN ENGLAND WAS "GOVERNED BY GENTLEMEN" ?

THIS failure of education as we know it, the fact that the Fellows of the Royal Society would seem to be as much subject to the mob mind as any meeting of strikers in the East End, has certain striking historical confirmations. We ascribe much of the popular hysteria our generation has known to the influence of an omnipresent popular sensational Press; to the "half-education" of Board schools. But these phenomena marked the Press of England just as noticeably when a daily paper cost sixpence or eightpence and when newspaper editors had their eyes solely on the clubman and the university graduate, when papers were produced "by gentlemen for gentlemen." This fact is brought out clearly in Mr. Kingsley Martin's study of public opinion in England during the period immediately preceding the Crimean War (*The Triumph of Lord Palmerston*).

Let us recall what happened over the Crimean War. In 1852 all who mattered in England were agreed it would be an outrageous absurdity to fight Russia for the purpose of upholding Turkey. Even indeed, at a much later date everybody admitted that Russia was prepared to concede everything essential and that the difficulties arose really from the obstinacy

of Turkey. Everyone admitted, moreover, that as between these two foreign tyrants, Turkey was immeasurably the worse. Further, it was believed that the Government of Louis Napoleon was not one that deserved support, and the French danger might at any moment become a very great one. (Palmerston himself at that date wrote: "It is wretched nonsense to imagine that the French do not contemplate an invasion of England.") It was not too much to say that at this date—1852—Napoleon was execrated by almost every section of political opinion.

Very well, by 1854, everybody who mattered—not merely popularity-hunting statesmen, commercial-minded newspaper owners, or the pot-house politicians, but the "intellectual aristocracy," including men like Kingsley, Tennyson, Martinau, Maurice—had entirely changed these notions, completely reversed them. To fight Russia had become a solemn obligation of honour; a war for Turkey would be a war for democracy and freedom, right and justice, the liberties of Europe and the protection of the oppressed. The Turks were extremely fine fellows; described by one public speaker (quoted by Mr. Martin) as "among the most enlightened of European nations," while the Russians were cunning, hateful, cruel, malicious oppressors. France had become "our faithful Ally," and Louis Napoleon a great Liberal statesman.

What had happened to bring about this marvellous change? What new facts, of a nature to make a man like Kingsley of one opinion in 1853 and of a diametrically opposed one in 1854, had been revealed? There were no new facts. Nothing had happened, except a certain metamorphosis in that elusive

thing public temper, which Palmerston partly followed, partly led, using newspapers pretty much as, at a later date, in other wars, they were used by certain of his successors. Put bluntly, there was, even in the terms of the old diplomatic values, no earthly need to go to war. The final breakdown of negotiations was not due to any real disagreement. "There was no deadlock," Mr. Martin points out.

No vital question had arisen which diplomacy could not have settled if the temper of earlier discussions had been preserved. There was no immediate danger to the British Empire; at first sight, no reason appears why war should have been declared in March 1854 rather than at almost any other moment during the preceding nine months. Further, the war itself did not bring its object any more clearly into light, for, as Mr. Strachey says, "Its end seemed as difficult to account for as its beginning."

The truth is, as Lord Aberdeen declared, the public were in the mood for war and had to have it. In a speech in the House of Lords he said: "We have been so long without having experienced the horrors and miseries of war, that it is but too common to look upon it now as a source of pleasurable excitement: and I verily believe that if, by the blessing of God and our endeavours, we should still be enabled to preserve peace, a very great disappointment will ensue in some quarters."

How did this mood arise?

It was not entirely the work of newspapers, whether "wangled" by Lord Palmerston or not. At the period *The Times* was, without any sort of question, the most powerful of all the newspapers. Mr. Martin writes:

Delane was confronted with the oldest¹ problem of democracy: was he to give the public what it wanted, or what he believed to be good for it? If the latter, was the whole influence of *The Times* to be sacrificed by the persistent advocacy of a view which the country would not accept? . . . The editor, in the last resort, was forced to choose between the ideal he had set himself and the retention of his influence by compromise.

So Delane in 1853, with a fear of Napoleon and a contempt for the Turk, an affection for Aberdeen and an abhorrence of Palmerston's policy, gradually found himself favouring an alliance with Napoleon whom he continued to distrust, advocating a war on behalf of Turkey, which he still believed to be the headquarters of "barbarism," increasingly diverging from Aberdeen and finally taking a principal part in overthrowing him in favour of the popular hero, Lord Palmerston. Some part of this reversal of position was due, no doubt, to a considered change of opinion, but no one who reads the story of 1853 can fail to see that it was the public which led and *The Times* which followed. Delane, like other conscientious men, first hesitated, then compromised, and finally retained his peace of mind by a whole-hearted conversion.

This passage would serve to describe accurately enough that process of change in editors, clergymen, teachers, statesmen, and the ruling class generally, which every war in every country can be depended upon to bring about. Newspapers and statesmen live by reflecting public opinion (in war-time, it is

¹ Old, indeed! Twenty-five hundred years ago Socrates, facing his judges and trying to explain why he had never taken public office, said: "I was too honest a man to be a politician and live. . . . I am certain, O men of Athens, that if I had engaged in politics I should have perished long ago, and done no good either to you or to myself. . . . The truth is that no man who goes to war with you, or any other multitude, honestly striving against the many lawless and unrighteous deeds which are done in a State, will save his life. He who would fight for the right, if he would live even for a brief space, must be a private statesman and not a public one." (Jowett's translation of *The Four Socratic Dialogues of Plato*, p. 77; Clarendon Press.)

correct to speak of "public opinion" and not of the opinions held by the public). They must reflect it particularly, of course, when it becomes passionate—which usually means blind and unbalanced—or go under, at least for a time. Few of them like going under, even for a time. Most of these leaders of opinion would never have professed the opinions that they did, or, in the case of the statesmen, followed the policies which they did, if the public had not imposed that particular line.

But if the public did not get its opinion from its newspaper, its teachers, its leaders, whence did it get that opinion?

Mr. Martin does not answer that question. He confines himself to giving the historical facts of the development of public opinion preceding the war, and leaves it to his readers to form their own conclusions as to why public opinion developed in just that way. He shows clearly that the newspapers often followed rather than led; that editors often "knew better"—realised how very wrong-headed the public were. Most members of the Cabinet were in like case and pursued a bellicose policy, knowing it to be dangerous, because it was the least that the public would accept. But, again, if the public did not get this bellicosity from the Government and the newspaper, where did they get it? Mr. Martin speaks of the "popular images," of the pictures in the mind of the shop-keepers and evangelical maiden ladies and stolid artisans, "proffering their lives and money in the service of the obese little tyrant in a fez, whose name they could not pronounce, and whose habits of life were as unknown to them as those of a prehistoric monster." Their picture, he says, was a

mistaken one, "built up from past associations." But this is surely inadequate. "Past associations" could just as easily have made the Turk the familiar heathen, instead of the heroic defender of political liberty and religious toleration. As a matter of fact the public discarded the familiar pictures for the purpose of making new ones: as it made new pictures not alone of the Sultan, but of Louis Napoleon: as, at a later date, we made new pictures of the Huns who, but a generation ago, were the cousins from whom we got our Royal Family, and our Reformation and much else. What causes the pictures to be changed?

It is as near as we can get to the bottom of the matter, perhaps, to say that we choose our pictures to suit our changing mood, as at one moment a man will choose to find deadly offence in the remark of a friend which in another mood would be passed over without attention; or will burst into a fatal and murderous quarrel, not because the external facts demand it, but because fatigue, or nervous irritability, for instance, prompt it. After the last War the public were quite unmoved by things which before the War would have had a tremendous and explosive effect. The public had become emotionally tired. Sensationalism produced no sensation. The organism no longer reacted to the stimulus which previously would have excited it. It wanted a rest.

But in 1850 it happened to have had a long rest, and its mood was rather the reverse of 1920.

A remark of Aberdeen, quoted above, comes nearest perhaps to giving a key explanation. The public mood was one which demanded excitement in its politics, which had become dull, a whole generation having been free from first class war. The Industrial

Revolution had created dense masses who discussed politics as a recreation. The national temper had become one of vanity owing to the memories of the victories over Napoleon and the unquestioned commercial primacy of England. The resulting Chauvinism had for a year or two been irritated by incidents like the Don Pacifico matter and the presence of foreigners at the Court. Palmerston exploited all this shamelessly, became the popular, John Bullish minister: "good old Pam": realised the value of the Press, and used it by personal influence on editors and reporters. He made the Cabinet hostility to him a means of securing popular championship as against the rather cold and aloof Aberdeen on the one side and the unco good commercial Quakers on the other. Two or three motives combined to make all this dangerous: the populace feared to be deprived of a glorious football game represented by a short, victorious, profitable war, this being strengthened by a dim, unavowed avarice, the feeling that if Russia seized Constantinople Great Britain would in some way be done out of her share in the spoils of the partition of Turkey. Just because this motive could not be avowed, there took place that "sublimation" with which the psychologists are familiar: economic considerations were held to be contemptible. The Sultan, in this case, took the place of Belgium. He had become the upholder of European democracy and political and religious freedom, and the war was for "God's purpose" and would regenerate the nation after "the long, long canker of peace."

Looking back at it, the very worst feature of the whole thing, the most disturbing, is that which makes it possible for men of real moral and intellectual

value to subscribe to that farrago of rubbish which made Turkey the embodiment of right and justice—in which all sense of proportion, all sane values are lost in a pugnacious and raucous din. Here surely was an occasion when the Puritan stubbornness, often so mischievous and cruel, might have performed a great social purpose. Where were the moralists (outside the Society of Friends) who, standing by the deep conviction of a lifetime, were ready in the face of the popular clamour to declare that “one and God made a majority”? Mr. Martin tells us that the very Peace Society itself skedaddled like the rest. And so, because leaders, who should be the servants, were set upon, pandering rather than serving, the people as a whole became set upon war at all costs, violently angry with any miserable pacifist who should attempt to deprive them of their entertainment, lynching politically and socially the statesman, teacher, minister of God who showed any disposition to do his plainest duty. And the vast majority of the editors, teachers, statesmen, bishops, poets, men of letters, as on later occasions, joined in the hue and cry, shouting raucously things which yesterday they denied, and will deny again to-morrow when once more truth has become the safe and easy thing to tell.

CHAPTER IV

THE ATROCITY IN WORLD POLITICS—AND A STORY

WE have already forgotten the part played by the atrocity in the War and in the peace. It is quite certain that the historian of the future, desiring to understand why some things were done, why men thought in such a way as to act in such a manner, will be puzzled by some features of the settlement made at the end of the Great War, particularly the principle which runs through the Treaty of Versailles: the complete lack of reciprocity on certain points. There is disarmament, but only for Germany: there is punishment of war criminals, but only German war criminals: there are demilitarised zones, but only German zones; there are mandates for non-self-governing territories, but only for ex-German or ex-enemy colonies.

Now there is only one ground upon which we can logically, in our own minds, have justified that kind of treaty as a means of settling the problems out of which the War arose. We did honestly come to believe during the War that those problems were due to a special wickedness of the German race; that there was no need, as the late Lord Cromer put it, to search further for the cause of the War than the character of the Germans; that Europe was divided into good

and peaceful people, the Allies, and bad and war-like people, the German and his satellites ; and settlement consisted in giving arms and power to the good and taking it from the bad.

The thing reads to-day like a rather foolish parody. But it was not a parody six or seven years ago ; this division of the world into good and bad nations was quite a reasonable deduction from what we were all reading about for five years, and it only sounds absurd now because we have so easily forgotten the place occupied by the atrocity.

When we first found ourselves at war, statesmen spoke of such things as the Bagdad Railway, the break-up of the Austrian Empire, the Southern Slav question, the future of Constantinople. But once the War had got well under way, the items in the newspapers which the millions read dealt with such things as the nurse who was captured and had her breasts cut off, the Canadian soldier found crucified, the life-boats that were sunk after the torpedoing of a merchant ship. Millions who were quite ignorant of high politics, utterly indifferent to all the discussions about the Dardanelles and the Bagdad Railroad—every tea-shop waitress, school-boy, navvy, school-girl, char-woman—knew about the atrocities and felt passionately concerning them. And that fact made a public opinion which drove the statesmen to two policies : the “ knock-out blow ” and the punitive peace.¹

¹ Sir Arthur Conan Doyle writes to *The Times*, December 26, 1917, as follows : “ The bestiality of the German nation has given us a driving power which we are not using, and which would be very valuable in this stage of the war. Scatter the facts. Put them in red-hot fashion. Do not preach to the solid south, who need no conversion, but spread the propaganda wherever there are signs of any intrigue—on the Tyne, the Clyde, in the Midlands, above all in Ireland, and French Canada. Let us pay no attention

Now there is no reason to doubt the truth of some at least of the atrocities, whether they concern the horrible ill-treatment of prisoners in war-time or the burning alive of negro women in peace-time in Texas or Alabama,¹ or the flogging of women in India,² or reprisals by British soldiers in Ireland, or by Red Russians against White and White against Red. Every story may be true, for every nation has such things to its charge. The British need go no farther back than the Boer War, which, as wars go, was a "decent" one; and the Americans no farther back than the Philippine campaign, which, even for wars, was not decent at all. In the Boer War we vilified

to platitudinous Bishops or Gloomy Deans or any other superior people, who preach against retaliation or whole-hearted warfare. We have to win, and we can only win by keeping up the spirit of resolution of our own people. . . . The munition workers have many small vexations to endure, and their nerves get sadly frayed. They need strong elemental emotions to carry them on. Let pictures be made of this and other incidents. Let them be hung in every shop."

¹ A thing which happens at least every few weeks in the United States.

² There has just appeared, as these lines are being written, a history of certain aspects of the Indian Mutiny heretofore neglected by the historian (*The Other Side of the Medal*, by Edward Thompson). The argument of the book is thus described by the *Spectator* reviewer: "Indians hate us. Why? Because we have suppressed one-half of the truth about the Indian Mutiny. Our boys are brought up on the atrocities perpetrated by the mutineers, but never hear a word about the atrocious reprisals which equalled and in part explained or extenuated some of the worst things done by the mutineers." In one devastating chapter (the reviewer goes on) he introduces us to the evidence showing the nature of the deeds done by our men. What appals us is not what was done in heat, but what was done and justified in cold blood. The author infers that national hatred must have been generated by the atrocity with which it was suppressed. Further, he assumes that the success with which we have imposed upon the world our one-sided version of the facts has inflamed the Indian with a sense of injustice. Lastly, he argues that this distortion of history is responsible for the panic, fear, and hate which assail the reason of the Anglo-Indian community when there is any stir in the Indian world

the enemy pretty much as later we did the Boche. Not only do we find the *Mail* telling us that the Boers are "neither brave nor honourable," that they are "cowardly and dastardly," "semi-savage" and "inhuman," "filled with satanic premeditation," but our poet-laureate, Mr. Swinburne, gives us this picture :

Vile foes like wolves set free,
Whose war is waged where none may fight or flee,
With women and with weaklings. Speech and song
Lack utterance now for loathing. Scarce we hear
Foul tongues that blacken God's dishonoured name
With prayers turned curses . . .
To scourge these dogs agape with jaws aflame.

In his indignation at any British protest against a death-rate of 450 per thousand in the concentration camps, and as a protest against the attitude of a notable English lady on the matter, Mr. Swinburne during the war impressed on us that the Boer women and children were after all but

Whelps and dams of murderous foes.

And so, finally, it comes to this in a London evening paper :

"The women and children are frequently employed to carry messages. Of course they must be included in military measures and transported or despatched. . . . We have undertaken to conquer the Transvaal, and if nothing will make that sure except the removal of the Dutch inhabitants, they must be removed, men, women, and children." ¹

Culminating in this as a military method :

"*V.R.—Public Notice* :—It is hereby notified for information that unless the men at present on commando belonging to

¹ *St. James's Gazette*, August 21, 1900.

families in the Town and District of Krugersdorp surrender themselves and hand in their arms to the Imperial Authorities by July 20th, the whole of their property will be confiscated, and their families turned out destitute and homeless."—By Order, G. H. M. Ritchie, Capt. K. Horse, Dist. Supt. Police, Krugersdorp, July 9, 1900.

But the Americans outdid us in the Philippines. The court-martialing of a certain General Jacob Smith, rendered necessary owing to the acquittal of a subordinate on charges of murder based on the execution of military orders, elicited from the general the admission of having issued the following :

"I wish you to burn and kill. The more you kill, the more you will please me. The island of Samar must be made a howling wilderness."

Asked by the subordinate above mentioned what age-limit should be placed to the killing, General Smith replied, "Kill everything over ten." General Smith, far from denying the issue of such orders, stoutly defended their necessity and their "humanity."¹ That they were thoroughly carried out, and that their spirit animated large sections of the American army in the Philippines, there can be no manner of doubt. Major Gardner officially notified his government, as civil governor of the Province of Tayabas, that "a third of the population had disappeared as the result of the military operations." He complains that the wholesale and indiscriminate "killing" was depopulating the country. Captain Elliott at about this

¹ "Colonel Woodruff, Counsel for General Smith, at the opening of the trial, at once stated that he desired to simplify matters, and with that object was willing to admit that he wanted everybody to be killed who was capable of bearing arms, and that he did specify ten years as the age-limit for such killing, since Samar boys of that age were as dangerous as those of mature years."—*Manila Despatches* to American Papers of April 25, 1902.

time published over his own signature a letter from which the following is an extract :

Caloocan was supposed to contain 17,000 inhabitants. The twentieth Kansas swept through it, and Caloocan contains not one living native. Of the buildings the battered walls of the great church and the dismal prison alone remain. The village of Maypaja, where our first fight occurred on the night of the 14th, had 5,000 people in it on that day. Now not one stone stands upon another.

And the public mind—public opinion ? Its reaction to it all was about that of the German people to the sinking of the *Lusitania*.¹

Mark Twain, in his autobiography, tells of the Presidential congratulations conveyed to General Wood on the morrow of a four days' "battle" in which nine hundred Filipinos—men, women, and children—were killed, and in which the American casualties were fifteen. General Wood explained later that

¹ The *New York Journal* (a Hearst organ) comments :

"Divine wisdom, which knows only the human race as a whole, wills that the ablest shall lead. They always have led, and always will. Sympathise with Aguinaldo, or with the mosquito sadly buzzing as the farmer drains his swamps, but don't try to get away from facts. . . . Erroneous is the general idea that they ought to win, and usually do win, because they fight for liberty. . . . Let Garnier, the monkey man, teach our apes in the Zoo to repeat the Declaration of Independence with slight variations. Will that get them out of their cage ? No. And Mr. Aguinaldo's feeble paraphrases of Jefferson will not make him rule where Jefferson's descendants have raised their flag. The weak must go to the wall and stay there ; it is better all round that they should. . . . We'll rule in Asia as we rule at home. . . . We shall establish in Asia a branch agency of the true American movement towards liberty. We'll beat that country, we'll own that country, we'll improve that country. We'll win and rule out there because the young American soldier who fights gamely and dies bravely is better than the thick-skulled, coarse-haired aborigine who shoots him from behind the bush. . . . America will win in the Philippines and establish America in Asia . . . in spite of the dear, kind-hearted, sentimental anti-expansionist."

there was "no wanton destruction of women and children, though many were killed by force of necessity." When the four days' battle was over, President Roosevelt telegraphed to General Wood :

I congratulate you and the officers and men of your command upon the brilliant feat of arms wherein you and they so well upheld the honour of the American flag.

(Signed) THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

How many Americans are aware of these facts ? About as many as there are Englishmen aware of the Indian side of the Indian Mutiny.

And if each side told the whole truth, instead of a part of it, these atrocities would help us towards an understanding of this complex nature of ours. But we never do tell the whole truth. Always in war-time each side leaves out two things essential to the truth : the good done by the enemy and the evil done by ourselves. If that elementary condition of truth were fulfilled, these pictures of cruelty, bestiality, obscenity, rape, sadism, sheer ferocity might possibly tell us this : " That is the primeval tiger in us ; Man's history—and especially the history of his wars—is full of these warnings of the depths to which he can descend. Those ten thousand men and women of pure English stock, gloating over the helpless prisoners whom they are slowly roasting alive, are not normally savages. Most of them are kindly and decent folk. These stories of the September massacres of the Terror no more prove French nature to be depraved than the history of the Inquisition, or Ireland and India, proves Spanish or British nature to be depraved."

But the truth is never so told. It was not so told

during the War. Day after day, month after month, we got only selected stories. In the Press, in the cinemas, in Church services, they were related to us. The message the atrocity carried was not : " Here is a picture of what human nature is capable of ; let us be on our guard that nothing similar marks our history. That was neither the intention nor the result of propaganda. It said in effect, and was intended to say :

" This lecherous brute abusing a woman is a picture of Germany. All Germans are like that. That sort of thing never happens in other armies ; cruelty, vengeance, and blood-lust are unknown in the Allied forces. That is why we are at war. Remember this at the peace table."

That falsehood was conveyed by what the Press and the cinema systematically left out. While they told us of every vile thing done by the enemy, they told us of not one act of kindness or mercy among all those hundred millions during the years of war.

That suppression of everything good done by the enemy was paralleled by the suppression of everything evil done by our side. You may search Press and cinema in vain for one single story of brutality committed by Serbian, Rumanian, Greek, Italian, French, or Russian—until the last in time became an enemy. Then suddenly our papers were full of Russian atrocities. At first these were Bolshevik atrocities only, and of the " White " troops we heard no evil. Then, when later the self-same Russian troops that had fought on our side during the War fought Poland, our papers were full of the atrocities inflicted on Poles.

By the daily presentation during years of a picture

which make the enemy so entirely bad as not to be human at all, and ourselves entirely good, the whole nature of the problem is changed. The problem of peace in that case is not one of finding a means of introducing government or order in a field which has heretofore had none, or of dealing, by the discipline of a common code or tradition, with common shortcomings—violence, hate, cupidity, blindness. The problem is not of that nature at all. We don't have these defects; they are German defects. For five years we have indoctrinated the people with a case which, if true, renders only one policy in Europe admissible; either the ruthless extermination of these monsters, or their permanent subjugation, the conversion of Germany into a sort of world lunatic asylum.

When therefore the big public, whether in America or France or Britain, simply will not hear (in 1919) of any League of Nations that shall ever include Germany, they are right—if we have been telling them the truth.

Was it necessary thus to “organise” hate for the purposes of war? Violent partisanship would assuredly assert itself in war-time without such stimulus. If we saw more clearly the relationship of these instincts and emotions to the formation of policy, we should organise, not their development, but their restraint and discipline, or, that being impossible in sufficient degree (which it may be), organise their re-direction to less anti-social ends.

The truth is, of course, that half the measures taken for the restraint of opinion in war-time, and a good deal more than half the coercions and intolerances, are simply temperamental explosions and defeat the ends they are supposed to serve. All writing which

argued for a workable and moderate peace was as far as possible suppressed ; was not allowed to leave the country. (This was the case with the writings of authors like Lowes Dickinson, Bertrand Russell, E. D. Morel.) But the articles of Mr. Bottomley, or the editor of the *Morning Post*, urging the utter annihilation of Germany, were given the freest circulation both at home and abroad. Which kind was the more likely to "encourage the enemy"—encourage him, that is, to go on fighting? As a matter of historical fact the articles which were thus encouraged by public opinion and the Government were the kind that the enemy Government did use, carefully reprinting them in its own Press with the admonition to its own public: "This is what you will get unless you go on fighting." The utterances which stiffened German resistance were encouraged ; the utterances which, if heard by the enemy at all, would have weakened it, and which in any case, if heard by our own people, would have rendered home opinion less insane at the peace-making, were discouraged or suppressed.

There follows here a little story which I had written during the War, but which was never published. The refusals of some half-dozen magazines and reviews, one after another, were couched in curiously similar terms. In effect they said: "The point is important, it is well put ; it ought to be said—we cannot say it."

