

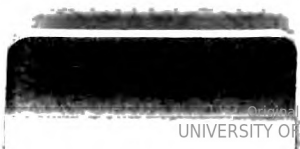
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