Here it is :

THE ATROCITY

Those present at this meeting organised by the Polkville Patriotic League were surprised to see Father Cassidy (S.J.) and Mr. MacMillan, of the

Unitarian Church, on the platform. For these two alone among the Ministers of Polkville had held aloof from the methods of certain members of the League, notably of the Reverend Septimus Scott. The Reverend Septimus had specialised in atrocities if one might put it that way. He had paid a visit to France and had there made a collection of "cases," numbered, with copies of sworn depositions and with photographs. He took the ground that these were the reasons why America was at war, and the road to victory, he said, was to make American blood boil at the recital of his selected list of the very worst abominations. Sermons in which he minutely described the cutting off of the breasts of young French girls by German soldiers had filled his church and stamped him as far and away the most patriotic figure in Polkville. Among the elderly ladies of his congregation he had acquired an aspect of irresistible masculinity and virility by referring very many times in the same sermon to the German Government as the "Pots-Damned Devils" and to the German people as "The Hellish Huns."

Father Cassidy and Mr. MacMillan on the other hand, while they had been more active in such things as Belgian Relief work, had rather kept away from the Polkville Patriotic League under the inspiring leadership of the Reverend Septimus. When Mr. Septimus Scott had asked for permission to display a carefully chosen selection of photographs of atrocities in the Catholic Mission Room, Father Cassidy had refused. When the League had organised a petition for the removal of the elderly German bacteriologist (born, it is true in Schleswig-Holstein, before it was German, but none the less for that an enemy-alien)

from the City Hospital, Father Cassidy had declined to sign it. When the League had demanded that all the German books in the City library, including the devotional ones and the works of Goethe, be publicly burned, he had declined to support the proposal. And that, of course, had made him a suspect.

The Chairman explained the circumstances of Father Cassidy's presence. The Committee of the League had passed a resolution calling for the removal of German teachers from certain schools, notably a Kindergarten, of which Father Cassidy was director. The resolution had in effect argued that members of a nation guilty of Germany's record in Belgium were not fit to teach American children. Father Cassidy had been challenged by members of the League to state why he, a Christian priest, had been silent on these atrocities, and what his policy concerning the German teachers was to be. Father Cassidy (evidently to the surprise of the Committee) had replied, not, it is true, that the teachers should be removed, but that he had come very regretfully to believe many of these stories of atrocities, and that he had a statement to make with reference to that conviction. Might he make it in public at a meeting of the League? The Committee had evidently regarded this as promising in some sense a recantation and had welcomed the proposal. There was a general air of expectancy. The Reverend Septimus Scott was present.

"It is true," began Father Cassidy, "that I am here to-night in some sense as a penitent. I do not disguise from you that I have hesitated to believe a Christian people capable of some of those things of which Mr. Septimus Scott has told you with such a wealth of graphic detail. It was not so much that I did not

accept the testimony which he produced—some of it coming from Belgian priests whom I have known in the past—as that I did not perhaps have that vivid sense of its meaning which comes when some circumstance of personal experience brings that meaning near to one. But recently a more personal experience has caused me to examine my feelings. A friend, a very dear and old friend of mine, a priest of my Faith, was an unwilling and helpless witness of just such an action on the part of his enemies as those described in Mr. Scott's documents. And I have here from this friend a letter describing it, together with some reflections of his, which I will also read to you. Broadly the facts are that in a town behind the lines—not on the battle zone at all—which I think makes the occurrence all the more dreadful since the excuse of the passion of battle and military danger could not be invoked—and simply with the idea of inspiring terror in the minds of the population, a helpless civilian was caught and publicly tortured. He was not even tried for any specific crime. He was vaguely accused of something or other, but the real foundation of the act which my friend describes was just that calculated system of 'frightfulness' and terrorisation of which Mr. Scott has told you. The treatment meted out to this helpless, unarmed, unconvicted civilian is thus described by my friend :

“ Having been dragged from a house into which he had fled, the man was taken into the public square. His torture then began. He was forced on to the ground and an iron driven into it in such a way that he could be tied to it with barbed wire. A brazier, such as is used in plumbing and like work, was then brought, and some small iron bars made red hot in it. This took quite a time, the victim of course being

compelled to watch the whole process. And as he lay there thousands of his enemies gathered about him, jeering and laughing. Those who were unable to see from the ground climbed on to the roofs of near-by houses.

"When the irons were hot, the man's guards ripped off his clothes with a knife—lacerating and ripping the flesh as they did so. The guards then took the irons, now red hot, and slowly burned each eye ball. The prisoner shrieked with pain, but as he opened his mouth for that, another red hot iron was taken and forced down his throat. His sexual organs were then burned out with a red hot iron—and by this time a hideous stench of burning human flesh filled the Sabbath air: for it was done on Sunday.

"Not only did thousands of men watch this without protest, but officers were there supporting the whole thing with their presence."

"And my friend adds this: 'Among all those thousands I heard not one word of protest, of mercy, of compassion; not one word.' I confess to you, my friends, that that story, the testimony of a man whose judgment as well as whose word I can trust, has made a very great impression upon me. And yet I am not sure how these facts, and, heaven help us, so many others like them, should affect our conduct to individual Germans, to such things as the teaching of German, and to our national policy towards the German nation. I speak for the moment, not as a Christian priest, but as an American citizen, anxious to know what is our wise course. Do these dreadful things represent just a blind spot on the eye of the German conscience—blinded by the cultivated passion of patriotism—and can we assume that, nevertheless, on the whole the German people will in the long run react morally in the same way as any other people, that underneath all this there is the same human nature that we know among ourselves?"

(Cries of "No," "No.") "Or must we on the strength of these facts regard Germans as a different type of human being from ourselves, not only different in their conduct because of false doctrine, evil traditions, and a certain historical background, but different in their moral nature, so that an attitude on the part of others which would in our case provoke one result would in their case provoke a different one?"

Father Cassidy paused here for a moment. It was not his intention to have stopped, but the Reverend Mr. Scott, who had glowed and radiated during the account of the tortures, had been visibly dismayed at the reserved and cautious tone his colleague immediately assumed, and he half rose with an impatient restlessness. Cassidy, as a matter of courtesy, although he had intended to go on, yielded the floor.

"I appeal to Father Cassidy," said Mr. Scott, "not to water down his moral indignation and the healthy impulse of patriotism which devilries like this must stir, by any sophisticated or ill-placed sentimentalism. Surely this has proved, if anything can, that the German must be treated as a wild beast. Let me read him what the New York *Tribune* in an editorial said most appositely on this subject the other day.¹ 'We shall not get permanent peace,' says the *Tribune*, 'by treating the Hun as though he were not a Hun. One might just as well attempt to cure a man-eating tiger of his hankering for human flesh by soft words as to break the German of his historic habits by equally futile kind words. . . . Since the German employs the methods of the wild beast, he must be treated as beyond the appeal of

¹ October 16, 1917.

generous or kind methods.' Just imagine, friends, that this harmless civilian so devilishly done to death—by cruelties worse than those of the Indian, a filthy and obscene Sadism—had been your brother, your son, your father. Would you question for a moment whether any Hun whatsoever can be trusted? Would you entrust anyone of this race with the upbringing of your children? Would you ever again shake hands with any who had palliated, excused, or minimised these damnable obscenities? Would you not know that they must be treated as outside the scope of decent human feeling?"

Father Cassidy held up his hand to check this flow of eloquence, and rose. "I cannot let this go further," he said. "It was not my intention that it should have gone so far. Had Mr. Scott not interrupted me, I should have added a fact which I was keeping to the last. It is a fact which prevents me from drawing the conclusions that he does from this atrocity; it will prevent him from drawing them. It is this: that those thousands who so calmly watched the torture of this fellow creature, those who carried out the torture, who burned out this man's living eyes with hot irons, and so forth, were Americans. They were all Americans, torturers and spectators alike. What they did, not in the midst of the passions of war, but in the quiet and security of a country town, was not an isolated thing—some sudden, monstrous up-flaring of a dreadful madness. It is an ordinary thing that has been going on for years. What I read to you was the scrupulously accurate account of an American lynching. It was not an exceptional case. They are numbered by scores, by hundreds, by thousands, and generally are marked by just such

dreadful and incredible horrors as marked this case witnessed by my friend.

“That friend was an ‘enemy alien,’ as I have told you: a German priest who had lived for many years among this negro population. That fact has prompted me to ask myself how our conduct must appear to our enemies. In writing to me of this case, the essential details of which have been confirmed by the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People, the priest reminds me that of the hundreds that have been lynched within the last few years, only a quite small proportion have been even accused of rape, and real evidence of any crime whatsoever has in most cases been lacking. Sometimes the individual lynchings have developed into collective massacres—massacres in which the victims are not men alone, but women and little children, The individual torturings and burnings alive have been in the past so common that they have seldom received more than the most casual and passing reference in our newspapers.

“From being a punishment for one kind of offence these tortures have become punishment for any offence, or none. From being a special treatment reserved for one race they have become one to be meted out to our own. From burning negroes for supposed rape we have passed to the flogging of clergymen for supposed pacifism, we have come to inflicting the death penalty for what the momentary mood of a mob may regard as ‘disloyal remarks.’ From killing white men for not being sufficiently patriotic we pass to killing them for belonging to one kind of union; from killing them for belonging to that kind of union to killing them for belonging to other unions. And we have entered upon a great war in order that fright-

fulness as a principle may be utterly destroyed among men.¹

"Why do I thus call your attention to things about which we Americans do not care to talk? As a means of minimising the abominable crimes of Germany in Belgium? God forbid; but that we may be fit to act as judges when the time comes; that we may be worthy to administer justice; that we shall be able to distinguish it from vengeance.

"What is the most serious thing about these facts that most of us refuse to look in the face? Let us not deceive ourselves by imagining that they are committed by criminals, by people in their nature debased, violent, and cruel. The serious thing is that they are done by the kindest and most humane people on earth; by our fellow Americans—not, I would have you notice, by new-comers, but by Americans of many generations, and mostly of pure Anglo-Saxon stock: for the South is mainly that.

"Now that my friend Mr. Scott knows who were the authors of that abomination just described, he will not draw, he will not want you to draw, the con-

¹ The French Government after the War decorated negro soldiers for "marked gallantry." The French general who recommended the cross, a soldier not unaccustomed to heroic and skilful military deeds, wrote to his superior: "The American report is too modest. As a result of oral information furnished to me it appears that the blacks were extremely brave, and this little combat does honour to the Americans."

The World News, of Roanoke, Va., says:

"The same newspapers that bring news of this fine heroism that wins honour for our whole country tell of the lynching in Georgia of three members of this same race, one of them, a woman, suspected of murder. Of course there was no excuse for this, as the courts are in full power and operation in Georgia. Equally, of course, nobody will be punished. We have been trying it now fifty years, and after hundreds of such murders there is hardly a record of a conviction."

clusions which he begged us to. And he will be right. We cannot treat the American people as he wanted us to treat the German—as beyond the appeal of the ordinary human instincts, because of their crimes to the negro race, or their own. It is upon our souls that we have for generations subjected to lifelong humiliations an unarmed and defenceless people—a people whose very presence here is due to the offences of our race. Our just anger is fired at the oppressions of, say, the Alsatians and the Lorrainers. But the position of this ‘conquered province’ of ours, this subject people, many times more numerous than the inhabitants of Alsace, is very much worse than that of the victims of German tyranny.

“Alsatians at least have an equality of social treatment ; they at least are not excluded from hotels and restaurants, do not have to travel in special cars, nor go to special parts of the theatre. The position of Poles and Czechs and the other subject peoples of the enemy is bad ; and we are right to fight to make it better. But their humiliations—mainly political and not civil or social at all—are as trifles beside the daily and hourly humiliations and sometimes the terrors and the dangers of *our* subject people—a people who have never fought us, never been in arms against us, never sided with our enemies, never attempted to subvert our government ; never challenged its security by political agitation or rebellion.

“Our conduct in this matter is an evil thing. But it does not make us an evil people. And the German, who will cite these cruel and unjust violences as showing us to be not alone a barbarous but hypocritical people, will be wrong. But shall we be guilty of the same error in his case ? Shall we say that as a matter

of policy we must refuse to deal with him as an ordinary human being ?

“ But if the lynching does not tell the story of the American, does the Belgian atrocity tell the story of the German, in this war, or the part of the story that concerns us most ?

“ For, after all, it is the strength of Prussianism, not its weakness, which is the real menace for us—or will be the menace if we fail to take due account of it. And its strength consists, not in its evil cruelties, oppressions, and lusts, but in the loyalties which, notwithstanding, it somehow manages to attach to itself. If it were nothing but crime and cruelty, it would not greatly menace us, for it would perish of its own weakness. The thing which should concern us also is that men die gladly for it, and we shall never deal successfully or wisely with it until we understand in some degree why that is. And so, while we must not forget these offences, I do not believe that we serve either justice or political wisdom in treating them as though they were the only important thing in the enemy’s character—or that of themselves they justify the conclusion that the ordinary motives of mankind will not weigh with them. And again I ask you to weigh that question, not that you may do the Christian thing, but that we may do politically the wise thing.

“ We are approaching now a decision, more pregnant of good or evil, for whole generations of unnumbered millions, for the whole world, than any which democracies have ever been called upon to make. How shall we prepare our mind and spirit for that responsibility ? Shall it be alone by stories like that which I have read you—the stories chosen, however, being not of ourselves but of the enemy ? Is that all that

we must do for our intellectual and moral preparedness for that great event ? ”

You will see, of course, that Father Cassidy had let *his* feelings run away with him. During the course of this oratory the Reverend Septimus Scott realised immediately his patriotic duty. Without delay he telephoned the police and the department of justice, and it suffices for this history to state that Father Cassidy's own case is refutation enough of his own disloyal insinuations. For he was not lynched. His sentence of ten years' imprisonment was certainly lenient when we remember that a Vermont clergyman that same year received a sentence of fifteen years' imprisonment for a much less heinous form of pacifism. The Press agreed that severer punishment might well have been imposed.

CHAPTER V

AMERICAN ANGLOPHOBIA AS AN EXHIBIT

ON December 17, 1895, when no one suspected that any major question divided the British and American peoples, and relations were, so far as one could judge, friendly and peaceful, President Cleveland, without warning or previous correspondence, sent Great Britain what was in diplomatic form an ultimatum about the Venezuelan frontier dispute: Britain was commanded immediately to settle the frontier discussion (which had cropped up from time to time, to the complete indifference of the public, for many years) by methods laid down by the United States. The American public, which had accepted peacefully for over a century the existence of an undefended British frontier-line running with theirs for three thousand miles, suddenly discovered that the enlargement of a British frontier in a South American State three thousand miles from their borders would so endanger their national safety as to justify war in order to resist such extension.

The effect of this sudden up-flaring of anti-English passion upon the mind of an English boy (who, having emigrated to America, was expecting to become an American citizen) then living amongst it, is revealed in the following paper, published at the time in an obscure Californian review. (This writer was that boy.)

(i) *San Mateo, January 1896.*

It is becoming quite evident that we must fight England: that the doom has sounded for either the British Empire or the American Republic. The gods, watching this conflict, have turned their thumbs down. The conclusion can no longer be resisted, unless all our honoured guides, our statesmen, our newspapers, our reviews, our preachers, have become quite untrustworthy. For weeks now—ever since December 17th, to be exact, for most of us were in blissful ignorance of this terrible alternative on December 16th—they have all been insisting with one voice that we must make England bite the dust, humble her, and break her power. Otherwise, these great United States are done for; their glory will have departed, and we are fit subjects for the slavery which we are assured we shall certainly endure. There can be no doubt about it. To question it is to write oneself down a traitor to his country, an unclean thing. Those unhappy papers or public men (we may rejoice that they are so few) who have taken the unpatriotic line in this matter have been covered with infamy, cast into the outer darkness where reside Godkin and Pixley, and a few abandoned university professors.

As the full consciousness of a righteous cause gives threefold power to the strongest arm, we may profitably recall the multifarious wrongs that this conflict is to avenge and to redress. Cleveland's Ultimatum does not, of course, traverse the whole field of our grievances. Behind the main point of that communication is the story of a century of wrong upon which our public Press and our patriotic mentors generally

have been enlightening us. I have, during the last month, been a diligent reader (thanks to the facilities of the Free Library) of a wide range of representative American papers, notably such organs as the *Chronicle, Call*, and *Evening Post* of this city, of the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Denver Republican*, the *Omaha Bee*, the *Chicago Inter-ocean*, the *New Orleans Picayune*, the *Indianapolis Sentinel*, the *Washington Post*, and the leading papers of New York, especially the *Sun*. More than that, I have followed for some time with great care the public utterances of such lights as Senators Chandler, Pettigrew, Frye, Cullom, Hawley, and Lodge, to say nothing of a host of generals, admirals, Congressmen, State senators, and preachers, whose recommendations to wade in and disembowel the Britisher form the staple of daily newspaper fare just now. If opinion thus widely endorsed be not fairly representative of America, where are we to look? Moreover, I have supplemented all these sources of information and guidance by personal talks with many fervent patriots, and the net result of it all is that we must fight England because (1) she is a great advocate of the pestilential doctrine of Free Trade; (2) of gold coinage; (3) of a stable and non-elective Civil Service, a subtle device of tyranny; (4) for the advocacy of these heresies she corrupts our free electorate by the lavish expenditure of "British Gold"; (5) she has more Foreign Trade than we have, and it must be taken from her by stripping her of her Colonies; (6) she is a pirate and land-grabber; (7) her papers speak disrespectfully of the American accent; (8) British tourists are insolent, and wear absurd clothes; (9) she gives rise to Anglomaniacs in America, who turn up their

trousers, wear knickers and pyjamas, part their hair in the middle, take "barths," and are an offence generally to good Americans; (10) she owns too many American securities, which it is time she sacrificed as legitimate spoil of warfare; (11) she corrupts our ambassadors by turning them into "contemptible flunkeys" and Anglomaniacs (*vide* Bayard); (12) she still insolently repudiates (she does everything insolently, and I am quoting the *Call* here) "the doctrines of 1776. She has never acknowledged the principles of freedom of government, government of the people, by the people, for the people. She is ruled at home for the benefit of the land barons, and her Colonies are oppressed to pay tribute. She is a standing defiance to human freedom"; (13) she favoured the Confederacy (Northern opinion); (14) she did not recognise the Confederacy when she might (Southern opinion); (15) she hates America, and is determined to see her humiliated; (16) we must vindicate the Monroe Doctrine.

This last cause has for the moment overweighed the others, which may be considered as the permanent ones, and I shall consider it separately. I have put down the reasons quite at haphazard—they vary in their relative importance with the varying temperament of the patriot—but I think I have got them all. I desire to say at once that they are all serious. None is put down with the idea of ridiculing the very genuine sentiment which prompts them. It would be possible in each case to give the authority in some notable pronouncement, but that is hardly necessary. Anyone at all acquainted with the newspaper writing and political talking of the last few weeks will recognise

them at a glance. For fear, however, that it should be thought I have done less than justice to the alert patriots, I will quote a few of the statements upon which the foregoing is based.

‘ This arch-land-grabber has planted her flag on all the scattered islands, and on nearly every spot on earth where it could monopolise or control the strategic advantages of location for its own interests. . . . We cannot look with indifference upon this policy of conscienceless encroachment. . . . If left to herself she will finally dominate Venezuela, and a free republic will be crushed by an overpowering Monarchy. (Senator Cullom, United States Senate.)

Our alert watchman will meantime keep an eye on our good friends across the Atlantic, especially when, having appropriated Africa, the islands, and even the rocks of the sea, or wherever else force or intrigue may gain a footing, they begin to take an interest, not altogether born of curiosity, or a purely Christian spirit, in this hemisphere. One cannot be so innocent as to believe that the sentiment of relationship or friendship of England to the United States would stand in the way of the settled policy of Great Britain to make Englishmen richer and her power greater, even at our cost. Her unvarying policy is, first and last and always, to advance British interests and retain British supremacy—to retain and add to British wealth. Her purposes are material. Whoever gets in the way of that is the enemy of England, and will be so treated—whether it be the United States, who may be intrigued against and encroached upon and even crippled in some time of her distress, or when off guard; or a tribe of black men in Africa in the way of her colonisation schemes, who may be safely massacred with machine-guns. (Hon. D. M. Dickinson, ex-Postmaster General, in an address at the Loyal Legion Banquet, Detroit.)

The gold monometallic policy of Great Britain, now in force among all great civilised nations, is, I believe, the great enemy of good business throughout the world at this moment. Therefore, it seems to me, if there is any way in which we can

strike England's trade or her moneyed interest, it is our clear policy to do so in the interests of silver. (Henry Cabot Lodge, Senate of the United States, April 6, 1895.¹)

In every emergency with which the United States has been confronted the British Government has been our enemy. She is pushing us on every side now. She is trying to straddle the Nicaraguan Canal and to grab the Alaskan gold-fields. Whenever she gets hold of a bit of land, from that time her boundary line is afloat. . . . That is the kind of nation that we are fighting. Look at their fancy drill, the other day, when in five days a powerful squadron was gathered at the stated point; is there no object-lesson for America in that? *I tell you that we must be ready to fight.* Either we will float a dead whale on the ocean or we must say to Great Britain, "Here is where you stop." (Hon. Joseph Hawley, United States Senator, at the Banquet of the Alumni of Hamilton College, New York.)

The growing strength of the British Navy is a menace to the rest of the world. It is intended to be, and as such ought to be crushed. (Reported interview with Rear-Admiral George E. Belknap, U.S.N. [Retired].)

The object of my lecture tour is to advocate a war with England, with or without cause, in the interests of silver. (Reported interview, Senator Chandler.)

I think we should annex in some way or other all the countries on this hemisphere. War is a good thing. (Senator John B. Wilson, of Washington, in United States Senate.)

He [the British Lion] is a prowler in search of prey, which is land—land anywhere, everywhere—land to convert the present boast of possessing one-third of the earth's surface into one of holding one-half and then two-thirds, land, more

¹ It may be worth while to recall that at this date, 1895-96, the bulk of the Republican party were ardent Free Silverites. It was a year later that Senator Lodge, in common with the entire Republican party, suddenly discovered (the discovery synchronised with the formation of the party platform) that the gold standard was the only possible one.

land, to extend the tribute to be paid the British Crown indefinitely. (Correspondent, *Springfield Republican*.)

There is no power on the face of the earth that we need fear trouble with except England. (President Capen, Tuft's College.)

Grant, Lord, that we may be quick to resent insults. (Prayer of Blind Chaplain of Senate on the morrow of the Venezuelan Message.)

War with England! Every good American should lay awake nights praying for it. (Ambrose Bierce, *Examiner*.)

The final result of all these irritations about fisheries and boundaries will be that a peremptory order will one day be issued by this country to Great Britain to quit this free soil for ever. (*New York Journal*.)

The over-bearing insolence of the tyrant; the greed and lust of the pirate; the prejudice of the ignoramus; the implacable, the everlasting, the hereditary enemy of this free land. (*The New York Sun*.)

A successful war by us against Great Britain would, without doubt, for ever sweep monarchical government from this continent, and transform it into a series of powerful republics "of the people, for the people, and governed and directed by the people." The possessions to the north of us would, if States of our Union, at once leap to the front in population and prosperity, and the mossy manses of the Canadas would be replaced by American homes. The hold of the kingly hand of mail upon the throats of the people beyond the seas would be loosened, and grand strides would be taken in the onward march toward the brotherhood of man, the federation of the world. (*The Los Angeles Times*.)

The foregoing gives a fair idea of the spirit which is now dominating us. Even better evidence than these expressions of mere opinion is the attitude of Congress and the people with regard to Cleveland's Venezuelan Message. They have stood behind him as

one man. Party divisions have been swept away. A united nation supports him in an action which Representative the Hon. Geo. N. Southwick, in his appeal for coast defences, calls a declaration of defiance and of war. That Congress so regarded it is proven by the fact that the Appropriation Bill was passed through the House by unanimous consent the very day following the receipt of the President's message. It is only in the presence of a common enemy that Democrats and Republicans thus drop their differences. The public men outside politics who have opposed the President's policy in this matter can be counted on one's fingers, while newspapers which have taken that attitude are still rarer. The sort of treatment which these latter have received at the hands of patriotic Americans may be gathered from the castigation to which the *Sun* has treated Godkin and the New York *Evening Post*. Says the *Sun* :

People who could stand in ordinary times the dismal egotism and unrelieved snarl and sneer of Godkin's editorial manifestations refused absolutely to tolerate him when he turned his pen to defamation of the American flag and abuse of all that American patriotism holds dearest. The most hardened readers of the *Evening Post* were ashamed to be seen in public places with that sheet in their hands. They felt, not without just cause, that they might be suspected of treason to the United States Government. . . . While the *Evening Post* under Godkin's management was devising and uttering day after day, and week after week, insults more malignant and slanders more infamous against our army, our navy, our flag, and our land.

We know what sort of conduct has merited these reproaches. Godkin has levelled "insults . . . malig-

nant and infamous, against our army, our navy, our flag, and our land," by the infamous suggestion that the army and the navy should not be employed to fight England "in the interests of silver," nor yet even to enforce the Monroe Doctrine. Furthermore, so lost has he been to all patriotic decency as to avow that the British doctrine of Free Trade and a stable Civil Service are preferable to American Protection and Tammany Hall. This visible preference for the foreigner and his doctrines, the implied slander on American institutions, fully justifies the severe strictures of his neighbour, the *Sun*. Moreover, Godkin's pestiferous advocacy of peace at a time when every patriot's blood is tingling with the distant roll of the war-drums, shuts him out from the sympathy of all true Americans. We may all admit that Peace—in the abstract—is a good thing, and at ordinary times may be praised as the ideal state for civil society. Also it is in keeping with the New Testament. But, as we may see from the attitude of our popular divines just now, no Christian should advocate peace when there is a danger of war, otherwise he is certain to offend patriotic susceptibilities. At times like this one should remember that there is an Old Testament as well as a New, and should choose that body of Holy Script which best accords with the political exigencies of the hour. In most of this peace advocacy, so insolently persisted in when we are all thinking of war, one may see the cloven hoof of the Britisher. Otherwise, why is it that it only proceeds from sources which, like the *Evening Post*, are already but too tainted with Anglomania and British heresies of Free Trade? This connection between British Free Trade and peace advocacy

was well sketched the other day by the *Chronicle*, in these terms :

It cannot be expected that any Free Traders will join the Patriotic League. Did anyone ever see an American Free Trader who was in favour of forts and fleets? . . . If the Free Trader had his way, not a fort would be built nor a gun mounted, nor an armed ship set afloat, nor a militant thing done. . . . His object is to reform human nature out of existence. It would be a sacrilege for him to join such a Club as the Patriotic League, and if anyone doubted it he would defend himself by the economic principles of the Sermon on the Mount. . . . The American Free Trader is the most solemn, obdurate, consistent, and irreclaimable opponent of progress that the world ever saw. But the objects of the Patriotic League can do very well without any help from the Free Trader. There are enough people of all parties in the country, of good red blood, of hard sound sense, and with feet on solid earth, to carry them all through to success and leave room for the consummation of many good objects more.

Some patriotic paper—I cannot recall which for the moment, as I have mislaid the cutting—went even farther (justifiably so, doubtless) than the *Chronicle*. It pointed out that as in times past the Cobden Club has lavishly spent money in America for the advocacy of Free Trade, we are justified in assuming that the Briton has also financed these treacherous peace advocates.

This barefaced corruption will, however, avail nothing. There are, as the *Chronicle* says, enough patriots “of good red blood, of hard sense, with feet on solid earth,” to defeat the intrigues of Salisbury’s agents or the hysteria of those morally morbid invertebrates, who can talk only of peace, when the soul of the nation demands war.

In our just indignation at this perversion of the

moral sense we should not be led to lose sight of our aim and object in the humiliation of England. In this spiritual exaltation which this new crusade has provoked we are perhaps apt to overlook the more grossly material side of the question. To what degree of moral and material abasement should England be reduced, what definite objects have we placed before us? American patriots are perhaps a little too apt to regard the defeat of England as a worthy object in itself, apart from any advantage that it may bring. When Senator Henry Cabot Lodge declares that "if there is any way in which we can strike England's trade or her moneyed interest it is our clear policy to do so," does he not perhaps overlook somewhat our position here in the West?

What, in reality, is our economic position here in the West with regard to England? I find on enquiry that England buys of us more than all the other countries of the world put together. Now, that is a considerable fact. If we follow Senator Lodge's advice and destroy her as an economic factor in the world her capacity to buy from us vanishes, and since the West, being mainly agricultural, is compelled, and will be compelled for many years, perhaps for generations, to sell her products abroad, we should be in a sorry posture if half that market were taken from us. One may say without exaggeration that whole States in the West owe their prosperity to the British market. It is for us a richer gold-mine than all the bonanzas that were ever discovered; the amount of money that we get from England is many times greater than the amount that we get from the mines of California, Nevada, and Colorado. Can we afford to lose that market? Our farmers are

none too well off as it is (nearly 90 per cent. of the farms in this State are mortgaged in one form or another), and deliberately to destroy the prosperity of such a customer—and that, of course, would be Senator Lodge's object—would bring many of us, the majority of us, to ruin. I know it is said that our own merchants would get the trade which England now has, and that in consequence our markets would expand in another direction. But if the Protectionists are right that is not possible. They have always told us that our tariff is necessary in order to compete with European pauper labour, and that because our labour is not so cheap we cannot produce things so cheaply. England's foreign market would therefore go to the cheap labour countries of Europe, and not to us.

But we should lose a great deal more than the English market by taking the advice of Senators Lodge and Hawley. Senator Hawley invites us to "look at the map of India" if we would see the sort of nation that we are facing, and infers that it would be to our immense advantage if England were turned out of most of her vast possessions. A leading article in the *Call*, the other day, supported this view, saying that if we could help our good friend Russia into India we should have struck a great blow for silver and for the "liberation of the world from the British yoke." Yet what would be the result of helping Russia to India? It would be this: that we should lose a market which at present is open to us on exactly the same terms that it is to Englishmen. Great Britain does not claim for her citizens in India a single commercial advantage that she does not as freely accord to us. Now we know perfectly well that no

other nation would adopt this policy. If France or Russia owned India the first thing those countries would do would be to differentiate by tariffs in favour of their own citizens as against the rest of the world. And we should find the market by means of preferential tariffs monopolised by the paramount power. And India is not the only country in which this would take place. The British Empire includes forty separate colonies, embracing about one-fourth of the population of the globe. At present in those countries we have equal rights, commercially, with Englishmen. England claims no advantage in them which she does not as freely accord to us. The moment those colonies passed under the sway of some other Power, as Senators Lodge, Cullom, Hawley, Morgan, Frye, Wilson, Pettigrew, and patriotic statesmen, admirals, generals, and newspaper editors would seem to desire that they should, we would find the doors of a huge market-place banged in our faces by reason of a preferential treatment in favour of other nations. It is not here a question of opinion but of fact. It may be that I run the risk of being accused of placing "pocket before patriotism," but I take it that there is a patriotism also which seeks that policy best calculated to advance the prosperity and well-being of one's fellow-countrymen. Desirable as it is to destroy one's enemies and to humiliate them, the satisfaction should not be too expensive a one.

Even patriotism does not excuse a mis-statement of fact ; or rather should I say that it will not save us from the consequences of such mis-statement. And it is to be feared just now that the patriots do mis-state the facts almost invariably in this

connection. David Wells, who will be allowed a certain authority in this matter, stated in the *North American Review* the other day that of all the grounds of American grievance against England the one which was more potential than the aggregate influences of all other causes whatsoever,

and which is accepted and endorsed as in the nature of a rightful international grievance by nearly every member of our national or state legislatures, and by nearly every newspaper or magazine in the country . . . is the assumption that the governmental and commercial policy of England is characterised by no other principle save to monopolise through arbitrary, selfish, and unjust measures everything on the earth's surface that can glorify herself and promote the interests of her own insular population, to the detriment of all other nations and peoples; and that it is the bounden duty of the people and Government of the United States, in behalf of popular liberty, civilisation, and Christianity, to put an end to the further continuance of such a policy, even if a resort to war would be necessary to effect it.

And yet, universal as this belief is in patriotic American minds, it is as certain as anything can be that it amounts to a flat contradiction of all the facts of the case. It is not possible to cite one single instance where Great Britain maintains a monopoly for her people as against the rest of the world in all the immense territory over which she holds sway. More than that, it has been well said that it is impossible to cite any such similar instance of commercial liberality in the world's history. In no other case is it possible to point to the case of a great and strong government, coming into indisputable possession and control of a great area of the earth's surface abounding with almost illimitable elements of natural wealth and consequent vast opportunities for exclusive

trade, commerce, and the collection of revenue, saying freely to all the peoples of all the other nations and governments: Come and share all these advantages equally with us.¹

In view of all this, therefore, why must we, as Senator Joseph Hawley says, either "float a dead whale on the ocean," or say to Great Britain, "here is where you stop"?

I am not doubting, mind you, that this must be our policy. I am simply saying that in the light of incontrovertible fact American patriots are largely mistaken in the causes assigned for that policy. A comparison between the fiscal methods of England and the rest of the world shows that our evident interest is on the side of British rather than any other foreign extension. It is certain, of course, that though this noble patriotic instinct is at fault in so far as one cause for its action is concerned, that sentiment as a whole must be a righteous one. We may profitably therefore investigate its other presumed motives of action, as we shall be certain by the process of exclusion to arrive finally at what may be termed the "justifying cause," a result which will certainly add to our definiteness of purpose in the coming conflict.

We come to the Monroe Doctrine. Here surely we may find reason for the patriotic faith that is in us. We have been so often told that it is the true "American" doctrine, that it is the "expression of our destiny," "the embodiment of our national aspirations." But, so dense am I, that I have but a vague and shadowy notion of what the Monroe

¹ The reader will remember that this was written in 1896, before the era of the New Protection.

Doctrine is, notwithstanding my patient attention to much fiery oratory, learned discourse, and newspaper wisdom. And—though I would not for worlds speak disrespectfully of the Equator or of the Monroe Doctrine—I have a good notion that most Americans are in my case. Some irreverent scoffer in an after-dinner speech the other night was guilty of this ribald jest : Says Jones, “ What is this I hear, Smith, about your not believing in the Monroe Doctrine ? ” Smith retorts, “ It’s a wicked lie. I never said I did not believe in it I do believe in it. I would lay down my life for it. What I did say was that I do not know what it means.”

That, to be frank, is my position. I believe in the Monroe Doctrine, of course, because I try to be a truly patriotic American. I would lay down my life for it. We all would. The newspaper editors especially are pining to disembowel the Britisher in the name of the Monroe Doctrine. But I must say I wish I knew what it meant. Although it would not, by a long shot, be the first time in history that men have very willingly shed their blood, voicing a battle-cry the meaning of which they did not understand, it would be more satisfactory at our end of the nineteenth century if we knew why we were to lay waste so many homes, to set so many mothers weeping through the long nights over so many orphans, why we are to go forth and kill so many husbands and fathers who speak our language, read our Bible, share our traditions, and for the most part are born to just such joys and sorrows as make up our own lot.

If we cannot tell what the Monroe Doctrine is, we should do well to see what it evidently is not : for of late assuredly it has been masquerading in

borrowed clothes. Until December 17th it is certain that not one American in ten thousand had ever heard of the Monroe Doctrine. It might have been one of the main religious tenets of Mormonism for all they could have told to the contrary on the evening of December 16, 1895. On December 17th, however, our Government was being supported in war preparations to enforce its respect by England "at any cost whatsoever. To the last dollar and the last man!"

The circumstances which led up to this sudden and marvellous development are sufficiently clear. During the best part of a century a boundary dispute has been going on between England and Venezuela. The origins of the dispute reach back to the time when the United States were yet unborn, when this country was part of the British dominions, some sections part of the Spanish. Great Britain has a little colony of no importance bordering upon Venezuela, and some of her settlers, being in doubt as to their status, wanted the matter settled. One is not surprised at this desire of theirs. We know the sort of "republic" which Venezuela is. I find on enquiry that during the first twenty years of her history as a republic, she fought no less than a hundred and twenty battles, either with her neighbours or with herself, and she has maintained that average pretty well since. One can never know for certain which is the government and which the insurgents. An American firm, having secured the orders for some arms from the "government," sent a ship-load down, to find the "insurgents" in power. The arms were promptly seized as "contraband," and the captain indicted for aiding and abetting a movement destined to overthrow the established authority. He appealed to his consul

but before the consul could intervene the new government had been overthrown by a third party. This is a true story. A certain Florentine lawyer—Tomasso Caivano—wrote a book detailing his experiences of twenty years' life in Venezuela and some of the Central American "republics." His story of the exploits of some Spanish-American presidents outdo anything that we know of the ancient Roman despots or the sultans. A certain Rufinio Barrois was accustomed to have a dozen of his political enemies shot every afternoon on the public square, to the braying of a military brass band. Their wives and daughters he had exposed stark naked in cages on the same public place. Signor Caivano cites a typical incident in the rule of a Venezuelan president. The election of the president being in dispute, the case went before the Supreme Court. All the judges who pronounced against the president actually in power were promptly caught, imprisoned, and shot. Then the president issued a *pronunciamento* in which he declared himself dictator—not that he liked personal government, which was abhorrent to his strong republican sentiments, but because such a step was necessary to safeguard the sacred liberties which, etc.

Such are the country and people upon whom we have expended a great deal of effusive praise of late, and whom we have espoused as "noble fellow-republicans" as against "British monarchists." To the plain person it would seem that so far as we have any interest in this matter at all it is on the side of England, since once the territory in dispute became English we could trade in it, live in it, exploit its reputed gold-mines on precisely the same terms as Englishmen. While it remains Venezuelan

we can neither trade there nor live there with any security. Our trade relations with Venezuela, as one may judge from the little fact cited just now, have time and again been subject to embarrassment and injustice, requiring the interposition of our Government. Yet such is the force of this portentous "Monroe Doctrine" that the President champions the cause of these precious cut-throats at the risk of a frightful war with a people who are our best customers and with whom in reality we have no sort of quarrel—and the nation supports him to the last man, and votes millions with one voice to prepare for the conflict.

I know that behind the merits of this particular case there is said to stand a larger question. It is claimed that should England gain in this squabble with Venezuela, should the marsh-land in dispute be seized by her, her power would be so increased in South America as to endanger the security of our national institutions in North America. This is quite seriously put forward as the rock on which the Monroe Doctrine stands.

Surely there must be some mistake. For over a hundred and thirty years Great Britain has possessed more land on this continent than we have—not a thousand miles away near the equator, but here, at our doors. Her possessions stretch away from the Great Lakes to the unknown North. Her frontier runs along by ours for over three thousand miles. And during that time of contiguity we have grown from feeble distracted colonies into the greatest republic of the world. For three generations we have had no trouble with our neighbours; they have never in the least threatened our institutions nor our republicanism. Up to the present it has

never occurred to the patriot to claim that this enormous territory on our border—greater than the whole of Europe—was any danger to us. But suddenly we declare that if England increases by so much as a dozen leagues a little swampy colony in South America—a colony which does not contain as many white men as one would find in a fair-sized American village—the very existence of this republic is threatened.

The fact is, we have no interests whatever in the settlement of this quarrel. And where we have no interests we have no rights for interference. Edward J. Phelps well resumes the American position thus :

It was simply assumed that because the boundary in dispute was in this hemisphere, the United States had the right to dictate arbitration between the parties as the proper method of ascertaining its location, and, if that was refused, to define the line for herself, and to enforce its adoption. This extraordinary conclusion was asserted for the first time against a friendly nation, not as a proposition open to discussion to which its attention and reply were invited, but as an ultimatum announced to begin with. And it was addressed, not to that nation itself, through the ordinary channels of diplomatic intercourse, but to a co-ordinate branch of our own government, and thence through the newspapers to the world at large.

And yet no act in all President Cleveland's political career has been so popular as this ; none has so stirred the great heart of the people, or so opened the flood-gates of patriotic emotion. Concerning this act his political opponents, on pain of being classed with the enemies of their country, are silent. Patriots will not permit criticism. But where does the Monroe Doctrine come in ? Surely this new faith, which

we are all to hold as sacred, as the safeguard of our nationality, is not the preposterous assumption to which Mr. Phelps has referred. Surely it has some basis and sanction other than this. To fight a great war with all its infinite and unseen possibility of mischief over such a matter as this South American boundary is to attain the burlesque. There must be something more than this for it to have become part of the American theory of government. Can *no* one tell us what it is?

(ii)

January 1897.

It is now just a year since I wrote at some length concerning the Monroe Doctrine and America's foreign relations generally. In that year public opinion has moved so far and changed so vastly that slow-moving folk—among whom, it seems, I must class myself—have become a little bewildered. At the beginning of last year the whole country, or at least the patriotic newspapers and statesmen and clergymen, were absolutely persuaded that America must annihilate Great Britain, or “float a dead whale on the ocean,” to quote Senator Hawley's thrilling words of that time. For doubting this much, or rather for desiring reasons for thus sallying forth upon the destruction of England, some critics have handled me pretty roughly. I was, it appears, “sneering at all that true Americans hold most sacred.” I was “un-American, anti-American”; a man of “timid peace,” who would have this country wedded to a life of “ignoble ease”; one whom the “flag waving

in the breeze " altogether failed to inspire. A certain correspondent thought that all true Americans would regard me as " a traitor, for writing such treasonable stuff. . . . Such persons who drag Old Glory in the mud are beneath the notice of true Americans . . . their Anglomaniac drivél is only saved from being treasonable by the fact that it is despicable."

These criticisms date of course a year back, and the patriot will doubtless recall them with some surprise, because, for the moment, he has forgotten all about the duty to annihilate England. He is after somebody else's gore for the moment. Indeed, in the Eastern States, though not out West (we do not abandon our historic sport of tail-twisting so easily), one may evince a certain friendliness towards the erstwhile " enemy " without rendering one's patriotism suspect. Now we have discovered the real villain in the drama. The ogre who is on the look-out to throttle us, and whom we must slay if our liberty and our civilisation is not to go down under a tidal wave of Weylerism, is—Spain. And I take it as evidence of the capacity of the American for clear and rapid perception that we were all ignorant of this fact six months since. Not, indeed, until the starting of a journalistic campaign of education did most of us know that we had any particular grievance, or that our national safety was threatened by that singularly distracted and powerless country. As for our capacity for ready sympathy for (foreign) mulattoes I am frankly astounded. A few weeks since it was the noble Venezuelans, threatened by the grasping Briton; now it is the noble Cubans " carrying on their sublime and deathless struggle for liberty," as the *Examiner* puts it, against the haughty Spaniard.

I know I shall be told that I am a "timid bloodless mugwump," but, to be quite honest, I have just as much sympathy for those Cuban Washingtons as I have for the noble Opposition party now carrying on a bloody war against cruel tyrants in Costa Rica, San Salvador, Guatemala, Colombia, Ecuador, Santo Domingo, Hayti, and half a dozen other Sambo republics whose names I have for the moment forgotten. In all those countries there is a tyrant as bloody, as cruel, as tyrannical as Weyler himself. He is called the President or the Dictator, as the case may be, and there is a party of perennial revolt, as in Cuba, fighting against him. But our patriots don't care. Nobody proposes that the United States should intervene. Nobody takes the least interest. And we are quite right. Our intervention could only make matters worse—worse, that is, for ourselves—and, un-American and anti-American as I am certain to be called for it, I deem the interests of seventy million Americans of greater import than those of some half-million or million and a half copper-coloured gentry now cutting one another's throats in the distressful Isle of Cuba.

This, I know, is rank treason, but I am encouraged to talk it because my treason of three months back has now become, at least, in the Eastern States, respectable patriotism. When I wrote a year ago, no one could say a word for England save on pain of outlawry. Now the patriots are singing her praises, because she is supposed to be taking our side in the Cuban business. How do I know but that six months hence, when we shall have found another dog to chew, these same patriots may not be singing the praises of Spain? I think this the more likely in

that our sudden and perfervid advocacy of the Cubans is hardly explained by the reasons usually and publicly adduced. I do not desire to impute motives to such elevated moralists as the patriots, or to question their sincerity ; but I am inclined to think that the Cuban Civil War might go on for a century, as similar wars have gone on for a century in Central America, without our being disturbed or taking any particular notice, but for the fact that our " manifest destiny " men have had their eye on Cuba for a generation. The island lies so temptingly within the sphere of our immediate destiny. It is true, of course, that we are only thinking of the poor *concentrados*, of spreading freedom and beneficent rule. I do not doubt for a minute the sincerity of Archbishop Ireland when he says that Americans are anxious to give their lives " to the pure and high-born ambition to succour their fellow-men." But also I cannot forget how the slave-holding Southerners used exactly this language sixty years since, when it became a question of acquiring new slave-holding territory. At that date, when the real object was to extend slavery, we were told that war was made upon Mexico because the United States was anxious to extend the sovereignty of " the flag of freedom." Do you know the original author of the phrase " manifest destiny " ? It was the slave-holding Caleb Cushing. No people were so great at " manifest destiny " as the slave-holders, a fact of which any reader of the *Biglow Papers* may readily convince himself. Parson Wilbur was a great deal more severe on it than I should ever think of being :

All this big talk of our destinies
Is half of it ignorance, t'other half rum.

I am quite sure that no such insinuation could be made against our bellicose clergy to-day. At the time of the war against Mexico, a war in which the desire to extend slave territory played the dominating part, so worthy a man as Edward Everett could talk of

the duty devolved upon us by Providence to carry the republican institutions which our fathers achieved with all the organised institutions of an enlightened community, institutions of religion, law, education, charity, art, and all the thousand graces of the highest culture, beyond the Missouri, beyond the Sierra Nevada, perhaps in time around the circuit of the Antilles, perhaps to the Archipelagoes of the Central Pacific.

It is curious, therefore, that just at this time we should be talking of manifest destiny when we are proclaiming to the world our sacred disinterestedness in going to the aid of Cuba. But one occasionally gets flashes of the under feeling. You have seen Senator John R. Wilson's recent pronouncement: "I would have Cuba if I could. In fact I think we should annex in some way or other all the countries on this hemisphere. War is a good thing." Senator Frye—what doughty patriots all these senators are:—follows in a like strain: "I should annex Cuba by conquest," says he, "simply because we want it." These statesmen are singularly honest, and I prefer their doctrines to those of the highfalutin folk who talk about the "will of Providence," "America's great mission," and make Almighty God an ally of the Republican party. Senator Frye, dispensing with these heavenly sanctions, is preferable: Annex Cuba "because we want it." No need to invoke immortal destiny.

My earlier critic, since he too has taken the Almighty into partnership, will, I fear, be more angry with me than ever. But how do I know that he does not completely share the views of Senators Frye and Wilson as to the ultimate destinies of Cuba? And I say this because he quotes with approval President Cleveland's injunction to the Princeton students to "support your country when she is right, and I am not sure you ought not to support her when she is wrong." How do I know that Mr. Kyle does not deem our action towards Spain wrong, but that he supports it in public because he is determined to vindicate his country "right or wrong"? As a matter of fact, Mr. Kyle is the last person in the world who has a shadow of right to appeal to any moral standard. He says in effect that he would still support the United States, however wrong she might be; he would, in fact, argue that wrong was right, and then he has the consummate impudence to say that my "lecturing" is immoral. He repudiates altogether the moral law in questions of international politics, and then calls Providence to witness that I am an immoral person and a perverter of youth, or words to that effect. Under the circumstances his reference to "superior airs" needs no comment of any sort.

The position with regard to Spain has become dangerous simply because patriots of Mr. Kyle's stamp are beginning to set the tone of our national feeling. They shout louder than other folk. They hector and browbeat as "traitors" all who disagree with them, so that reflection and civilised argument become impossible. We are face to face with a curious phenomenon which is difficult to explain. It would seem that the nation is set upon warfare of some sort.

For months we have been spoiling for a scrap. A few weeks since it was Venezuela. The danger was averted by the extraordinary submission of England. To-day it is Cuba, and if that danger can be overcome we shall find some other thing over which to quarrel and assert our greatness to-morrow. Our newspapers, statesmen, public men, and clergy even, are talking to us of the advantages of warfare—not war with any one particular nation or for any particular purpose, but just warfare generally. These wiseacres are suddenly discovering that without periodical blood-letting we must certainly decay. Theodore Roosevelt has enunciated a precious doctrine of the “strenuous life,” according to which, unless we fight frequently, we shall die from “ignoble ease.”

We must play a great part in the world, and especially . . . perform those deeds of blood and valour which above everything else bring national renown. . . . Our army and navy have never been built up as they should be built up. . . . The navy and army are the sword and shield which this nation must carry. . . . We do not admire the man of timid peace. In this world the nation that has trained itself to a career of unwarlike and isolated ease is bound to go down in the end before other nations which have not lost the manly and adventurous qualities.

Does history, American or other, support Mr. Roosevelt? Are the military nations the prosperous and virile ones? Turkey is the most militarised nation in Europe; England the least. Which order of principles seems to have worked out the best? And on this continent has the progress been to the unwarlike and unadventurous Yankee or to the Spanish-Americans already referred to—the peoples who have had a ceaseless training in warfare and

should possess in abundance "the manly and adventurous qualities" ?

In a recent *North American* appears an article in which our growing tendency to warfare is ably and significantly sketched. The author, Mr. R. N. Shaler, says :

Those persons who are accustomed to observe the movements of public opinion have had occasion to note of late a curious tide which is setting our nation towards warfare. . . . We appear to be driven by a blind impulse into modes of thought and action concerning our neighbours that will, if unchecked, bring us to contests of arms. A trifling fracas with Chili, a mere police court case ; an insurrection in Cuba ; a matter of fishing in Newfoundland ; of sealing in Alaska, or the confused questions of a wilderness boundary in South America, each and all serve to set the dogs of war baying. . . .

In his address the other day at the Arbitration Conference in Washington Carl Schurz said :

To judge from the utterance of some men having the public ear, we are constantly threatened by the evil designs of rival or secretly hostile powers that are eagerly watching every chance to humiliate our self-esteem, to insult our flag, to balk our policies, to harass our commerce, and even to threaten our very independence, and putting us in imminent danger of discomfiture of all sorts, unless we stand with sword in hand in sleepless watch, and cover the seas with warships, and picket the islands of every ocean with garrisoned outposts, and surround ourselves far and near with impregnable fortresses.

President Eliot, of Harvard University, at this same conference, was still more emphatic. Referring to the Venezuelan incident, he said :

. . . Can anything be more offensive to the sober-minded, industrious, laborious classes of American society than this doctrine of Jingoism, this chip-on-the-shoulder attitude, this

attitude of a ruffian and a bully? This is just what Jingoism means, coupled with a brutal and despotic militarism which naturally exists in countries where the government has been despotic or aristocratic, and where there has always been an enormous military class. The teaching of this doctrine by our Press and some of our public men is one of the reasons this conference has gathered now.

But surely the very worst feature of the "inflammability of a multitudinous population" to which President Eliot referred, the feature which has in it the most danger, is that the men to whom we have a right to look for keeping uppermost the sober second thought of the nation, the better class of our public men and our clergy, seem the very readiest to add fuel to the flame. Nothing has been more extraordinary during the last few months than the servility with which our pulpit has kow-towed to the worst passions of the multitude. I could reproduce here—were I not already running to too great a length—sermons which in their vague warlike mysticism were fitter in the mouths of Dervishes than of Christian men. And these incitements to strife only occur when the feeling of the people is already warlike. When we are clothed and in our right minds the clergy coo as gently as any suckling dove. It is an unpleasant thing to say, but does not this inevitably suggest the reflection that the clergy are more anxious to preach what is popular than what is right? Reflect on this incontrovertible fact: When in December last the relations with England were most strained, when it was touch and go as to whether we should have a war with England upon our hands, did not the Daily Press treat us to sermons from eminent divines, in which the wrongs this country has suffered

at the hands of Great Britain were eloquently set forth? Yet now, when the danger has passed and it has become more the thing to talk of arbitration, the clergy are telling us of all the reasons for being good friends with England. Surely it would have been better to set forth those claims of friendship when we were in danger of forgetting them, rather than now when there is not the least danger. But the clergy did not. Think of the action of the chaplain of the Senate, who in the midst of the Venezuelan madness could pray that this country should be "quick to resent insults." Forgetting every injunction of his Faith this minister of the Prince of Peace could cover the worst of Jingoism with the sanction of Christianity. I would wager my last dollar that when we come to discuss the arbitration treaty this doughty cleric will inform the Almighty upon the benefits of peace.

It is true that this moral poltroonery—the desire to be on the side of the big crowds—is not confined to the parsons, but one is justified in expecting better things of them. When they lead the way, it is not surprising that the politicians follow. It would seem that the clergy are in a blue funk of being found momentarily in the minority, of being called "traitors" by little asses and yellow newspapers. Courage of the prize-ring sort is a cult amongst us, but the courage which will consent to be for a time unpopular, to stand with one's face to the silly flag-wagging mob, to pronounce a word for common sense and common honesty in times of general dementia, seems all but completely absent.

I am aware that the average American will consider this as altogether too serious a view of the matter.

It will be deemed solemn and owlsh to object to what is probably but a little harmless excitement. That this talk of war and the parade of the paraphernalia of war adds a zest to politics dull enough for the most part. That it pleases the women folk and gives the boys something to do o' nights. That there is nothing very serious in it at all, and that it will end as the Venezuelan excitement ended—in smoke. And that is why the politicians and the parsons lend themselves to it. The country is “all right,” and rich enough to spend a little money on gold lace and excitement if it wants to.

If the past has any lessons at all, no fallacy is more dangerous than this. No man can watch the movements of opinion in this country without seeing that this war talk which we start with a light heart soon becomes serious. Nothing is more fatal to the sense of humour and proportion than this patriotism of flags and war-drums. It is true that we avoided war with England at the time of the Venezuelan business, but only because she adopted an attitude which no other country would have adopted. France would not have done it; nor Germany; nor will Spain. The Spanish “pundonor” will make it absolutely impossible. And even if we do manage to avoid conflict with Spain, we shall get it with some other nation, if the humour now upon us lasts. Those people who will not take the trouble, nor incur the *odium patrioticum*, of setting their faces against that mood, are making exactly the sort of error they would make in allowing a child to play with squibs in a powder magazine.

But even if it should never result in war, it is still mischievous, and will cost us dear—is costing us dear.

I know that America is supposed to be so rich as to afford any folly, any stupidity. Our newspapers are fond of talking of our boundless wealth, the "per-r-airies stretching from the rock-bound coast o' Maine to the sunny shores of the golden Pacific." All this oratory is very attractive, and Americans are very fond of it, but what are the facts ?

The last time I heard that phrase about "this sun-kissed land" and the "boundless prairies stretching from the rock-bound coast," and so forth, it was from the lips of a gentleman in a country store, who concluded the oration by asking the loan of a dollar and a half in order to get a sack of flour to take home to his wife, the store-keeper declining further credit on an account which was already four and a half years old. I am not romancing ; it is an absolute fact. The farmer in question had for half an hour been indulging in precisely the sort of bamboozle with which our land companies fill their rose-coloured circulars. "The richest country on God Almighty's earth, sir." The man might have stood for the land-agent in *Martin Chuzzlewit* ; the lineaments of Dickens' picture, drawn sixty years since, were all there, faithful to the last detail. With just this difference : my friend was not a land-agent. He did not want to sell me his farm ; I don't know why he was filling me up with all this land-agency romance. No one did. It just came natural to him. Now the facts of this patriot's situation are that his farm is mortgaged up to the hilt, as also are his team and wagon ; his implements he has never paid for ; his grocery account is something over four years old ; he can never remember the time when he was out of debt ; his wife, at thirty-five, is an old and worn woman ; she can never remember

the time when she was not overworked, when she had not to get up by daylight, and well before it in winter-time, to cook the coarse grub for the family and the occasional hands. The wooden shack in which they live is an oven in summer, a refrigerator in winter. A garden the farm does not possess ; no one would have the time to attend to it. The vegetables are bought from the travelling Chinaman, and the wife and her husband have not even the meagre satisfaction of owning the farm upon which for years they have laboured like convicts. And they never will own it. In a couple of years the bank will foreclose, the ramshackle wagon will be loaded with bedding and a frying-pan, and this worn woman with the tired face will follow her husband to some newer territory, where the process will be started all over again *da capo*. "Finest country on God Almighty's earth, sir. Millions of happy homes, sir, stretchin' from the rock-bound . . ."

I shall be told that this is an exceptional case ; many Americans will, in perfect good faith, call it pure romance, because they are ignorant of the real conditions of their own country. Their knowledge of American farm-life is such as they see it from the standpoint of the summer boarder and such as it is represented by politicians, by land-agents, and also, be it said, by the extraordinary self-deceiving twaddle which the farmers themselves have acquired the habit of indulging in. But whether I am right or wrong, I speak, at least, as one who has gone through the mill, as one who has worked as a labourer upon a half-score of ranches in California, who has himself ranched, who has passed some years cheek by jowl with farmers and farm-hands. Most town-bred

Americans, and some who are not town-bred, but remember the farm from a boy's standpoint, speak habitually without the advantage of such an experience, and I will appeal from their usual highfalutin periods to certain undeniable facts. I will take the three counties of California with which I am most familiar : Fresno County, Kern County, and Tulare County. They are fairly representative, and include in their area the fruit-growing, the grain-farming, and cattle-raising interests. Now, if you examine the public records of these counties, as you can easily do, you will find that, striking an average over the whole, 97 per cent. of those farms to which titles have been acquired from the Government are mortgaged in one form or another ; if you examine the records of chattel mortgages deposited in the court-houses, you will find that, in addition to the mortgages upon the land, nearly half the farmers have also mortgaged their implements or their crops. That is to say that not four farmers in a hundred own their farms. That already is a great fact. The man who year in year out has to find interest for a debt cannot be called independent. But that is not the whole story. Go into one of the big stores in our country towns, and get the store-keeper to tell you in confidence the real condition of his accounts with his farming customers. You will find that the majority of his accounts have run from three to five years ; that the farmers " pay something on account " after harvest, and that only a small minority are for long out of his debt or free from liens which he holds. And those deferred accounts also pay 1 per cent. a month interest.

Now go to the farms. What sort of food do the farmer and his wife eat ? What sort of clothes does

the wife wear? What sort of leisure do they enjoy? I could name a score of women married to farmers, with property supposed to reach five figures in value, who are accustomed to rise at five, light the fire, cook the grub, clean the house, do the washing, milk the cows, feed the poultry, attend to the children, mend their clothes, cook the midday meal, cook the supper, do the chores, and go to bed at something near midnight. There is not a day-labourer's wife in the city who would not be ashamed to dress so meanly, or who would not refuse the food she eats every day of the year. There are thousands of farm-houses in this State where "meat" means salt pork, "vegetables" potatoes, where beef or mutton is never tasted from one year's end to another. The life of the man is a corresponding one. A capitalist, a man whose property is supposed to be worth thousands of dollars, he pitches hay with the thermometer a hundred in the shade. In winter he puts the frost-crusted harness on to his shivering beasts, feeds and waters them himself. And after ten or fifteen or twenty years of this he gets sold up, and pulls up stakes, to start on a hundred and sixty acres of government land "fenced by a couple o' yaller dogs," but situated happily in "the richest country on God Almighty's earth, sir!"¹

I know that this sketch will be pooh-poohed as fantastic and exaggerated. But it is the truth; the figures of mortgages, the evidence of our eyes, everything save the florid oratory which we swallow as

¹ Does this picture apply only to the generation of 1896? Recent (1925) figures of farm mortgages, sales and bankruptcies, and the growth of tenantry, would seem to indicate that over large areas at least the situation has not very greatly altered.

other drunkards swallow gin and morphia, supports its truth. Here and there we have a publicist who will tell it. Occasionally you will see it reflected in the agricultural Press, while a few shrewd observers like Hamlin Garland have testified to it in their books. I challenge anyone who is entitled to speak on the matter by close contact with our farming population to rebut its general truth.

But what has this to do with the Monroe Doctrine, and the conflict with Spain, and with our recent warlike talky-talky? It has everything to do. My contention with regard to our growing militarism was that this country could not afford the luxury. I do not mean that it could not find the money—it could maintain an army of a million men if needs be, as it has done before—but that the condition of things I have described never will be mended, if, instead of busying ourselves with our own people, we get excited over the wrongs of Cubans and “the fulfilment of our destiny.” We may be sure that if, in a country like ours, a country possessing in abundance everything from which the wealth of the world is created, those who work the hardest get the least; if our tillers of the soil are in effect worse off than the peasants of rocky Switzerland or crowded Holland, and infinitely worse off than the farmers of effete England—if this be the case, there is something radically wrong. It is not natural that our agricultural population should be both poor and overworked, debt-ridden and toil-driven. Yet such is the case. Our towns are wealthy, our manufacturers are rich, and get richer every day, but our farmers remain poor. And our farmers are the larger class, at least in the Western sections. They are, or should

be, the backbone of our country, the reservoir of its best blood, the keeper of its best traditions. And yet the nature of our new patriots is such that they are much more interested in the woes of the Cubans than in the hardships of American men and women. The *Examiner* has just been sending out photos of the Cuban women in the Concentration Camps, and our statesmen and our clergy weep over them. Yet I warrant that were I to make a collection of the pale-faced and overworked women of our farms not one of these statesmen or these clergymen would give it a glance. You may call me names, and say that I am no patriot, but to me the men and women that I know, their struggle for the daily bread that is so poor and hard, are of more import than the Cubans and all their causes. Let the Cubans work out their own salvation, and let us give our energies to ours.

But the patriot won't have it. When I see a perfervid young man waving little flags, I know that it is no use talking to him about Americans—about the people, say, in Fresno County. You must talk to him of those noble Cubans if he is to show the least interest. And he is like most patriots.

And that is what I mean by saying that we cannot afford this militarism. Not only will it not help us to find what is wrong with our own institutions—with those policies which keep those poor who should be rich, and make richer those who are rich enough—but it will prevent our doing so. The moment that we fight Spain we shall become mixed with the *haute politique*. We shall fight our elections upon questions of prestige in Europe; upon subduing this or that enemy; upon acquiring more empire. The expansionist with his flag and his drum will so interest us

that we shall have no inclination to listen to the dull fellow who is talking mere domestic problems. Our taxes will double, but if one object he is told that he is putting "pocket before patriotism," and that it is all for the glory of the flag. And, worst of all, that peculiar temper which has blinded our Western population during a generation to its real interests will be immeasurably strengthened by all this warlike adventure.

This temper has led us to prefer indulgence in a sentiment of hostility to the furtherance of our interests. We have been persuaded, and for years we held it as unquestionably true, that, as Senator Lodge puts it, if we could do anything to injure England, it was our clear interest to do so. England ! The very best customer for our products that exists in the world, a country that takes more of them than all the rest of the world put together. And it is a customer of this proportion that we are to destroy if possible—the only great foreign market where our beef, and pork, and grain, and fruit have an absolutely free market ! I am absolutely astonished at the strength of the Anglophobia as it exists now, and has for years existed among Western farmers. What grievance have they against England ? What injury has she done them ? They could not, to save their immortal souls, tell you ; but they hate her, and if any politician is especially offensive with regard to her they will vote for him.

Now, it is evident that this is not a rational temper : that it is not one in which our best interests will receive a quiet and clear-headed consideration. But it is one which the new militarism will foster. England will not necessarily be the object of it, but we shall be

taught to distrust and hate the "foreigner," to try and injure him, to create large forces to overawe him. In other words, sentimentality, the sentimentality of suspicion and hostility, the sentimentality of there drum-banging patriot, will influence our policy in the future, as Anglophobia has influenced it in the past.

From the proposition, that Protection adds nothing to our incomes while it increases the price of everything we buy, there is no getting away. The Protectionist does not even pretend or attempt to meet it. I have listened to scores of debates, public and private, and never once has this point been fairly met. Always in the end does the Protectionist get away to the "European invasion," and "Europe getting rich at America's expense." It suffices for him to show that so many thousand cotton-weavers of Lancashire have been ruined, or that our imports are decreasing, to have presumably gained his point, oblivious of the fact that, however this may benefit the manufacturer, the farmer pays: he pays more for his cotton but gets no more for his wheat. It is likely that he will get less, since those Lancashire cotton-weavers will perforce buy the less. Dependent to an enormous extent upon a rich England for his market, the American farmer will be hugely pleased when the Protectionist shows him that McKinley is ruining British industry. If the Free Trader be persistent, the Protectionist will silence him—at least in public—by some insinuation of Anglomania, of being "no American," of preferring Britain to his own country, and being told to remember Bunker Hill. From patriotism there is no appeal.

Yet, nevertheless, may we ask, what have the sins of Great Britain in Ireland, the objectionable

accent or behaviour of the British tourist, the fooleries of our Anglomaniacs, to do with the price of wheat? Is it quite serious, when we are talking of crops and prices, for one party to the argument to imitate the accent of the "blawsted Britisher," and to say that you are "so English, dontcher-know"? Yet I have never listened to a campaign speech in which these silly tricks have not been introduced. And they always succeed. The good farmers sitting round are for the most part hugely pleased, accept it all as a serious argument. I have seen closely and cogently reasoned argument in favour of Free Trade replied to by the remark, "Aw yaas! So English, yer know. Is it rainin' in Lunnon?" and the listeners have for the most part regarded this sally with huge satisfaction—a complete and full answer to everything which could be said in favour of "British" Free Trade.

In the face of this you tell me that Anglophobia is a harmless foible. I seriously maintain that, by reason of it, the Western farmer has been bamboozled for two generations. Whatever be the merits of the question, he has never considered them. It is sufficient with him that Free Trade is the "British policy," and in consequence wrong. The causeless animosity overrides all other considerations. And when to this primitive tribal enmity is added the windy bombast about this "sun-kissed land," and the "thousands of happy homes" (all mortgaged), the burlesque is complete. Burlesque? I know of nothing more pathetic than the spectacle of a man burdened with toil, with debt, poorly fed, poorly clad, his wife awearied with the monotony of petty drudgery, and his children anæmic, enthralled by a political oratory which ignores his debts, ignores his poverty, his toil,

and is concerned only to inflame his hatred of a people ten thousand miles away, to tickle a bootless vain-glory about the wide “per-r-airies, stretching from the rock-bound coast of Maine to the sunny shores of the golden Pacific.” Ordinarily I resent—as a farmer myself—the ill-concealed contempt of the town American for the “hayseed,” the facile caricatures of *Judge* and *Puck*. But when I witness the spectacle I have just described, upon my soul, I think he deserves everything in that way that he gets.

If it be true, as I honestly believe that it is true, that this hostility and vainglory have so influenced our judgment of the right fiscal policy as to induce a wrong decision, how immeasurable has been the cost of this sentimentalism! Think of all the lives that have been made the harder, of the constitutions that have been shattered, of the women made prematurely old, of the houses that are the meaner, of the children that are neglected, of the homes that are less easy, for the sake of doing something which will displease the British or startle Europe. Was I wrong in saying that we cannot afford this militarism, this blatant desire to impress the foreigner with “our epperlettes and feathers”? Is not this too high a price to pay for it all?

We have seen how eloquent some of our moral preceptors—including some clergymen—can become concerning the dangers of long-continued peace. Might not Mr. Roosevelt and the rest occasionally vary these themes with one concerning the danger—the cost—of hate? I know that certain of our patriots would, like the *Chronicle*, pour infinite scorn upon introducing the “economic principles of the Sermon on the Mount” into a political discussion.

But there is, nevertheless, an economic side to the moral law. If men cannot violate it, save to their cost, it is certain that nations cannot. And when we charge Englishmen of to-day with historical offences for which they are no more morally responsible than for the crimes of Nero, or make war on Spain for offences which are no concern of ours—offences which, when committed by others than Spain, or by ourselves, leave us unmoved—we do an injustice for which we shall sooner or later pay in full. When we nurse a desire to humiliate others, to parade, like the savage, our big muscles and our big body, when our pride becomes vainglory, the debauch will not be indulged without penalty. Unless all history has deceived us, unless the story of a hundred nations has been devised for our deception, that “Destiny,” so dear to the patriot’s heart, shall exact the full tale for all our passion, our vainglory, and unreasonableness. And the innocent shall pay with the guilty—for the guilty it may be—to the third and fourth generation.”

CHAPTER VI

THE MECHANISM OF PRESS DEMAGOGY : A GREAT PRESS DEMAGOGUE

It is nothing new in our society for a large economic interest to become linked to the maintenance and encouragement of some common human weakness. The position of the liquor traffic at certain times will occur to one as a typical case. There has grown up in recent years another great economic interest (by its very nature in a position to exercise enormous influence in a much more direct fashion than the liquor trades could) which is pushed, as an indispensable condition of sure and rapid profit-making, to maintain and develop certain passions and weaknesses socially very much more destructive than the taste for strong drink. At no time did we ever see alcohol take such possession of whole nations and groups of nations for years together that governments and people alike indulged in orgies of self-destruction, and drank themselves back to barbarism.

I suggest, not that the Press is the cause of that lack of balance in public judgment which has so often in the recent past made democracy unworkable (for the cause must include deeply-rooted, anti-social instincts of human nature), but that a certain section of the Press is pushed, as a first condition of its existence, to intensify the human weaknesses which

lie at the root of most public folly ; to render them more unmanageable, to become the exploiter and developer of immensely dangerous, disruptive forces. This does not, of course, apply to the Press as a whole—"the Press" must include an infinite variety of publications. But it does apply generally to that section which is organised into great industrial combinations, involving capital running into millions, and which must, consequently, in order to pay dividends, maintain enormous circulations at all costs, and so take the shortest of all possible cuts to exciting the interest of all and sundry—factory girls, school-boys, teashop waitresses—in any public question which may happen to come up.

It is not the question of the shortcoming or folly of a particular owner, a Northcliffe or a Rothermere. If there had been no Lord Northcliffe, the social problem presented by the industry of which he was so eminent a captain would have been no less acute. The problem is hardly less great in America and in France, although the circumstances of newspaper production in those countries differ in important details from the circumstances of the British industry. It is not a matter of personalities, or particular peoples or groups, but of certain fundamental human forces acted upon in a certain way.

Let us take an illustration.

Here is a Southern community where for a generation lynching has been a scourge ; or a French Capital passing through an anti-Dreyfusard or anti-German Chauvinism pregnant with mischief for Europe ; or a German generation infected with a dangerous militarist mysticism ; or an Irish population aflame with anti-Popery ; or a Balkan with some patriotic

hate. We, detached outsiders, see clearly enough that in each of these cases, the group at a given point is not sane. Minds are unbalanced because one part of the facts has been obscured by another part. Yet the popular paper must, at the cost of sacrificing its circulation, still further upset the balance. The Southern paper which, at times of passion on the subject, should be so negrophile, or a French paper so Germanophile, or a Northern Irish one so pro-Catholic as to bring into prominence the group of facts which, beyond all others, are indispensable to popular wisdom, would inevitably lose circulation as compared with a rival which went on enlarging that part of the fact, already too large, in the public mind, and scrupulously excluded the truths already too much overlooked. A paper which during the War refrained from printing dubious German atrocity stories, could not hope to do as well as one which appeared with alluring tales of German corpse factories. Thus, in the competitive process, a vicious circle is established. Public taste calls forth corpse-factory stories from the ingenious editor ; these, inflaming the temper of the public, render that public less able to hear patiently or to give any consideration to the facts which might offset in their minds the effect of the atrocities. The editor finds himself obliged to be progressively one-sided. It is not, be it noted, a matter of expressing editorial opinions, but of selecting the news which the readers shall know. Given the facts which the French Press have been printing this last year or two¹ about Germany (and England), French policy is entirely reasonable and sane, something which ours would be if we read nothing

¹ Written in 1924.

but what the French have been reading. But the point is that a Frenchman, having to choose between two papers, one that told all the facts and one that told only the selection which went with the grain of his passionate feeling, would, in nine hundred and ninety-nine cases out of a thousand, choose the one which confirmed his prejudices. No man likes to read a paper which creates an uneasy feeling, by the facts which it relates, that his opinions are unsound and his prejudices mean and stupid: that he is a small-minded fool, in fact.

The Press does not *create* evils like Nationalism or race hatred. What it does is to intensify and fix more firmly the type of character and the state of mind out of which those evils grow and become so dangerous. Precisely when the judgment of the mass is increasingly vital, because vital decisions rest less and less with an authoritative few, and more and more with the many—just at that juncture the Press, which our forefathers had looked upon as the great hope of democracy, acts in the manner described upon the elementary human forces I have attempted to indicate.

The phenomenon is not peculiar to any one country. In America, in England, in France, in Italy, to a lesser extend in Germany and the smaller countries, we see much the same thing taking place—a certain simple mechanism operating to produce a roughly similar type of paper and kind of influence upon the public mind. The nature of the process is everywhere broadly what has been described: if a public has been captured by a given folly or passion—race hatred, or Nationalism, or religious fanaticism, or what not—the paper which hopes to win or retain large circulations must so shape its selection and

presentation of news as to appear to confirm the prepossession of the moment. For it is an all but universal characteristic that even the wisest of us likes to read just those facts which confirm an existing opinion, since it is uncomfortable, disturbing, unsettling to have to readjust opinions about such things as, for instance, the wickedness of all Germans and the goodness of all Allies ; or, in America, the intolerableness of all negroes ; or, in Ulster, the craftiness of Catholics ; or, in France, the capacity of the Boche to pay the next term's rent. The fact in human nature here indicated has been the basis of demagogu ever since Socrates declared that no man could hold office in Athens and tell the truth. What is new is the exploitation of this shortcoming by the power of an enormous industry ; the working of an immeasurably powerful mechanism in such a manner as to worsen states of mind like those at the bottom of the present welter in Europe. To appreciate fully the way in which that mechanism works, we must take into account a certain psychological fact in addition to the one just noticed. It may be true that, given time, most of us can modify an existing opinion or prejudice in the light of new facts, or facts not heretofore appreciated. But the process of reasoning about facts is slow and rather painful, while the reaction to some stimulus exciting primitive instinct, deeply rooted prejudice, is quick and easy. Any newspaper appealing to the more easily stimulated group of motives, to first thoughts, will have taken away circulation from a rival before this latter has had time to establish what may be a better case, but one which depends upon rather more reflection—second thoughts. From the point of view of circulation, it is of no avail that the latter

should completely prove his case, if that proof should demand any considerable period of uncongenial reading, because it is in that period that readers will go to the rival paper and will never know how right their abandoned one has been. The first result for a *Petit Journal*, which should give an impartial account of the facts of the Ruhr occupation, would be anger at its "pro-Germanism" on the part of its readers. If it were the only paper in France, it could afford to go on giving all the facts, because the second result of learning them would be to make its readers see that a policy framed in the best interests of France would take cognisance of the facts as a whole. But in the present circumstances of the newspaper industry the readers of the *Petit Journal* would have subscribed to the *Matin* long before the necessary conversion could take place. The line of economic least resistance for the popular press is a policy which in fact enlarges the place and power of the first thought as opposed to the second.

Keeping in mind these facts in human nature, let us consider certain other conditions of successful large-scale, popular newspaper production.

If a paper's circulation is to run to millions, it must include that vast public which "snatches" at its news—the preoccupied clerk reading in the Tube yesterday's history of the world in headlines, the waitress or tea-shop girl getting her views of European politics from the *Sketch* or *Mirror*. The editor must so present politics and public questions—when he deals with them at all—as to catch the attention of that public and make those subjects interesting to it. He has to interest the school-girl or typist, not under conditions of leisure and with rested mind,

but in the clatter and hurry of the tram, or in the fatigue and dullness of after work. The typist or clerk may have a latent capacity for sound political judgment as great as that of any other large class ; certainly as great as that of the country parson, as the squire or retired colonel who formerly made up so much of the " public." But the modern popular newspaper does not, and cannot afford, for the reasons above indicated, to cultivate qualities which are not only undeveloped, but slow in reacting to cultivation. The selection and presentation of news must be such as will secure the *quickest* reaction from the very largest number ; for circulation success depends, again as we have seen, not on touching those instincts or emotions which are deepest, still less those which are most social and civilised, but those which will respond most rapidly to the particular stimuli which the instruments possessed by the trust enables it to apply.

An important distinction should be noted. There are papers—*The Manchester Guardian* among dailies, and in all countries a number of " highbrow " reviews—that do obviously try to give the whole truth. But if the great newspaper trusts, the vast industrial organisations like the Associated Newspapers, the Amalgamated Press, the Beaversbrook combination, the Hearst Press in America, had to live on the patronage of the class of readers which is prepared to hear both sides, those big concerns would be utterly bankrupt. They certainly could not pay dividends on capital running into tens of millions sterling ; their advertising space would not be worth a thousand pounds a page. The Industry simply could not exist on a *Manchester Guardian* basis of circulation. The

Daily Mail or the Hearst Press, must make of politics and public questions, as of all other raw material of circulation, something which will catch the attention and interest of the clerk and the waitress. No paper which fails to catch them will attain to million-a-day circulations.

In the eighteenth century, two or three pamphleteers (for example, the Encyclopædists) could and often did profoundly affect events by sheer argument, because a very simple mechanism, a few pounds spent with a printer in a back street, enabled them to reach the effective political public. Public opinion and private opinion were thus very close to one another. In order to reach the modern public, the publicist must work through the mechanism of daily newspapers in which millions of pounds of capital have been involved, and which he may jeopardise.

It does not affect this argument to object, as it is sometimes objected, that the *Sketch* or *Mirror* editor does not attempt to interest his readers in politics. He is interesting them in politics all the time. Every story about the wickedness of Germans, every picture of Monsieur Poincaré being cheered by French crowds, every cartoon revealing the Hun as a sly and cunning fraudulent debtor means the stiffening of a certain attitude to foreign policy; the vast simultaneous puffing of royal personages and fashionable figures means the crystallisation of a certain attitude on social questions. And it is just because it is easiest and safest to "work" that kind of political interest that the popular press does create and perpetuate that kind of political mind, make public opinion the thing which we know. Public opinion does not descend from the skies, but is made by a complex

mixture of human forces, factors, motives. Systematically to cultivate a more serious type would involve too many circulation risks. If a Hearst makes of foreign politics mainly a series of "stunts" in which a blatant Nationalism fed by a crude Anglophobia is the main "feature," or a Northcliffe keeps up a mechanical repetition of the war-time incantations of Germanophobia, it is not because those things exhaust the emotional or intellectual possibilities of their millions of readers, but because it is to those "stimuli" that the reader reacts most quickly.

This process of playing the first as against the second thought, makes, within certain limits, for intense moral conservatism. It tends to stereotype such traditional conceptions as Nationalism, Monarchism, social inequalities; and in such changes as do occur, reduces the elements of rationalism and the influence of independent thinking.

Conservatives are just beginning to learn the fact that democratic devices—manhood suffrage, referenda, etc.—that used to be regarded as revolutionary, exposing the country to violent change, are now usually factors of fundamental Conservatism.¹ An

¹ Thus the *Spectator*: "Socialists hate the referendum like the plague because they know it probably means an end to all revolutionary schemes. The vast majority, as has been proved over and over again, are not revolutionary. But the very fact that revolutionaries loathe and fear the referendum is the very reason why a Unionist government should make a point of adding it to the Constitution. One of the cardinal rules of business safety is to insure yourself against a great risk when you have the power to do it. Revolution is the kind of incendiarism against which the country ought to take out a good, safe, and comprehensive policy. That policy is to be found in the Poll of the People."

Quoted in the *New Republic*, May 27, 1925.

American writer, Mr. Frederick Nelson,¹ drawing on American experience, puts the case in these terms :

The initiative, referendum and recall struck terror to the Conservative soul, so that even Roosevelt's glittering generalities on these matters seemed evidence of the reddest radicalism, with the God-knew-what malign intent against the Constitution of the United States. It was assumed in those dimly distant days that, once all sorts of people were allowed to vote on all sorts of questions with ballots a foot and a half long, the end had come for honest capital and individual enterprise : that Red Revolution would stalk through the streets unchallenged : and that Business, Religion, True Principles, and the Home would be forced to sit annually in anxious dread while the people passed their Fool Legislation. On this basis those assumed to represent the Interests fought every extension of popular government, direct election of United States senators, suffrage for women, the direct primary. Millions of words and doubtless millions of dollars were spent in the opening years of this century to hinder the advance of these "revolutionary ideas." It can hardly be a secret now that the people who put up the money and made the speeches are wondering why they went to so much trouble. . . . You can with enough money and a good press agent "fool enough of the people all the time" to maintain privilege and reaction indefinitely : the People would rather purr than scratch—and you can hire competent "publicity men" to say "Nice kitty kitty" to the People for about \$125 a week. In America we have a hundred demonstrations of this immutable truth for every one which England can produce. Humiliating stories of the sovereign American People gathering themselves under the wing of the late Mr. Harding to escape the wrath of a bogus and assiduously concocted "super-state," and of the same sovereign American people four years later fleeing to the Republican party, oil and all, lest Mr. La Follette destroy the Constitution, are fresh in the minds of all. We need not discuss them, save to emphasise the complete lack of foundation in fact for the supposition that the People are dangerous. As a prominent Republican consulting engineer

¹ *New Republic*, May 27, 1925.

of the campaign said, "Feed 'em this Constitution stuff and they'll forget all about Oil!" They did. And in my own State of Connecticut a man of relatively slight ability, and one without favour except in a small political machine, has been elected to the United States Senate because his campaign managers were successful in convincing my fellow citizens that his opponent, Mr. Hamilton Holt, was a "Pacifist" because he made speeches on behalf of Mr. Taft's League to Enforce Peace! So much for the intelligence of the Average Voter.

Conservatives, in fact, are proving to be far more successful practitioners of the arts of the demagogue than their opponents have usually been, although we find them again and again becoming victims of the monsters they themselves create. These last years the statesmen of Europe seem to have calculated that the popular passion they encouraged could be disregarded when it had served its turn. They learned better at Versailles and elsewhere. It was evidently true, not merely of "the old Presbyterian," but of that common people about which he talked so much and understood so little, that it is easier to bamboozle than to de-bamboozle. And if we encourage folly for the purposes of the War, then the policies of the peace must be written in the terms of that folly.

We have this last year or two a striking illustration. The history of Europe in the last four or five years has turned upon the question of Reparations: what Germany could pay, how she could pay, the conditions necessary for payment. It was in the autumn of 1919 that Mr. Keynes published his *Economic Consequences of the Peace*. It had an immediate effect upon "inside" informed opinion. After certain natural explosions everyone who mattered admitted that here were, broadly at least, the facts. After a

month or two no one on the "inside" dreamed for a moment of challenging its major conclusions. Within a year of the book's publication an authority on the subject said : " The battle for sanity in the Reparations matter has been won." It is a closed chapter.

Three years later, nearly four years after the publication of Mr. Keynes' book, the Rothermere Press is engaged in a claimant "stunt" in which every conclusion that had been admitted privately everywhere during those years was simply and purely ignored. The Rothermere Press assumed that for its ten million readers, more or less, all the arguments of those four years, all the facts brought to light, all the changes of policy which those things had involved, had simply never been.

Beyond a few contemptuous references here and there to the "pro-German theorising of long-haired professors," the *Daily Mail* leader-writer paid no attention whatever to the whole literature which had grown up in those four years. And Lord Rothermere, who presumably had learned a few elementary rules from his late brother, is, from the point of view of the Trust Press, entirely right. The ten millions know nothing of those facts or those arguments. They constitute second thoughts which have never been sufficiently good copy for the *Mirror* or the *Mail* to deal in. Those papers have adhered to the principle of applying some stimulus each day to a quite simple emotion. On Monday there is a noisy "splash" to the effect that the Government would betray the British taxpayer if it reduced the Indemnity a mark below the figure which Monsieur Tardieu or Monsieur Poincaré demands ; if England does not get a large indemnity she is ruined. On Tuesday an equally

violent "splash" on the thesis that "if Germany is put on her feet she will put us on our back" (an aphorism many times repeated). There is not the faintest effort made to reconcile these two policies—the policy of ruining Germany in the interests of British trade and of making Germany pay huge indemnities in the interests of British taxpayers. They do not need to be reconciled, if the feelings of Tuesday, in favour of, say, the policy of smashing Germany, can be excited with a sufficient violence and excitement. For the excitement of Tuesday will, of course, smother the excitement of Monday ; and the policy of Wednesday, if then a return is made to the policy of Monday, will smother that of Tuesday.

These journalist and newspaper proprietors are not monsters. They are not indifferent to the welfare of their country ; presumably they desire to be public-spirited and patriotic. What, then, is the explanation ? Again, it is that they are conscientious business men in charge of very valuable properties, fighting every day the fierce competitive battle of one paper with another.¹ And a paper that is to sell by millions to a population following tiredly day by day dull occupations must be entertaining. Compare, as entertainment for the tired clerk, housewife, bus driver, tram conductor, a paper which reports an International Economic Conference (the very title is fatal) in terms of currency and credit problems, coal shortage and continental transport, with a paper that converts that dull thing into a thrilling "Hun" plot, creating tangible villains, at home and abroad, upon which can be vented emotions stirred and cultivated by the

¹ Perhaps when all the papers are in one trust it will be easier to tell the truth !

War and of late deprived of a nourishment to which for five years they had been accustomed.

This creation of villains which the virtuous journalist unmasks is not fortuitous; it is an indispensable part of the psychology of really popular entertainment—as witness the character of the popular drama or film. It has not, in the newspaper, any necessary relation to public service or utility. Sometimes, indeed, journalistic necessity must override a certain squeamishness. As one cannot suppose that ennobled proprietors particularly like hounding as “Hun coddlers” quiet folk, guilty of the crime of taking starving children from the streets, one must assume that it is a necessity of a certain type of modern journalism. Again, the Gresham Law operates. If your paper is not of that kind, then it will be beaten by one that is. Finally, the sense of what will tickle these particular emotions of the public becomes instinctive on the part of the most successful newspaper owner or editor. He will even, by a convenient pragmatism, defend as sound morality the cultivation of this form of journalism. If the great mass like it, how can it be wrong? Is not the voice of the people the voice of God?

NORTHCLIFFE AND HIS WORK

(It is suggestive that, although several years have elapsed since his death and although he wielded an influence which prompted one eminent journalist who did not like him at all to say of him that “whether we like it or not, he is the most powerful man in England to-day,” and another at one time to declare that “no man can hold office in this country save by his grace”—despite this, no detached estimate of the work and character of Lord Northcliffe has so far appeared. Yet

he was in fact the leader of a social revolution, the artisan of a most significant moral and social change. His personality, his methods, as representative of this new application of industrialism to the dissemination of ideas, is part of the problem of the public mind which we are considering.

It is therefore relevant to produce here a sketch, based upon a rather intimate personal acquaintance with him during ten years, made at the time of his death.)

One speaks of "The Northcliffe Press" and has in mind the series of morning, evening, and Sunday newspapers known to, say, an American who spends a few weeks in England: The *Daily Mail* (with a circulation of very nearly two million copies a day—three or four times the circulation of any daily newspaper published in the United States); the *Daily Mirror*, the paper of illustrations with a circulation somewhere at the million mark; the *Evening News*, the evening edition of the *Daily Mail*, with a circulation of about three-quarters of a million; the *Glasgow Mail and Record*, a Glasgow daily of large circulation; the *Weekly Dispatch*, a Sunday paper (to Americans it may be explained that as the London daily papers do not publish on Sundays, the "Sunday" papers belong to a special class and have often enormous circulation); as well as other Sunday and weekly journals. But we shall never understand how Northcliffe obtained his power, nor shall we understand its nature, unless we keep in mind the fact that the papers which first gave him wealth and power were not daily papers but certain organs of which a visitor to England probably never hears, of the existence of which, indeed, most educated Englishmen are unaware.

The Harmsworths, as they were called before they

became ennobled, were an extremely wealthy publishing firm and had great power in the formation of English feeling and opinion (although many would deny this) long before they published a daily paper, or, indeed, anything which could be described as a newspaper properly speaking. And even to-day the main source of their revenue is not in the Daily Press, but in some eighty publications which constitute the reading matter of perhaps the greater part of the population and make up the greatest publishing business in the world—and which most English folk of the “educated” classes never see.

And that organisation, with the colossal fortune and influence that has resulted from it, was built up by one man who was penniless and unknown when he began, in a conservative country suspicious of innovations and already provided with great newspapers.

What is the story of it? How was it done? What was the manner of man who did it? What has been its effect upon British politics and thinking?

I have seen statements in the American Press to the effect that Northcliffe was of working-class origin, or at least not of the social order which makes him a “gentleman” in the European sense. This is wrong. He came of the upper middle classes, from which, until a few years ago, the rulers of England were mainly drawn. His father was a barrister of the Middle Temple. The family is partly of Irish stock (Alfred, the Viscount Northcliffe to be, was born in Dublin), with, however, humorously enough, French and German affiliations. Neither Alfred nor his brothers have any of the social disqualifications which in England so often mark the self-made man, including the self-made Lord; no “h’s” missing, no social

gaucheries of any kind. More than that, in his intercourse with his subordinates, Northcliffe usually displayed great courtesy and charm, exercising a real magnetism over those with whom he came into contact. Although autocratic in his methods of administration, he was, in his social contact, democratic and simple. Though not a good conversationalist—for reasons that I will indicate presently—he had a pagan zest in life, a school-boy attitude and humour which made him a good companion. His heads of departments often became close personal friends, staying at his country houses, knowing his family, meeting his friends. He was a model employer, quick, it is true, both to “fire” and to “hire,” but generous to the point of extravagance in his recognition of merit. This by way of discounting certain legends.

Alfred Harmsworth was the eldest of a very large family of brothers, and when in the normal order of events he would have gone to the University the family fell upon hard times, and instead—at sixteen—he went into the world, and with astounding rapidity was able to provide and make careers in one way or another for every one of those brothers. Parenthetically, his lavish generosity to them, as to his mother, was entirely characteristic of a side of him which no one who knew him would want to minimise.

When at sixteen or so he left school and was turned loose upon the world, and became a free-lance journalist, what was the type of journalism to which the future maker and destroyer of Cabinets turned?

It is important to note the choice he made.

The England of the 'eighties was, we may recall the England of William Morris, Darwin, Huxley Tyndall, Newman, Carlyle, Herbert Spencer, Bradlaugh

Gladstone, Dilke, Parnell, and all that they stood for in moral and social and intellectual ferment ; it was the England of Fabianism, Positivism, Æstheticism, the beginnings of political Labour and Feminism, of a definite Republicanism, of the struggles about Irish Home Rule. Men were beginning to "find out the industrial revolution," to discover that steam and electricity had not really liberated England, but had filled it with slums and a new and perhaps worse oppression and poverty ; they were looking for salvation rather to new social and moral ideas, and everywhere young men were dreaming dreams of the New World that they would win with their crusades.

To all this young Alfred, who was one day to play so big a rôle in the politics of his generation, seems to have been completely indifferent. There is no evidence of his having been even distantly interested, or that any of these causes or the special journalism associated with them—which would have been a heady wine to another type of alert young mind thrown loose amongst them—had the slightest attraction for him. Yet journalism—which means, necessarily, dealing with public affairs—was to be the passion of his life and the source of his wealth and power.

We get the key to Northcliffe's incredible success, to the real character of his influence and the nature of the problem which the Northcliffe influence in British politics represents, when we note that the journalist who was to have more weight in politics than any of the journalists his country had known, lays out his campaign for the capture of the nation's mind by disregarding political ideas and movements altogether and by turning to the journalism which concerns itself with the bicycle, sport, photography, amusement,

boys' interests. Not only was this the type of newspaper work in which he engaged as a free lance in the years from sixteen to twenty-three, but the same method of approach is reflected when he came at a later age to establish newspapers of his own.

His first—and most characteristic—venture was *Answers*. *Answers* belongs to a category of publication for which the United States has no duplicate. And it rather defies description. It addresses itself presumably to adults. Format: eight inches by twelve; paper: very cheap news print; type smaller than that current in newspapers. The first item on the first page of the first number of this historic sheet is a ten-line paragraph about an idiot that had a habit of shouting the hours when the clock indicated them; the second paragraph, twenty lines, is devoted to describing the intelligence with which an anonymous ass worked a horse pump; the third item deals with the beginnings of silk stockings; the fourth with "The Origin of Grog"; the fifth the origin of hair powder; the sixth with the discovery of some fossil bacon. Later numbers contain on the front page a selection of the kind of joke one may still see in American country papers on the editorial page; following them is a column of "Facts": "Chinese fishermen paint an eye on their boats to enable them to see their way"; "the record number of lightning flashes for England is 1,244 in two hours"; "marble carvings in Athens depict young men playing a game like our modern hockey"; "gold-fish numbering 500,000 are imported into this country every year."

Then follow twenty lines of counsel upon fast bowling in cricket. Rather more about the influence of mothers in great men's lives; how a python is sent

by railway ; thirty lines telling that the weather is killing swallows ; a highly moral poem ; things to remember before you leave the house for the holidays ; a description of a lunatic asylum ; a large prize offered for the deciphering of an anagram ; a sort of Dooley column on matrimony ; unusual ways in which women have earned a living ; more prize competitions ; cookery hints ; dress-making hints. . . . It is the English substitute for the Sunday Supplement which does not exist, since the English daily paper does not produce a Sunday edition. The paper was a frank imitation of a weekly publication called *Tit-Bits* started some years previously by a commercial traveller named George Newnes, and which had developed "Missing Word" and similar competitions. Young Harmsworth applied the principle of "following what succeeds, and doing it more so." He offered a pound a week for life to the competitor who could come nearest to guessing the amount of money in the Bank of England on a certain date. There was the usual dodge of coupon, two attested names, etc. Result : seven hundred thousand competitors, and the paper brought to the attention, through the names on the coupon, of three million people. In a few years the profits on this one publication amounted to over fifty thousand pounds annually.

Answers was quickly followed by other papers of a similar quality, until to-day the "Amalgamated Press"—the name of the company owning *Answers*—has eighty publications of one kind or another, pays some hundreds per cent. on its original capital, and was the very solid foundation out of which the Northcliffe Daily Press has grown.

To what must we ascribe its enormous success ? To

two things. First, the Education Acts of 1870, which made it compulsory for every English child to be taught to read (this brought into being by the 'eighties a public of tens of millions for whom the existing Press—stolid, heavy, leisure demanding—made no provision)—and, secondly, the genius which Harmsworth showed for understanding the new type of public. He found that such publishers as were catering for it went on a fundamentally fallacious principle. The editor of *The Times* or *Telegraph* of that day demanded that his men should have equipment and training and education. But the publisher of *Penny Stories* for the new public of mill-girls and office-boys deemed that any drunk or ne'er-do-well could turn out stuff good enough for them. This would not do for young Harmsworth. He devoted immense care to studying just how boys liked to see the hero dressed when rescued from the shipwreck: just the qualities the chamber-maid really wanted in her duke. When one of his papers published a recipe for a pie, he had his cook make a pie from that recipe, and woe betide the editor of the paper concerned if the pie were not a good one. He would discover that the heroine of the latest issue of *Fanny's Penny Story* had begun life in the novel at twenty-two and finished it—at the altar, of course—at twenty. An immediate interview with the author, who suggests that really it does not matter. And then that young man would learn something about the Harmsworth conception of business and journalistic morals. "I found you earning two pounds a week," said, in effect, Harmsworth on one such occasion, "and I brought you here and gave you forty pounds a week because I wanted you to put as much thought, care, and con-

scientiousness into a story for mill-girls as Hardy would put into one of his novels for his particular public. And you think that 'anything is good enough' for your public. Then why did you accept forty pounds a week? If it is your conception of honesty to accept forty pounds for doing no better than the drunk across the street who is earning forty shillings in this kind of work, get out; if you want to go on getting your salary, earn it."

Or he may be dealing with the editor of a *Comic* (an American correspondent was witness of this). The *Comic* is on Northcliffe's desk as the editor comes in! "Smith, sit down. Why don't you put paunches on these policemen? The public expect comic policemen to be fat. And the persecuted husband must always be thin. That fellow does not look hen-pecked; he looks as though she fed him too well. Be careful, or we shall get too refined." And the dismissal may be either with a laugh, or with the Napoleonic scowl, that is so school-boyishly Napoleonic that (almost) the visitor laughs.

Now there is nothing discreditable or unworthy about this; in many respects it is admirable; in some respects the reading matter which the Amalgamated Press provides is an improvement upon what its special public was previously getting. But when this particular type of genius is made the instrument for the capture of political power, for dictating the nation's policy, dismissing this Cabinet and creating that—then certain questions arise.

When the Harmsworths turned to daily journalism they made a success in that field for the same reasons which had given them success in the field of periodicals. The old type of English newspaper—long verbatim

reports of Parliaments, law cases, and political speeches, "weighty" and ponderous discussions of foreign affairs, no condensation of news, no headlines—was produced with an eye purely to the servant-keeping class, the club man, the merchant, the politician, the country rectory—say a reading public of perhaps a million in all. The Harmsworths, when they established the *Evening News* and, later, the *Daily Mail*, went hunting the remaining forty millions or thereabouts—the woman left at home, the typist, the bus conductor, servant girl, everybody—and got them.

And it got them by the same methods which had made *Answers* and its progeny a success. Harmsworth knew that "public affairs" were, for the million, not a matter of politics and affairs of State : public affairs were to women, for instance, the fashions, "society," what people wear ; to men, sport, the "human element" in the police cases, personalia in politics. The study of the inattentions and the trivialities became with Northcliffe a profound science.

And so millions bought his papers because of their way of reporting a boxing match, distributing pictures to reading matter in a certain proportion and in a certain way, presenting the fashions as they had not been presented before in the *Daily Press*. And having obtained power by that order of motive on the part of the public, the power was used for purposes to which the motive had no relation. It was because of his sports or his fashion page, not because of any idea that the public really had of his capacity to deal with politics or economics, that Northcliffe was an enormous force in deciding the issues of Free Trade and Protection, peace and war.

That is the supreme paradox of the Northcliffe

power. The founder of *Answers* may have had the soundest political judgment, a genius for economic and political problems, all sorts of qualifications for statesmanship, but it was not in any case these things which gave him his political power. He acquired that by virtue of facts which had nothing to do with political judgment—his knowledge as to just how a boxing match should be reported, or women's fashions dealt with in a daily paper. Millions bought his papers for some such reasons as those and not because they had any view as to his political judgment. *The thing which gave him the power of statesmen had nothing to do with statesmanship.* To make a man "ruler of the Queen's navee because he polished up the handles so carefulee," is consistency itself compared with the reasons which at times made Northcliffe the arbiter of peace and war, and now and again the most powerful man in Europe.

We shall get the key to a good deal if we take in the significance of this : here are two young journalists, men of very diverse characters. One of them has a keen interest in social and political problems, in all the efforts made towards a better organisation of society, in the fight against poverty, in the correction of injustices, in improved methods of government and representation. The other youngster is interested in none of these things, but in the type of journalism in which they are strictly taboo. If you were asked the question, "Which of these two men is likely to have the greatest influence on the political and social movements of his time ?" you would reply, of course, the former. It would be a wrong guess. The history, not merely of Northcliffe, but of all the lesser Northcliffes, shows that it is the proprietor journalist who

knows how to deal successfully with what we are apt to regard as the trivialities of life, to the exclusion of "politics," who will gain the greatest political influence ; and this, not as an accident, fortuitously, but just *because* the more "serious" things occupy a secondary place in his interests. The things which make him a power in politics are not things which imply any real competence to deal with public interests. He obtained political power *because* he was not interested in politics : because, that is, selling papers to a non-political public, he had a *flair* for the non-political subjects that would interest that public. Having captured its attention he could use it on behalf of ends that he favoured.

One may argue, of course, that there is no necessary contradiction between the capacity to judge the public taste in sports and news, and the capacity to judge of the relative merits of Free Trade and Protection ; but Northcliffe's political career does caution us insistently that the two are not necessarily related.

If one analysed the periodicals of the *Answers* order one might imagine an Amalgamated Press editor issuing admonitions to his contributors in some such terms as these :

"NO PROBLEMS!" Nearly all facts are interesting—until they constitute a problem. Do not puzzle or worry your reader with things he finds difficult to understand. In other words, give facts in any form save that which might lead the reader to think about them, to reflect how one fact affects another, and the resultant combination affects life—for that presumably sets up a process in the mind of the reader which he finds either tiring or disturbing. Having called to his mind one fact—that the coins minted last year

in the British Mint would stretch twice round Ireland—the next thing to do is to give him a quite separate and detached fact—the number of undiscovered murders in England last year. At a pinch you may tell him that the bank-notes printed by the Government are enough to cover the walls of the houses in Manchester. But on no account must you go on to explain that the printing of notes beyond a certain number determined by the quantity of metal held by the bank would raise prices, confiscate part of the property of bond-holders and have all sorts of effects deeply touching the reader's life. At the point where the thing really begins to concern human affairs, the editor would cut it out as being a "problem" of some kind—currency or sociology.

It is noteworthy that one of the characteristics most commonly observed by those who came much in contact with Lord Northcliffe was his dislike of an argument, of the discussion of an abstract idea. Quick, alert, with a wide knowledge of curious facts, extremely sensitive to what people were feeling, he had not the patience to follow even the simplest discussion on Free Trade or Protection, Feminism, a currency problem. Concerning these "theories and abstractions," as he would call them, he admitted he had no fixed principles or ideas. And the conduct of his papers about those things has revealed it.¹

¹ The author of *The Mirrors of Downing Street* says of Lord Northcliffe: "The most conspicuous thing in his character is its transilience. One is aware in him of an anacoluthic quality, as if his mind suddenly stopped leaping in one direction to begin jumping in a quite contrary direction. It cannot be said that his mind *works* in any direction. It is not a trained mind. It does not know how to think and cannot support the burden of trying to think. It spring at ideas and goes off with them in haste too great for reflection. He drops these ideas when he sees an excuse for another

He did not care to give reasons for his decisions, still less to play with an idea. And it is this among other things which made him an indifferent conversationalist, charming as his intercourse at times might be.

Incidentally, the existence of two distinct classes of mind, the class to which facts are isolated and detached things unrelated to one another, and the mind which sees in all facts a related whole and tries to grasp the nature of the relation, was, of course, recognised by the Greeks, who gave a name to each type two thousand years ago.

The public which the *Daily Mail* had discovered and brought to the surface of national life, as it were, had not heretofore been interested in politics, in the ordinary sense of the term. This public of women and youths and school-boys and girls had always become excited in, for instance, war-time ; but now they had a collective voice, megaphoned, as the Government found as early as the time of the Jameson Raid and the events which followed. The Harmsworth Press made of the freebooter Jameson a national hero.

It would have been hard enough in any case for the British authorities to have acted with the impartiality for which the circumstances called. Jingoism was no new thing in England. But the Government soon found that here was an old difficulty in quite a new degree. It was no good replying in *The Times* (as it then was), or the *Standard*, or the *Morning Post*

leap. Sequence to Lord Northcliffe is a synonym for monotony. He has no *esprit de suite*. But he has leaps of real genius. An admirable title for his biography would be 'The Fits and Starts of a Discontinuous Soul.' There is something of St. Vitus in his psychology. You might call him the Spring-heeled Jack of Journalism."

to an attack made by the Harmsworth Press; the old Press did not reach the new public at all. Here was a new force which Harmsworth practically alone controlled.

The Government learned it in greater degree still when the Boer War came, and Lord Salisbury, like later Premiers, had some hard things to say about the "Harmsworths and their half-penny sensations." In the older Press, with all its dullness and pomposity, you could argue about the secondary effects of a given line of policy; but in the new Press there was apparently a violent-mindedness guided only by the strong passions and emotions of the moment.

Chauvinism obtained a new accession of power in England. The *Daily Mail* during the Boer War, as twenty years later, went a good many points better than its rivals in its emphasis on enemy atrocity. The Transvaal Boers were accused of committing very nearly every crime of which the Germans were accused during the late War; then, as later, the Government were accused of deliberately hiding these crimes and waging a "rose-water" war; then, as later, the paper stood for a punitive peace. Its peace policy was in keeping with its war policies: Jameson, Rhodes, Chamberlain were its Imperial heroes, and it naturally stood for the reintroduction of Protection in the form of Imperial Preference, or Tariff Reform. Although it has wobbled on the question of Protection—just because it has occupied the position of being "the leader because it followed"—Harmsworth's espousal of Tariff Reform was one of the factors which induced Joseph Chamberlain to embark upon that advocacy of Protection which was to prove so disastrous.

But there occurred with reference to the Boer War

what occurred later with reference to the Great War : the demonstration that while a Harmsworth may be very nearly supreme in war policy, he loses much of his power when it comes to peace. In war-time he can dominate politicians, as he proved when he was largely instrumental in the deposition of Asquith and the putting in power of Lloyd George ; but when peace comes the politicians can in some measure defy the sensational Press, as Lloyd George has defied Northcliffe. And this is a suggestive indication of the limitation of Northcliffe's powers.

The 1906 election in England was fought on the issue of a Chauvinist and Protectionist Imperialism *versus* Liberalism, Free Trade, and conciliation in South Africa. The Harmsworth Press was "all out" for the former policy and in opposition to the latter. And much of the London Press, seeing how a Jingo line had coincided with phenomenal expansion of circulation, had followed suit. If the "stunt Press," as it has come to be called in England, could be considered as, in all circumstances, either the leader or the representative of the active political public opinion, Chamberlain should have carried all before him and Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman should have been swept into limbo. The exact contrary occurred. Someone has said of that election that "all the Press was on one side and all the votes on the other." This is not the place to analyse that really extraordinary manifestation, and is recalled here only as throwing some light on what was to happen ten years later in the dramatic struggle between two great personal embodiments of democracy—or demagogu, if you will—Lord Northcliffe and Mr. Lloyd George.

The final phase of that struggle began at the 1918

election. Northcliffe had demanded, among other things, that the Germans should pay "the whole cost of the War." Now Lloyd George knew perfectly well, as his memorandum showed, that the Germans could not be made to pay the whole cost of the War, and that it would be disastrous to try and make them. It was evident that in going to the people for a "mandate" in 1918 he wanted to be free of any such undertaking. The Northcliffe Press was immediately on his trail, and there began one of the campaigns that it knows how to organise. Day after day, at the head of their page, was a slogan "HE HAS NOT SAID IT." The public began to demand that he "say it."

Well, at the end he was obliged to "say it"—and it bedevilled his policy ever after.

Once the election was over, a subtle change set in in the attitude of the public to the whole thing. It had had its fill of crises and politics and sensations and national disasters. After five years of war strain it wanted to amuse itself . . . and Northcliffe discovered that his rampagings against Lloyd George fell flat. If the Prime Minister would indulge in an occasional diatribe against the Germans, people were content to leave him alone. Mr. Lloyd George soon found this out, and said in effect to Lord Northcliffe: "Do your damndest!" There came an occasion when in a speech in the House of Commons he declared that his erstwhile colleague and confederate "had no more judgment or reliability than a grasshopper," and the House roared its approval. He had defied this Jove, and no thunderbolts fell. Nothing happened. For the time being Lloyd George was master of the situation, and Northcliffe, with all

his power, found that now he could do nothing. And when Lord Northcliffe left on his much-heralded world tour, some of his newspaper colleagues were unkind enough to suggest that it was to nurse his discomfiture at having been worsted in this duel with the politician for whose accession he was so largely responsible.

In other circumstances, when the public is not in a state of emotional fatigue, but ready to react once more to the stimulus of mass suggestion, power might once more rest with the newspaper proprietor.

* * * * *

It has been said of Northcliffe that he succeeded because he had the common mind to an uncommon degree. And that is probably true. He once declared that he owed his success mainly to one discovery, namely, that "most people have never heard of Pears' soap,"—Pears' soap being, until a few years ago, the most-advertised thing in England. It is as though an American should say: "Most Americans have never seen a Ford car."

Once, when, as a "stunt," he was persuading the British public that the road to health lay in a kind of semi-brown bread, and after six weeks or so his staff suggested that the public were getting sick of it, he issued these instructions: "I want an article about standard bread in the paper every day for a year; then perhaps somebody will have heard about it." Some mythical German in Switzerland is once reported to have warned the Allies that "They'll have you yet, those Junkers." That warning appeared in the *Daily Mail* very nearly every day for several years.

The principle means, of course, among other things,

that if your rivals are winning public approval by being partial, suspicious, credulous, vindictive, you must be still more partial, suspicious, credulous, and vindictive. If the public likes to have enemy atrocities don't suppose you can ever give them too many.

The legend seems to be that, while Northcliffe had the quick intuitions which could read the mind of the man in the street and prepare the journalistic fare accordingly, the actual building up of the business and its administration was the work of the late Kennedy Jones and Lord Rothermere. That is only partly true. Northcliffe's personality was an enormous factor therein. It was a personality that would have made itself felt almost as much if the product concerned had been soap or dry goods instead of newspapers. The kind of attention he gave to his business was in keeping with the general principle on which his whole success was based. He has often stated it. He has said in effect : " When I came into the business nearly all newspapers were produced with an eye only to two or three millions of the population—the servant-keeping class, clubs, the politicians, city men. If a man of ability wanted a career in journalism it was to production for that order that his mind naturally turned. But who was looking after the other thirty or forty millions odd ? Mainly a few Bohemians and incapables. I determined to apply as much energy, education, and effort to the interests of the neglected millions as the classical journalist had heretofore given to reaching the readers of the old *Times*. To those millions the proper way of reporting a cricket match or displaying the new fashions means more than politics and the fate of empires. Success here is bought at the price of immense care devoted to the

proper presentation of what the superior person would call triviality."

There is before me as I write a large stack of letters written by Lord Northcliffe, largely in his own hand, while on his "holidays," from continental hotels, often from very out-of-the-way places, or from America. The writer jumps in the same letter from discussing whether X is really imperially minded enough for his new editorial position to whether the weather reports appear in the right place, and whether this heading should have been in that type or another, and to whether there are not too many abbreviations in the small "ads." The most trivial detail gets apparently the same intensity of attention as the discussion of general policy. The critic would be tempted to say that the letters show no sense of proportion in the distribution of emphasis. But given the objective of it all, is not his scale of values perhaps right ?

There was no man in the business whose concentration upon it was as great and continuous as Northcliffe's. Everything that he did, his very amusements and relaxations, had some direct relation to his papers. "What were we dining about with those people the other night ?" he remarked one day, turning to his wife. "Yes, I remember now. It was about those machines." He did not seem to find it necessary, as most men do, to separate his business from his private and family life. Not a house party did he give but a good proportion of the guests were men connected with his concerns. When he went on his frequent travels, nearly always it was with someone from the business (it was always "the business" for him). I remember Kennedy Jones, who was supposed

to be much more a business man, giving expression one day to his sense of the "hackneyedness" of the problems with which one had to deal in business. "But Northcliffe," said Jones, "never seems to feel it. This same everlasting A B C to Z of the alphabet of newspaper production never wearies him. He finds the last trivial detail as entertaining as the freshest question of policy." But in addition to concentration, there are two or three other things which explain his success in utilising that knowledge of the ordinary mind which was the foundation on which he built. More than many men who would lay claim to be far greater administrators, he realised the importance of psychology in business.

Where other employers would have looked mainly for experience, technical knowledge, and industry in their employees, he looked mainly for the temperamental, the psychic qualities. If he could get the right spirit in the heads of departments, he did not much care whether they had experience or not; and he would shift men from the editorial to the business side, and make office-boys editors and managers, in a way that would horrify the more conventionally-minded. But the results usually proved him right. And to get this right spirit was his main task in the business. He would get it not merely by holding out prospects of higher salaries, shares in the profits, and so on, but by a studious guidance of his own behaviour to the men about him. He had the trick of persuading a round score of men in the business that each one of them was his especial friend and favourite. It was one of his obvious and favourite devices, indeed, to imply to each one of the twenty that that particular one was in fact the head of the

business, or that at least the business really hung upon that one's particular endeavours. He was not above utilising to this same end his uncanny knowledge of the vanities, jealousies, resentments of the average sensual man.

Normally his relations with the staff were those of scrupulous courtesy. He took immense trouble to cultivate just that relationship to his associates which maintained an *esprit de corps*. It was part of his scheme of things to know the names of the children of his editors and correspondents, to send them toys at Christmas-time, funny post cards when he was abroad. Even though all this might have been "calculated," it did not make it any the less human, or make the association of those who were at the head of things less of a family party. There was certainly another side. He could be momentarily brutal, but it was not his usual temper. It is, of course, well known in the newspaper world that, in the matter of salaries, help to his people in difficulties, retirement allowances, and so forth, he was astonishingly generous. However autocratic he may have been in certain respects, he showed in his social contact with his staff simplicity, camaraderie, kindness, and often a charming magnetism.

His intuitions were often sweeping and impatient judgments on a very slender basis of fact. One swallow made a summer for Northcliffe, and two would make the earliest summer that the history of England recorded. It is almost literally true to say that if by some accident three people in succession were to remark that it was a warm day, he would immediately telephone to all his editors to know why they had not had articles on this unprecedented season. Did

they not know all England was talking about it and all records beaten ?

One recalls that this tendency to generalise from a too small basis of fact cost his concern very large sums in damages when applied to the criticism of certain soap combines. But there are no damages for similar misjudgments when applied to matters of the gravest national and international concern.

It seems that in his late years the autocracy of his attitude increased. Less and less did he want independence of judgment on the part of those associated with him. Whereas in the early days he welcomed it, in the latter days he was apt to resent it. Yet those who have worked with him will have, for the most part, nothing but the kindest memories. One felt the magnetism of his personality even when extremely uneasy concerning the net result of its effect in national life. Though his mind did not go deep, and did not go at all into certain regions, it was so quick, so acute, as far as it did go, that it was perpetually interesting. His temper had a school-boy quality. One had the feeling that he was playing at being a Napoleon, but he made the game amusing, and made one want to play too. The private man was better than the public man, and the public man was largely a reflection of the social forces of his time.

But the belief that to give the public what it wants is in certain circumstances a very mischievous occupation, is in no way inconsistent with the belief that immense industry, great genius, singleness of purpose, can all be devoted to that mischievous end.

To the end of worsening at certain crises the character of the English mind, making it more trivial,

less balanced, sometimes more cruel and vindictive, by giving it what it wants when it wants it, Lord Northcliffe contributed as no man before him. One may detest (as I do) the task that on these occasions he accomplished, and admire (as I do) the real genius he brought to it. One need not blame the man. "A manifestation of certain social forces." Little given to introspection, Northcliffe doubtless followed such garish light as he happened to see.

If blame there be, it should be for the public.

PART II

WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?

CHAPTER I

IS IT THEN DICTATORSHIP? THE FALLACIOUS DEFENCE OF DEMOCRACY

MUCH of what precedes in this book is an attempt to bring home the shortcomings of the Public Mind, of collective decisions. That attempt has been made because only by realising the extent and nature of public folly can we hope to make democracy a success. To go on saying: "The Voice of the People is the Voice of God" with the implication that the "people" are "naturally" right, is to be as guilty as the navigator who should say: "There are no reefs in the ocean that I need bother about." From that moment, the reefs become a deadly danger to his ship. The navigator who says: "Why of course there are reefs: I have them marked on my chart and I know how to avoid them" has robbed those traps of nineteenth-twentieths of their danger.

The hope of democracy lies in fully realising the truth that the voice of the people is usually the voice of Satan.

It is an astonishing fallacy, this notion that one who believes in democracy must believe in the innate, "natural," political capacity of the ordinary man; must share the Gladstonian "trust in the people." This view involves, of course, the conclusion that, since the people must be broadly right, the main

problem of democratic government is to secure a correct register of the popular will. Hence the emphasis which is thrown upon such devices as referenda, recall, direct election, extension of franchise, proportional representation. If only, we seem to say, public opinion could express itself freely in public policy, we should have the best guarantee that we can provide against oppression and bad government.

This belief in the natural political capacity of the ordinary man has, of course, at all times been widely challenged. It is widely challenged to-day. But to challenge it, to reject this "trust in the people," is taken as equivalent to rejecting the belief in democracy as the best form of government. If you believe that the political capacity of the ordinary man of the modern world is necessarily very feeble ; that collective decisions are subject to vitiation by all sorts of emotional irrelevancies and are apt to be misled by these irrelevancies in the interpretation of the plainest facts ; if you believe that the voice of the people is at times certainly much more the voice of Satan than the voice of God—then, obviously, the general conclusion is that you cannot support democracy as the best form of government. If the facts show that decisions made by the populace are faulty, the usual conclusion is that we should not rely on popular judgment, but should turn to some alternative method, autocracy, aristocracy, dictatorship.

But suppose that those alternative methods reveal the same faults, and, what is more to the purpose, are themselves dependent in the last analysis upon popular decision ? In that case, we are thrown back upon popular judgment as the only refuge. I am suggesting that the true view is this : (1) that the

“natural” tendencies of popular judgment are extremely unreliable and faulty; (2) that there is, however, in the long run, no alternative to popular judgment as the basis of government; (3) that we can, by the right social disciplines and educational processes—things which are not “natural” at all, but highly artificial—correct and guide the natural tendencies, but only (4) if we recognise clearly the necessity of so doing.

In the discussion of Democracy *versus* Autocracy, we get pretty much the situation which we used to get in the old discussion about reason. In an earlier age, it was thought sufficient to show the fallibility of reason in order to justify its rejection as a guide of life. “Reason is untrustworthy: men should not reason.” And elaborate reasoning has been presented to prove by reason that we should not be guided by reason.

Reason is untrustworthy, but as it happens to be the only thing by which we can test authority, intuition, instinct, or other alternative guides of conduct, and choose between good and bad, we should cultivate assiduously this tender, weakly, but indispensable plant. To disparage it, to declare its cultivation unnecessary or evil, is to throw overboard the compass of the ship because it is “so small and feeble” compared with the sixty thousand horse-power developed in the engines underneath.

That autocracies, aristocracies, “upper classes” are themselves as much subject to the characteristic follies of the public mind as the mob itself is a fact dealt with in the earlier pages of this book: it is implicit, indeed, in nearly all its pages.

If one considers the present plight of Europe and

the main causes which have produced it—recalling how much Prussianism, Militarism, Imperialism, Nationalism have entered into it—it becomes evident at once that the aristocratic groups have shown a greater tendency to those evils than have the democratic elements. The violent Chauvinism, which more than anything else has been a disruptive force in Europe, has been almost everywhere especially accentuated in the upper and “educated” classes. The influence of the aristocracies and oligarchies, political and economic, has on the whole been used to worsen the bad popular tendencies, to exploit them rather than to correct and guide them to good ends, especially in such things as Nationalism, the tribal hates that threaten the very existence of European civilisation. Of late, we seem greatly to have feared the “mob” and its revolutions, with its confiscations, economic disturbances, social disintegration. But in the last fifteen years, the most destructive exhibitions of the mob mind—and the most economically disturbing, incidentally—have been on the part of the aristocracies, autocracies, oligarchies. All belligerent Europe—not merely Russia—has gone through economic revolutions, with confiscations, destructions, disintegration, financial disorder. But those financial revolutions in which lifelong savings of millions of patient, quiet folk have been all but swept away in the dodgery of inflation and the riot of paper money, were not, either in Germany, France, Austria or Italy, the work of the Bolsheviks. They were, as we have seen, the work of “realist” statesmen of the old type, swearing by law and order and stability; sometimes of autocracies and aristocracies, buttressed by venerable churches and ecclesiastical authorities, by capitalists

who have lived to see their order all but wrecked by the policy they supported. The excuse which these governments sometimes offered—and generally with complete justice, as so many of the documents here given show—was that they were as wise as their peoples would let them be ; that not to make war, to suffer “national affronts” rather than make it, to make a workable peace which their critics would have interpreted immediately as letting the enemy off, would have turned votes against their party and so put a still worse government in power. And the dictators were as afraid as any of having an emotional public turn against them, unless the emotions were duly fed.

When we say, as we commonly do, that the people need prophets and leaders, we must remember that the leader can only establish his claim to leadership through the individual minds of the mass ; and if the state of these minds is such as to prompt them to accept no counsel which will deprive them of the indulgence of their passion of the moment, what avails the wisdom of leadership ? How shall lesser men succeed where the Buddhas, the Socrates, the Christs have failed ? There is no vicarious salvation here. Men must save themselves.

Progressive and Conservative alike tend to withhold due recognition of this need for making provision against public folly. The “progressive” who has fought privilege and thinks by the extension of suffrage to deprive that privilege of its power, has a natural reluctance to admit that the people for whom he battles will almost certainly use their votes extremely foolishly. The reactionary, while ready enough to admit the extent of public folly, resists any conclusion

pointing to education as the remedy. His remedy is, by one means or another, to try and deprive the populace of power: "We ought to leave it to authority." And there has of late been a great recrudescence of that view marked by the veritable epidemic of dictatorships which has spread from Moscow to Madrid and Rome. This spread of dictatorship has come too on the morrow of the War which was "to make the world safe for democracy." And, something more striking still, many who were so passionate during the War about the need of fighting for the cause of democracy, and were ready that their sons should die for it, to-day applaud dictatorship, and find Mussolini's not at all concealed contempt for the whole democratic conception of politics entirely admirable. Which proves, if it needed proof, that the real danger to democracy comes from the instability of certain of our ideas about it; the lack of understanding of its conditions.

Already events are showing that dictators are as much subject to public opinion—and the temptation to pander to public folly—as the veriest "democracies."

Whether Fascist or Communist, the dictator can dictate nothing really displeasing to the mass—all the people. Lenin's Communism has had to bend before the determination of a nation of peasants to keep the land; and the most likely outstanding result of the Moscow Communist dictatorship is a tremendous reinforcement of the system—and the psychology—of private property. Mussolini's apparatus of popular representation is already becoming as elaborate and far-reaching as that which he destroyed.

Nor is it difficult to see why these things happen. Life to-day in the West is dependent upon the daily

maintenance of a complex mechanism—railways constructed in relation to certain imports, exports, manufactures, which in their turn are affected by such things as the bank rate, foreign exchanges, the stock markets, taxes, insurance rates. The management and co-ordination of these things is more and more necessarily the work of technicians and experts. Our Mussolinis may dictate the imprisonment of this critic, the assassination of that rival politician. (The public reflects: "One more politician the more or less . . .") But the dictator cannot dictate the rate of exchange, or the real price of food. In order that his power shall have effect in that field, he must do certain things about the bank rate, currency, tariffs, new loans, taxation, railway charges. But *what* things? Raise the rate, or lower it? Deflate the currency, or inflate? Stiffen the tariff, or relax it? Dictatorship! But dictate what? To be sure of that he must get at the facts, necessarily hearing many sides, listening to the representatives of many diverse interests; he must judge between conflicting claims, correctly interpret the statistics. Even if something which is in fact, whatever we may call it, a parliament, plays no part in that process, a bureaucracy will. And a "bloody dictator" in the hands of a bureaucracy is apt to be as comically helpless as anybody else in such a situation.

But there is another sense in which dictatorship is dependent upon popular wisdom, upon being able to secure the intelligent and understanding consent of the people as a whole to whatever law or regulation the government may decree. Less and less in our society can these regulations be ensured by coercion. As the tasks of civilisation become more complex,

coercion of those performing them becomes more difficult. A certain law operates here. If, in order to secure the performance of the necessary task, he who does it must be endowed with knowledge, tools, freedom of movement, he can use all those things to resist the claims that are made upon him, if they do not meet with his acquiescence. In other words, to the degree in which he is powerful to perform the difficult task, he is powerful to say that he will not perform it, if it does not please him. His consent must be secured. More and more must he be party to a bargain. Very simple services might be compelled by coercion. You can get sugar-cane cut by the threat of the slave-driver's lash. You cannot, as I have pointed out elsewhere, get your appendix cut in that way. It is no use threatening the performer with pains and penalties if he does not operate successfully. You may not have the last word on the subject. We have a situation in which either side can produce deadlock; neither side achieve its constructive object—get things done—by coercion. And this is as true for the revolutionary as for the reactionary.

In the old days, before the machine era, physical revolution had a fair chance of achieving its economic and other object. The serfs on an estate, if capable of common action between themselves, could, by slitting the throat of the feudal lord, take his land and divide it among themselves. The transfer of property could be made thus in fairly simple circumstances. But a railroad, for instance, cannot be transferred from the shareholders to the workers in quite so simple a fashion: The payment of the wages at the end of the week out of a revenue which was in-

adequate would still present problems which neither dictatorship on the one side, nor "more democracy," nor "a better expression of the voice of the people," on the other (unless there is knowledge behind that voice), could of itself solve. The working of a railroad is itself a fairly complex task; but in the circumstances described, it would mean not only working the railroad, but co-ordinating it to that mass of economic and social activities touched upon above. It is true that perhaps the most effective method of all is for the workers to hand over certain of these problems to a committee or person of "autocratic power"; in other words, for "public opinion" to *agree* to accept that method. But, again, that puts the autocrat at the mercy of public opinion, since without that decision of public opinion he is helpless.

I suggest this: an autocracy can only rule by getting at the mind of the mass; manipulating it one way or another. Obviously, no autocrat can rule by the coercive power of his *individual* physical force.

We are apt to talk of the oppression from which a people suffers, in a given case, at the hands of a tyrant or a tiny minority, as though the mass were held in physical subjugation by a single person or a small group. But obviously something other than physical force enters in, because if it were a case of the opposition of two forces, the people as a whole on one side and the tyrant on the other, the physical force of the former, if used, would be absolutely predominant. A single tyrant, or a court clique, or a few dozen or a few hundred persons (even though they be capitalists or financiers) cannot "hold down" by physical power "groaning millions," because obviously the preponderance of physical force is on

the side of the millions. A five or ten or fifteen per cent. oligarchy or aristocracy cannot overcome the power of the ninety-five or ninety or eighty-five per cent., as the case may be. The popular picture then of Tyrant *versus* People, in which the "people" are ground under the heel of the tyrant, helpless victims, that is, of the tyrant's *physical* preponderance, is plainly false. The tyrant can only impose his physical power by getting at the *minds* of the people, either dividing them, by setting up one group against the other, or by taking advantage of an existing tradition, and by means of it securing an acquiescence in autocracy on the part of the people. The Kaiser ruled Germany as the Czar ruled Russia, by virtue either of a semi-religious attitude on the part of the mass (as in Russia), or a popular acquiescence which amounted at least to the absence of any feeling of hostility sufficiently active to prompt resistance (as in pre-war Germany). But if there form in the *minds* of the people a decision to withhold such acquiescence, or to resist; if tradition lose its power, as veneration for the Czar lost its power in Russia, or the doctrine of the Divine Right of Kings in Western Europe, the monarch, oligarch, autocrat, dictator is shorn of power owing to this moral or intellectual change. What a Czar or a Mussolini depends upon is a tradition or habit of thought, "public opinion," on the part of the mass: a readiness, or at least a tendency, on the part of a thousand peasants in a village to obey the orders of two elderly officials, or of a thousand soldiers in a regiment the orders of half a dozen officers. As soon as this tradition—this particular public opinion—disappears, the power of the officials, or officers, or aristocrats, disappears.

The fact is that the great dictators and autocrats—from Cæsar and Napoleon to Mussolini and Lenin—have been demagogues, knowing that in the last resort their power rested upon their popularity, or upon their being less unpopular than any available rival. And autocracy itself is able to govern wisely and well only to the extent that the governed are wise enough to distinguish between good dictators and bad, or good policies and bad.

What is meant by saying that if democracy is to work, provision must be made to meet our tendency to error and fallacy in collective judgment? We get a hint in certain democratic devices, as in trial by jury, where we have, in fact, recognised the need for making such provisions. What is our first act in applying the democratic method of trial? It is to recognise that the people as a whole cannot judge. The job is delegated. We realise also, and this is an even more essential point, that those twelve delegates could not possibly decide rightly save under certain conditions. They must be removed, for instance, from mob passion. Their judgment must not be biased by the reading of sensational discussions in newspapers. Having thus isolated them, we compel them to hear both sides before casting their vote. We compel them to hear those two sides according to some rational rule of evidence and advocacy; and then, having taken these precautions, we take the further precaution of having the evidence summarised by an expert in the shape of the judge, who shows its relation to the law. Only then have we some hope that their decision may be broadly a sound one. So far we have not managed to apply any similar devices to the great assize which we call an election. If we

were to apply to the jury the rule which we seem to apply to political democracy generally, we should say : " This method of settling the question by twelve men sitting in secret is a most undemocratic procedure. Let us have a referendum. Let twelve million voters (not having heard the evidence, using the occasion for the indulgence of any irrelevant passion that may be uppermost) decide this matter. The sound sense of the plain, blunt man. . . . The great heart of the people. . . ."

Is that unfair on our democratic processes ?

CHAPTER II

AUTHORITY AND OUR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

WHEN we say that the decision in vital social matters is thrown upon the "community," the "nation," we mean that it is thrown upon John Smith and Mary Brown—the individuals, that is, who compose the community or the nation. For a community or a nation cannot decide or think; only men and women can think. And if Smith decides some matter of morals or politics, say, in one way because Brown has decided it that way, and Brown has decided it that way because Smith has decided it that way, what are the grounds upon which Smith and Brown have based their faith and their decision?

And note the enormous forces pushing them to that method, the choice of their criterion. Reasoning of the kind involved in private and individual judgment, even in small matters, is very much an acquired taste, sometimes "an intolerable burden." And risky. Suppose one made a mistake? Not merely in the rule of the motor road, but in countless other things, there is no telling where individual judgment might not land us. Instead of this difficult, head-aching business of deciding all by oneself what is right, why not accept what has always been accepted, what the authorities on the subject have laid down, and send the heretic to the inquisition? So herd

instinct, individual inertia, idleness, the desire for "certitudes," for a sure anchorage, all come to buttress the habit of acquiescence, conventions, taboo, authority.

But, again, which *is* the authority? Who decides what authority shall claim the right line of conduct, the true faith? An older and simpler form of society had a perfectly logical attitude about that. The old inquisitor said in effect to the heretic brought before him: "How can you, an isolated individual, be any fit judge of what is religious truth and set your conclusions against the judgment of men who have devoted whole lives to the elucidation of religious truth? It is not your business to form opinions, but to accept those which men better constituted to get at sound doctrine have concluded." But the inquisitor did not end the oration by adding: "And now that we have forbidden you to use your reasoning powers about religious truth, will you please step up to this chair and lay down to the world what precisely it is to believe and do in these matters?"

Yet that is exactly our position to-day towards what the inquisitor would have called the "mob" and the governance of the world. This is the stultifying contradiction in our present conceptions of democracy. For having said in effect that as individuals we really cannot decide, but must leave it to authority, we immediately, as democrats, add: "We are that authority, and woe betide anyone who forgets it." "Leave it to the President," said America in 1918, and lynched anyone who seemed to challenge the President's view. But when the President, in the fullness of his authority, presented to the American people the rules he laid down—the Covenant of the

League and the Treaty of Versailles—the same people who had “left it to the President” and had refused to allow any free discussion or adequate examination of the President’s opinions, promptly rejected those opinions and would have nothing of them. Those who had forbidden judgment, judged. We fear to encourage in men the habit of individual judgment, but entrust our lives to the hazard of that judgment. We do nothing to develop the capacity for individual judgment in the ordinary man; it irritates us when he displays it (we dislike people who do not share our opinions, and we are careful so to organise our lives that we are reminded as seldom as possible of such impertinence: to take no papers, join no clubs, read no books, hear no preachers that do not agree with us). But we make that individual judgment, multiplied a few million times, the ultimate authority in our society.

Instinct makes us exceedingly alive to the need for unity of action in society. We have been much less alive, however, to the fact that the action for which the unity is demanded is decided by people whose capacity to make such decisions has been atrophied by this development of the tendency to sheer acquiescence.

Because we fear that the individual judgment of ignorant folk would undermine authority, we disparage that judgment, and then proceed to make that individual the final judge of what authority shall proclaim. So concerned have we been to make men observe the law that we have overlooked the necessity for developing their capacity to distinguish between good laws and bad. We have severe punishments for breaking law; none for making bad laws. So concerned have we been to bring and keep men under

the discipline of religion that we have overlooked the need for equipping them to decide whether the religion under whose influence they are brought is a true one.

When society was, in fact, a much less complicated machine than the sheer march of invention has made it to-day, this emphasis of authority, in view of the unity achieved by it, was perhaps a right emphasis. When great masses of men, owing to the absence of effective communication one with another, or through any other cause, were not yet equipped consciously to frame laws and rules themselves, they have been brought to obey those drawn up by priests or kings, or to observe traditions or respect taboos on the principle that it does not matter which way the road traffic goes, to the right or to the left, provided that all do the same thing.

But traffic problems are more intricate than they used to be, and the means of meeting them much more difficult to devise. We have come to the point where we have decided for good or ill that the users of the roads must themselves devise the elaborate rules by which the problems shall be met, must make intricate decisions affecting the lives of the whole community. And for that task I suggest that they have not been fitted. The qualities of mind which alone can fit them are precisely the qualities which, in fact, we are consciously or unconsciously discouraging in them. Conformity to certain rules of conduct there must be; in a thousand details the individual cannot be allowed freedom to "follow his own convictions," irrespective of those of his neighbours. In a thousand circumstances of everyday life we have no time, no opportunity, to examine our beliefs. We subscribe to them, without examination, because they are the

views of our time, and act on them until we find them unworkable.

The conditions of modern life—largely the material conditions—tend enormously to enlarge the field in which that acquiescence is inevitable. A man follows the traffic rule, because if he did not he would get killed ; catches the bus to town, because if he did not he would lose his job ; accepts the latest views about appendicitis, because he has usually just twenty-four hours to make up his mind about the operation, and that is not time enough to read up the subject.

Now it is this necessity for “ keeping step ” which ensures a sufficient conformity for society’s purpose, and the real difficulty we have to meet is not the lack of conformity, for normally the tendency to conform is overpowering, but our obvious inaptitude for individual judgment.

Our education perforce (as we shall see in a moment) almost represses it ; our churches are extremely suspicious of it in their sphere ; our literary lights are usually contemptuous of the “ logic ” which might help it, and laud intuition and instinct to the disparagement of reason. The usual price of success in journalism or politics is to conform to the herd’s opinion as blatantly as possible. Then, taking the individual formed by that training and environment, we make him the master, in some curious hope, it would seem, that if only we can multiply wrong conclusions a sufficient number of times, they become right conclusions ; that folly, if only there is a great deal of it, will somehow become wisdom.

We are still genuinely confused and doubtful as to the proper place of freedom of thought in judgment on the one side, and authority on the other.

We take up catch-words, as the Americans took up the catch-word of Liberty without any understanding of how it could operate practically ; as though it were a principle that could be applied in its entirety without qualifications of any kind, instead of a principle that must have qualifications at many points. Americans orate about Liberty, build statues to it, compose hymns to it, become intensely emotional with reference to it, and then violently assail its social or political application at the point where it is most indispensable for the development of democratic capacity.

No one who, until yesterday, had examined the method and subject-matter of the education of our children would have the hardihood to suggest that that education has been devised with a view to strengthening what might be called the social judgment of the rising generation, to giving its members a capacity for seeing readily how one fact in the life about them is related to other facts, how society functions. In shaping our education, certainly we have not said :

Since we are so made that our minds fall continually into traps in judging even the plainest things, so that we come to wrong conclusions about self-evident facts, education should aim, first, at correcting this tendency, at training the ratiocinative processes, strengthening the sense of evidence, making plain to the growing mind what are the conditions of truth, developing a scientific spirit in dealing with the everyday affairs of life, enlarging, in other words, the capacity to recognise truth when it stands before us.

Even if we deliberately set ourselves in education against the forces making for the passive and unquestioning acceptance of authority, it would be a hard task. The necessary processes of education—the equipping of the child with the indispensable tools

of reading and writing (and elementary arithmetic too)—tends to inhibit the reasoning faculty, the capacity for judgment, and to develop instead the tendency to accept current judgments and standards and to make education a matter of memorising certain conventionally chosen facts. The child must accept on authority, "learn," a large number of things about which it is no use asking why; which are so just because they are so, and must be memorised. The alphabet, for instance. The order of its letters are pure authority. There is no reason why the alphabet should go from A to Z rather than from Z to A, except that it is so, and with nine-tenths of what the child has to acquire in this way that is the ultimate reason. There is no use in asking why or wherefore. We are obliged to impose, whether we would or not, a mass of rote matter on the child at a very formative age. The process necessarily tends to atrophy the speculative, reflective, ratiocinative qualities. At a later stage, when whys and explanations, causes and effects, might enter very much more, the same tendency remains accentuated. Examinations must be passed. To pass the examinations, certain things must be learned: the names of capitals, mountains, kings, parts of speech, books of the Bible, Latin declensions—all things the learning of which consists in memorisation. To the degree to which the pupil shows a tendency to want to know the why and wherefore, to speculate, he tends to forget his names and dates, the lengths of his rivers and the heights of his mountains and the rules of his Latin grammar, and to become an unreliable pupil liable to get ploughed, an intolerable nuisance to his teachers. Education of the character with which we are familiar is extremely easy of organi-

sation. The tests are mechanical, can be applied in a mechanical way, by mechanically minded, easily selected teachers. The system, as someone has said, is fool-proof. Immediately one gets away from the method of authority and mechanical memorisation, one is landed in a method of education much less easy to test, much more difficult of regulation, something in which the criteria are much less definite. The need for standardisation, and for something which can be run by governments and public departments, is all in favour of the first as against the second method. It is so much easier for the teacher if some definite criterion of his work can be established. Does the boy know his irregular verbs, or does he not? It is easy to find out, and if the boy does not know them, to keep him in until he does. I once asked a quite distinguished professor in a German university how he could possibly grade the merits of a dozen theses, since each might have a merit differing from and incomparable to the merits of the others. He replied: "Well, the first thing I do is to verify the footnotes, and if I find any inaccuracy, I throw it out"—an excellent means of putting the most stupid at the top, since the biggest fool, having no other recourse, would make sure of the accuracy of what he copied from others.

Thus, if the need for training this special quality of judgment—the capacity correctly to interpret the kind of phenomenon we are compelled somehow to come to conclusions about—were fully recognised, it would, for the reason just indicated, and for another to be indicated in a moment, be extremely difficult to put into effect.

The other difficulty is this: it is very doubtful if

most of us ever learn what we are taught. We only really learn what we teach ourselves. And if the schoolmaster began to teach children how to reason—by “instruction” in formal logic, or the laws of evidence, or what not—the general capacity for rationalisation would probably be even lower than it is at present.

* * * * *

Even so, the effort so to shape our education as to develop a capacity for social judgment must continue, and we must learn, if needs be, by our failures.

After all, it is not astonishing that we should be stupid about such subjects as ethics, morals, social organisation, government, religion, politics, and economics when the authoritarian approach to their study, which we have heretofore imposed, necessarily deprives them of all natural interest. It is not sufficiently understood why this should be the case.

What constitutes the natural interest of the young in games, stories, dramas—in sport and fiction? In every game there is an obstacle to be overcome by the initiative, resource, ingenuity of the player. Success in overcoming them—or in just struggling with them—pleases by the sense of achievement, sometimes stimulated by competitiveness. In the case of fiction and the drama the main appeal is through curiosity, uncertainty, “breathless expectation” as to how the plot will turn out.

Now the search for truth in morals, ethics, religion, politics, social organisation, economics, would normally, if we would tell the truth at the start, be marked by all the elements just enumerated. Here, too, are puzzles to be solved, obstacles to be overcome, uncertainties to be faced, curiosity awaiting to

be excited. Is ours the best form of government, ours the true religion? Is this conduct moral or immoral? Is that thing right or wrong? Have we discovered Truth, or has she once more escaped us like the elusive hero of the drama chased by his enemies? Could we really make a world where all would be free and happy? How should we do it?

Here are adventures indeed—the great game. We know that the interest of it in fortunate cases can be lifelong. But all the possibility of putting behind the study of these things the same interest which is aroused by play and stories, is surrendered the moment these things become a matter of an authoritative laying down of the law. From the moment that we say authoritatively: “This is the truth, the solution of the puzzle; there are no uncertainties; all you have to do is to remember the law or the catechism and obey it”; from that moment there is no *dénouement* impatiently to be awaited, no plot to the story whose development keeps us awake; no curiosity, no planning for us to do, no pioneering of the mind, no adventure. Why should you expect the adolescent mind in those circumstances to show the slightest interest, to be anything but dull and stupid about it? Of course, a mind so trained will, when adult, be more interested in Mary Pickford than in the state of Europe, in the last movie than in the destiny of mankind. The average mind is not naturally indolent—it is capable indeed of immense industry. But it loses interest in the big things because in childhood it has had to pass through the sterilising tank of “authoritative truth.”

There is still a reluctance on the part of the academic mind to recognise a curious but undoubted truth

touching the human capacities. The type of effort which is common and which it is obviously easy to develop is that of intense industry in minute research, the patient and painful learning of great masses of data—all the attributes of a specialist. Our success in physical science—in the handling of matter—is sufficient proof of that. Our advance here over the ancient and particularly the Greek world is enormous, incalculable. But there is no corresponding advance in that quality which in the schoolmaster's world seems to be regarded as sloth, a lazy, ill-disciplined quality—the capacity to think out the bearing of the common facts in life as a whole, the capacity for an everyday social philosophy which shall prove workable in practice. That kind of quality is obviously rare, and presumably difficult to develop. We can produce a thousand experts—anatomists, philologists, historians, bacteriologists, mathematicians, engineers, electricians—to one Bernard Shaw. Few things more than war reveal the relative prevalence of the two qualities. In the research into matter—in the application of scientific knowledge to gas, power, aeroplanes, submarines, medicine, explosives—every nation produced past masters. And those masters were usually ardent supporters of the more outrageous political policies of their respective nations. No nation produced more than a few isolated individuals who desired to know the object, in terms of human welfare, of all the effort in the science of killing and how the ultimate object was to be achieved ; who kept their heads and proved themselves capable of seeing facts which as soon as passion had died down everybody saw.

We could perhaps bring home this difference between our progress in the management of matter on the one

side, and the lack of any corresponding progress in the management of human relations on the other, by imagining an Athenian visiting London or New York. Let him go into a modern newspaper office with its mechanical equipment of printing presses delivering a million to two million copies of a large modern paper within the course of a few hours, communicating within a moment or two with the other side of the world, listening in London to the actual voice of a man speaking in New York, delivering to millions in London words pronounced in Washington only an hour previously, transmitting even the speaker's picture through the ether. All this, the Athenian would conclude, is the work of Olympians, of Gods.

But then let him read the editorial discussion of some social, political or moral issue, at, say, a time of a general election, or when one nation happens in a fit of Jingoism to be in conflict with another. Let him weigh the considerations invoked by rival candidates at an election, examine the quality of a modern treaty of peace, listen to the charges and counter-charges of two sides in war; let him have an hour's chat on some problem of ethics or morals with the editor of a great popular newspaper. "Are these," he would ask himself, "the Olympians, the Gods that have accomplished these miracles that I have just witnessed? This popular editor with his italicised leading articles, crudely appealing to base passion, suppressing one half of the facts, distorting shamelessly the truth—he is no fitter to decide a question of ethics or morals than we in Athens were two thousand five hundred years ago." In the sense of evidence, in other-mindedness, in a general understanding of human relationship, of mutual obligation, in none of these

things, indispensable for life together, would that Athenian, so amazed at the wireless and the electricity and the flying, find London in advance of Athens. And not alone the popular editors, but the very lords of science themselves would have revealed this same contrast.

Yet, on the face of it, it would seem, that right judgment in ethical and moral questions, judgments which are about everyday things, based upon facts known to us all, the great commonplaces of life and human nature, would be so much easier to grasp than knowledge of the elaborate science of the atom and the electron and the bacterium, with all the toil and labour that it implies.

But evidently it is much more difficult to produce wisdom in everyday things, to get the great commonplaces right, than to be an expert in recondite subjects. The qualities needed for the latter—industry, application, patience—can look after themselves very much more than the schoolmaster would seem to think. The qualities demanded for true judgment about social and political conduct—judgments about large general issues which as citizens we are compelled to make—qualities which imply ratiocination, a certain capacity for speculation, open-mindedness, other-mindedness, "logic"—the capacity for individual judgment—these plainly require a special nursing.

One common type of failing in the public mind may be illustrated by a concrete case, drawn from an incident in the Titchborn dispute. It will be remembered that the evidence had established pretty plainly that the claimant was not, in fact, the heir to the estates, but a run-away butcher boy of the village. In the course of the case, the curiosity, interest, and

finally the sympathy of butchers throughout the land had been aroused by this plucky battle of a butcher against the wiles and wits of lawyers. So, when the case went against him, the Butchers' Association (or some such body) raised a fund—to which thousands, I believe, subscribed—"in order that a British Butcher should not be done out of his rights by a lot of damned lawyers."

It has happened to me to use that story in popular lectures without evoking a smile, until I go on to explain that if he were a butcher, obviously the court had decided rightly; if he were the heir, he was not a butcher, and not entitled to the sympathy and support of butchers. After which explanation—unbounded hilarity.

Another illustration may be drawn from the history of the trial of witches. In those trials, one often found vast erudition, the fruits of ages of literature, long and learned disquisitions, expert treatment of logic and evidence, acute reasoning at certain points. Yet all that learning missed the decisive piece of evidence which required no learning to see, which was indeed self-evident. Was this old woman able to call upon unseen powers in order to make herself invisible, to pass through solid walls, to smite those whom she did not like with disease, injury and death? Obviously, if she was able to use such powers, she would use them to render her judges impotent to send her to death. But that piece of evidence, visible every day of the trial as the old woman stood before them, it never occurred to the judges to consider.

Yet we need not be complacent. The demand made (in effect) by three hundred members of Parliament that Germany should for sixty years export money

but not goods, is an even plainer piece of self-stultification than the shutting up of witches in prison in order to prevent their passing through stone walls.

Even in fields where one would have assumed that the interpretation of evidence as the condition *sine qua non* of opinion worth anything at all would have been obvious, as in the field of medicine, little importance has been attached to this capacity to judge facts. It is just beginning to be recognised that very nearly the whole problem in therapeutic research lies in the correct interpretation of evidence ; that many of the problems are not "medical" problems, narrowly speaking, but problems of the right interpretation of evidence. For a thousand years, medical science pinned its faith as an all-sovereign remedy to bleeding. That is to say, tens of thousands of practitioners through hundreds of years, watching the effects of bleeding, came to the conclusion that it was good. The modern medical world says those hundreds of thousands of doctors through the centuries misinterpreted the evidence, which, however, was the evidence of daily contact with victims. Again and again, where difference of opinion arises between two medical schools or authorities, it is due, not to one having greater knowledge than the other, but to reading the commonly agreed data differently.

It is almost incredible, therefore, that the general culture of the medical practitioner of to-day does not include a knowledge of the principles of evidence. (The man engaged in research is obliged by the conditions of his task to take some cognizance of the laws of evidence.) Latin syntax was all-important until yesterday ; no respectable university would think of qualifying a medical man without a knowledge

of the structure of this dead language. But it demanded of him nothing in the way of a knowledge of the technique of reasoning, the use of statistics, the principles of evidence.

The teacher sometimes acquires a vested interest in the authoritarian position, by reason of his professional status. The case is put by Professor Schiller thus :

The interest of the subject is to become more widely understood, and so more influential. The interest of the professor is to become more unassailable, and so more authoritative. He achieves this by becoming more technical. For the more technical he gets, the fewer can comprehend him ; the fewer are competent to criticise him, the more of an oracle he becomes ; if, therefore, he wishes for an easy life of undisturbed academic leisure, the more he will indulge his natural tendency to grow more technical as his knowledge grows, the more he will turn away from those aspects of his subject which have any practical or human interest. He will wrap himself in mysteries of technical jargon, and become as nearly as possible unintelligible. Truly, as William James once explained to me, apropos of the policy of certain philosophers, " the natural enemy of any subject is the professor thereof ! " It is clear that if these tendencies are allowed to prevail, every subject must in course of time become unteachable, and not worth learning.

He illustrates his case by examples that have been used here :

Logic has been just examinable nonsense for over two thousand years. The present economic chaos in the world has been indirectly brought about by the policy adopted by the professors of economics forty or fifty years ago, to suit their own convenience. For they then decided that they must escape from the unwelcome attentions of the public by becoming more " scientific " ; *i.e.* they ceased to express

themselves in plain language and took to mathematical formulæ and curves instead, with the result that the world promptly relapsed into its primitive depths of economic ignorance. So soon as the professors had retired from it, every economic heresy and delusion, which had been exposed and uprooted by Adam Smith, at once revived and flourished. In one generation economics disappeared completely from the public ken and the political world, and the makers of the peace treaties of 1919 were so incapable of understanding an economic argument that not even the lucid intelligence of Mr. Keynes could dissuade them from enacting the preposterous conditions which rendered impossible the realisation of their aims.

Perhaps Professor Schiller is a little severe and is confusing separate functions. It is not necessary that the expert should be understood of the people; it is his job to get at the truth. But it should be somebody's job to interpret the truth for the non-expert man, and a Science of Interpretation for Popular Understanding is one that assuredly needs developing.

It is agreed, of course, that no adequate educational reform can be carried into effect by the educationists themselves. They are compelled to furnish certain results demanded not merely by the parents, but by the whole system under which we live. In the case of the national schools, the "instruction" must be of a kind which the inspector or examiner can easily test. In the case of a pupil intended for a profession or the university, certain examinations have to be passed at certain times, and that pins the teacher down pretty rigidly to a predetermined curriculum and time-table. ("Do you *never* think about these things?" said once an American professor wearily to his girl student. She replied aptly enough: "Professor, if you had a schedule as full as mine, you

would know that it allows no time to think about anything.")

But the teachers themselves can do something. They can make their job much more difficult by insisting even more than they have done (and of late they have done a good deal in this respect) that a knowledge of isolated facts is not education ; that the very poorest way of testing education is to find out how many " facts " the pupil knows—the date of a certain battle, the name of a certain poet, the length of a certain river ; that, indeed, such knowledge is, for the most part, utterly useless, and that what matters is the capacity to see how the facts pushed under our noses every day of our lives should affect our daily conduct. Something can be done by revising the scale of values in " instruction " and " information " as apart from education. Why should it be thought indispensable to let a child know that the earth is round and rotates on its axis, to teach it a good deal about the heavenly bodies, but deemed quite unnecessary to let it know anything about, say, money and its place in the mechanism of society ? For a great many people to believe the earth to be flat would do no particular social damage, but for a great many people to believe that waste is good for trade, machinery bad for labour, that the foreigner can and should send us plenty of money but no goods, are ideas (all but universal in Europe) which cause immeasurable misery and suffering. They impoverish the Western world, help to maintain its armies and navies and its causeless but bloody rivalries. Our children are taught more of the mechanism of the sun and the moon than of the human society in which they live. In the same way we think it necessary

to give the least educated of our children some notion of the grammar of speech, to teach them that verbs and nouns must agree, but unnecessary to give them any notion of the grammar of truth, to teach them to see when premise and conclusion do not agree.

CHAPTER III

HUMAN NATURE AND THE OBLIGATION TO BE INTELLIGENT

ONE may say of many of these pages : they are an attempt to indict the human race, which must necessarily be a futile attempt. If we are all mad, it is not madness. We are made that way. It was natural, inevitable, that these tempers and passions should dictate conduct at certain crises. What, for instance, in reference to the peace settlement, could you expect in view of all that the Allies had suffered at the hands of Germany for five years ? Did you really expect that on an occasion of that kind ordinary folk should be cool, balanced ? Can we ask that men shall alter the way that they are made ? It was natural, and "that's an end of it."

Certainly it was entirely natural, entirely in keeping with human nature, which is merely another way of saying what I am here concerned to show : that we are not "naturally" wise in our public decisions, only wise as the result of disciplines we impose upon ourselves ; that the instincts and impulses of men in the mass are quite inadequate as a guide in our complex society ; that those instincts must be guided and directed by intelligence.

Let us take a homely illustration of what is meant by the statement that human nature will destroy

us unless disciplined by a knowledge based upon experience.

Some years ago, in a packed American picture theatre, someone suddenly raised the cry of fire. The audience obeyed their instinct—the instinct of self-preservation. One would say that if there is any instinct we can safely obey it is that of self-preservation. They obeyed it—that is to say, a few obeyed it, and the rest found the instinct of self-preservation strengthened by the instinct of the herd and of imitation—and there was a general rush for the doors, which happened to get jammed. Ten people were trampled to death. It was a false alarm. There was no fire. Those people perished from an ill-disciplined obedience to sheer instinct; or, if you prefer Behaviouristic terms, to external stimulus.

A few weeks later, in another theatre, the cry of fire was again raised. But the manager happened to be present, and with the memory of the previous catastrophe in his mind, was determined to stop any panic in his theatre. Jumping upon the stage, he cried in a dramatic voice: "Keep your seats. No one is to move. Now, there is plenty of time. Rise. Look to the nearest exit. Walk. No one runs."

That theatre was emptied in perfect order, although this time there was a fire and the place was burned to the ground.

What happened in this second case? Instinct was guided, disciplined, by an intelligence using a knowledge of experience—a knowledge of the way in which our minds and natures work, and using that knowledge to alter the way in which instincts or external stimuli determine behaviour.

And looking back on the panics into which the

Babbitts have drifted these last ten years—this great nation throwing itself under the leadership of its theatrical Kaiser into an adventure which brought it catastrophe; that other nation rampaging at one moment for pacifism, the next for a smashing military punishment; a third group making a peace which five minutes of cold thought would show could not work—looking back on these stampedes, we might summarise the problem before us by asking how we can do for one another, for the greater audiences of the nations, what that theatre manager of the second theatre fire did for his more limited audience. How can we? What *are* the necessary disciplines?

First, however, a probable caveat must be fore-stalled. It may be objected: The life of impulse, the free movement of the human spirit, is a necessity of that spirit; a highly regulated, sternly disciplined rationalised life—that, it may well be argued, would be an intolerable burden.

The objection is due to confusion. It is not a question either of repression or suppression of impulse or instinct. A concrete illustration which I have used before will make the point plain.

I have nursed, say, a fierce vengeance against an enemy for many years. Brooding upon it has brought me to the point of murder, and I am determined that if I can but find this man he shall be killed. A friend to whom I have confided this intention uses reason, argument, against this course; but to no avail. Yet upon the day on which I encounter my enemy in the street, and am about to kill him with my revolver, I am stayed by an argument of pure logic. For as he raises the right hand, I see that it has five fingers. My enemy had a finger missing, and a piece of pure logic,

reasoning, demonstrates to me that this is a case of mistaken identity. As soon as that is plain, the impulse to kill falls to the ground, falls as the result of an intellectual process ; and if this man is arrested as the presumed author of the crime which had created my anger, emotions *now* do not flow against him at all. The impulse is to go to his rescue, in order that a judicial error should not be committed.

I will add a further illustration as a reply to the objection often raised that "reason is so feeble and emotion is so strong." The feeble and tiny element of reason in man corresponds, let us say, to the compass of a ship ; his emotions to the power developed in the engines. To point out the feebleness of the force which draws the magnet to the north is irrelevant. It *is* feeble, but on that feeble instrument depends whether the power of the engines shall be an element of safety or of danger. If the small piece of mechanism points truly, the greater the engine-power developed the better. If it does not point truly, the greater the engine-power, the greater will be the wreck when a defective compass has put the ship upon the rocks.

Let us now return to the theatre fire. What enabled the manager to secure such instant response to his call for discipline ? Why was it thus possible to obtain a guide, a check to instincts ? Because the audience had previously, when *not* under the influence of panic, been made familiar with the need of discipline—sufficiently familiar to know in a general way that where fire breaks out, there human nature is likely to betray them ; that they "ought" to make an effort of the will to "keep their heads." If this obligation is never brought home to them, if they are temperamentally quite unprepared, in the sense of

never having been warned at all, if the tradition of self-control has not grown up, if there is no sense of shame in cowardice, they will be uncontrollable when the panic starts. A girls' school which has the best traditions, plus regular fire drill, will be well disciplined at a fire ; a school which has no such tradition and is never drilled, *when there is no fire*, will have an unpleasant experience when fire comes.

Elaborate the illustration a little. Let us imagine a girls' school in which teachers and parents alike have got somehow into their heads the idea that fire discipline was a definitely bad thing ; that it was a great reflection upon the school and the girls to suppose that they could possibly need it when fire broke out ; that they were good girls with right instincts in a crisis, and could be depended upon, without any special preparation, to do the right thing ; and that those who suggested anything to the contrary were traitors to the school, mean-spirited, craven, cowards.

Well, it is precisely this later line which is the usual and popular line when we come to the panics which mark certain aspects of public policy. Patriotic writers, poets, teachers, orators, not only implicitly, but very often explicitly, declare that the emotional, instinctive, intuitive impulse is the best guide in political conduct ; that to examine objectively and coldly our own behaviour, the conduct that is of our own nation, is to undermine all proper patriotic feeling.

In Germany, before the war, there were a few leaders here and there who tried to duplicate for their nation the service performed by the manager in the second theatre panic, and to utter warnings against the growth of that dangerous chauvinist nationalism in which the innate instincts to domination and coercion

had been fed, not merely by political demagogues, but by historians, pseudo-scientists, university professors, clergy. But we know what happened to those who uttered the warnings. If it were a university professor who begged his audience to stop and think a moment of where this new philosophy was leading, why he lost his chair; if a pastor, his pastorate; if a newspaper editor, his circulation.

And the same kind of fate awaited those who during the war in England tried to warn their countrymen against the danger of making just that kind of peace which was, in fact, made. They were met with revilings, bitter hatred. The prophets were stoned.

But what, then, remains if hard truth is necessary for the civilisation or the direction of the passion, and passion makes it impossible to see the truth?

Well, we are not all of us passionate—at least, not all of us all the time. And it is during the more realistic moods, in the lucid intervals, that we may be brought to look at our past behaviour, to recognise the tempers which prompted that behaviour, to get a new feeling about it; may be brought to see, perhaps, that what in our haste we called “good” is, in fact, bad, to put it on the shelf of our minds labelled “evil,” and by that act be less ready in the next bout of temper to take it down and re-label it good—less ready to stone the prophets.

In the last resort, educational reform, like all the other elements of progress towards a better collective judgment, a better public mind, will depend upon that revision of moral values about which I have spoken. Can we acquire a feeling of the moral obligation to be intelligent, and so to observe the conditions

of truth that we do not become more stupid than we need be? So far, our standards have encouraged the flagrant violation of those conditions which, among other things, include the duty not to believe except on good evidence, to hold an open mind, to listen to countervailing views, to be tolerant of opposing opinion, to have patience with the person who has the impudence to disagree with us, to hate demagoguery as at times the vilest form of intellectual prostitution. Our standards do not encourage the will to truth, the will to intelligence. "Be good, fair maid, and let who will be clever." As though the fair maid could be good without being clever (particularly in this generation!), could be just to her neighbours, refrain from repeating stories which a better intelligence would show to be untrue, but which "good" women seem to have a special aptitude for repeating; could play her part in life without leaving a trail of mischief behind her—could do all this without an intellectual effort.

We tell our children that they must speak the truth, with the implication that it is a mere matter of "goodness" so to do, of the moral will; that the truth is quite easy to see, and that their conscience, God, will tell them what is the truth. But this implication that truth is thus a matter of intuition is itself a refusal to face the truth. The most mischievous lies are those we tell when we think we are telling the truth, when intuition betrays us because we allow a temper, an instinct, to swamp reason. We inculcate a definite moral code (or try to) by catechisms, religious literature, tradition, precept; we are all the time warning children against instinct, "temptation" in fields of morals, but we do not even suggest that there are temptations

in the formation of opinion, daily intellectual sins or we imply that they do not matter.

It is not true that intelligent behaviour is unrelated to the will, stupidity something which can in no measure be affected by any effort of the will. Many of the conditions of truth, the attitude which will give us a greater chance of seeing the facts, *are* matters of the will. We *can* restrain our temper sufficiently to listen to a countervailing view; we *can* watch our vanities; *can* stop to inquire of ourselves whether we are obeying an irrelevant sympathy or hostility. These social disciplines are as possible, if cultivated, as was the discipline which enabled the theatre audience to check its momentary onrush to the doors upon being reminded by the manager of what would follow that stampede.

How can we encourage this will to intelligence?

By far the most powerful inducement in our behaviour in society is the approbation of our fellows; that form of vanity which socially makes the world go round. It may indeed be said with truth that the sanctions which operate most powerfully among men are not, properly speaking, legal sanctions at all. The thing which drives a modern business man to intense labour all his life is certainly not the need for actual food or shelter, but the desire for a standard of life which will secure for him a certain social deference. It is this respect—eminence, honour, glory, if you will, of varying degrees—which provides the dominant social motive. Men do conform to the demands made by the current social standards. Sometimes those standards are moral, in the more limited sense of the word, exacting, that is, conformity to a certain code of conduct. In other circles the important thing is

conformity to a certain etiquette. But, whichever it is, the standard is immensely powerful.

Certainly it can discipline this "human nature."

Watch the well-bred woman receive an unwelcome visitor at an unconscionable hour. The hostess's instinct, impulse, all the impetuosity within her, is prompting her to say: "For Heaven's sake go away and call at some more seemly hour." She does nothing like that. She approaches with extended hands and a charming smile and tells her visitor how delighted she is to see her, and if, after an hour of interminable talk, the visitor should make a move to go, begs her to stay a little longer. Why this immolation? Because the social standards demand that the hostess shall check her instinct. And she does so. It is the thing which keeps a fear-ridden soldier in the ranks. About most that we do there is no compulsion but the approbation or disparagement of our fellows. If it were as important to observe the rules that we all know to be indispensable to the discernment of truth as it is to take off our hats to ladies, we should be astonished at the change which would take place in the character of the public mind, the improvement in the standard of discussion, the quickening of the understanding of contrary points of view, the discernment of the difficulties of other nations, the increased capacity to settle conflicts which now seem irrepressible, problems which now seem insoluble.

One is encouraged after all by what has been accomplished. Somewhere Montaigne, who of course did not believe in witchcraft, argues with great plausibility for the conclusion that men would never liberate themselves from the unseen terrors of that superstition. "For note," he says in effect, "what

is taking place in this modern, civilised, intellectual France of ours of the sixteenth century. Here are judges who have before them the case of an old woman who is accused of having changed herself into a fox for the purpose of stealing other people's chickens. And these educated men, having spent a life in studying the laws of evidence on the subject of witchcraft, after deliberating on this case for six weeks decide that she did change herself into a fox and so steal the chickens. Now if this is possible with an educated man whose business it is to know what is evidence and what is not, how can you ever expect that the busy artisan or peasant or bourgeois will have leisure or cultivation sufficient to be right where these judges and lawyers were wrong?" That is a plausible argument. Yet we know as a matter of fact that in this particular field at least men have shaken themselves free from these terrors and misapprehensions. Their intelligences operate more smoothly and readily. The veriest school-boy, if asked the question which of two events was more likely—that the old woman really did turn into a fox or that the village gossips were mistaken—would reply "instinctively," as we should say, that of course the village gossips were mistaken. But how is he, unlearned, untrained, able to be right where the learned judge of an earlier time was so wrong? Largely because in this field, authority no longer forbids the observance of the conditions of truth which have already been enumerated: the demand for evidence, an objective attitude, the application of the inductive method, the liberation from pre-existing prejudices. But whatever the cause the fact remains that, here at least, the uninformed mind can easily be right where once great learning and culture still

left it hopelessly wrong. And we may be permitted to hope that what has been done in one small field could be done for the human intelligence in a larger field if we could put our finger upon the most potent factors of conduct.

Even biology, or recent biological speculation, gives some encouragement of the hope that the improvement of understanding would follow a different scale of moral values, setting up a new will. One recalls how Bernard Shaw, in dealing with the part played by the will in development, in creative evolution, has forecast for us in *Methuselah* the time when man, desiring to try the experiment of having three heads apiece, developed a will within the organism to grow three heads; and grew them. One may be pardoned a little scepticism as to the possibility of growing three heads, however strong the will within the organism. But we may nurse a hope perhaps that, if that will is made sufficiently strong by the pressures and sanctions just touched upon, it might at least result in the growing of one head, which perhaps would suffice for our purpose.

Most men want to do right. The trouble for them usually is to discern what *is* right. Our modern world at least, whatever may have been true of other times, suffers more from honest misunderstanding as to what *is* righteousness, than from intentional wrong-doing. The "wicked man" of the Prayer Book, defying the accepted moral code of his time, is never much of a menace to human society. All are on their guard against him. It is the "good" man, offering no challenge to the conventions, animated by high motives of duty and social obligation, aflame with moral indignation, hate, and vengeance, who puts society

in danger. When there is a chance that Evil may appear with the credentials of righteousness, then indeed the foundations of things are threatened. The pious witch-hunter, sowing terror among men, bemusing their minds and perverting their spirits; the high-minded Inquisitor, passionately convinced that only by forbidding thought upon religion, and by making readiness to believe improbable things the supreme virtue, can society be kept together; the self-sacrificing patriot who would rather see his country a desert than allow old hatreds to die away—it is these idealists of the wrong ideal who have done more damage to society than the worst of the recognised villains, whose activities so absorb the official guardians of morality.

It would not be true to call the burner of witches, the torturer of heretics, the fomenters of patriotic war, murderers or assassins. Usually they have been passionately convinced that they were doing right, obeying the will of God. It is the ideas that were assassins. The men who held those ideas had merely failed to examine credentials, to see whether, as an old illustration has it, the Deity who had spoken to them and aroused their feelings so intensely, was in fact God—or Satan. They “meant well” in their cruelty and devastation. Their motives were pure, as are often, for instance, those of judges who send innocent men to, their doom. But we may well question whether we should excuse the judicial error which sent the wrong man—a Dreyfus or another—to the scaffold or to the lyncher’s pyre, on the ground that the hatred of the alleged crime of treason or rape was so intense. We commonly speak of the logic which has nothing to do with morals. But reason alone

can show us that this accused person with whom we are so indignant on moral grounds, is in fact innocent of the crime of which we accuse him. Shall we be accounted guiltless of injustice if we send him to his death, because our moral indignation was so intense that it made us incapable of the cold reason which would have revealed to us the truth? There are circumstances in which "cold" reason is a moral obligation—cold reason particularly about the things which provoke warm feeling, our group loyalties, national claims, class interests, herd instincts.

"Goodness," the emotion of right and righteousness, however necessary that may be, is not enough. Not long since, an English divine said that the root-cause of all war was the selfishness and avarice of men: that only by turning to righteousness and duty could men be saved. One thought of the spectacle of tens of thousands of youngsters going to their deaths as to a feast on those battle-fields ten years since; of the mothers who let them go; of the fathers who were proud of them; of the millions who starved and skimped and suffered through the years with glad hearts. Selfishness? Avarice? Well, of course, when one thinks of it, not on our side, but on the German side. But can even a German give his life with the valour that those thousands did from motives of avarice—unless they were quite unusually certain of their mansions in the skies? Cannot we face the plain fact that if they, too, showed heroism, unselfishness, abnegation, it was because a sense of duty impelled them also? But it was a mistaken sense of duty. And that is the whole point. The leaders and teachers and pastors and masters came to these German people speaking of duty, Fatherland, righteous-

ness ; speaking as the voice of God. Unhappily it was the voice of Satan masquerading in divine raiments and the disguise very nearly enabled him to destroy that generation.

We cannot throw the task of finding out what is righteousness upon some easy emotional intuition, inner light, God. He has told us that we can only live by the sweat of our brows, which may be taken to mean of our brains, our minds. In so far as emotion comes into it, as it must, it should come to reinforce this supreme need of loyalty to the task of truth.

One great error seems to have misled us in the past. We have said (putting it in theological terms) : " God will tell us what is righteousness, what is the truth." Plainly He will not. He will tell us to do righteousness and to tell the truth, but not what righteousness and truth are. To find that out is the job to which He has condemned us, or dedicated us.

In Shaw's play *Saint Joan*, when Joan announces her intention of marching upon Paris, the French Commander points out that in that decision she is disregarding her experience as a soldier. " Oh, God will see me through," replies Joan with some casualness. The Commander then retorts : " God will be no man's daily drudge." God will stiffen our hearts, and tell us we must stick it in a tight place, but He will not save us the trouble of finding out whether there is forage along this road and not along the other. That planning is our job, and we cannot shirk it by passing it along casually to God.

We have succeeded fairly well in the management of matter. We make steam and electricity, and sometimes the ether, do largely what we want. But we have not succeeded in making our minds, tempers,

natures, do what we want. There we are all the puppets of forces we often do not see, or face, or understand. We must both face and understand them more completely. From the conquest of inanimate nature we must go forward to the conquest of human nature. Otherwise human nature will destroy human society.

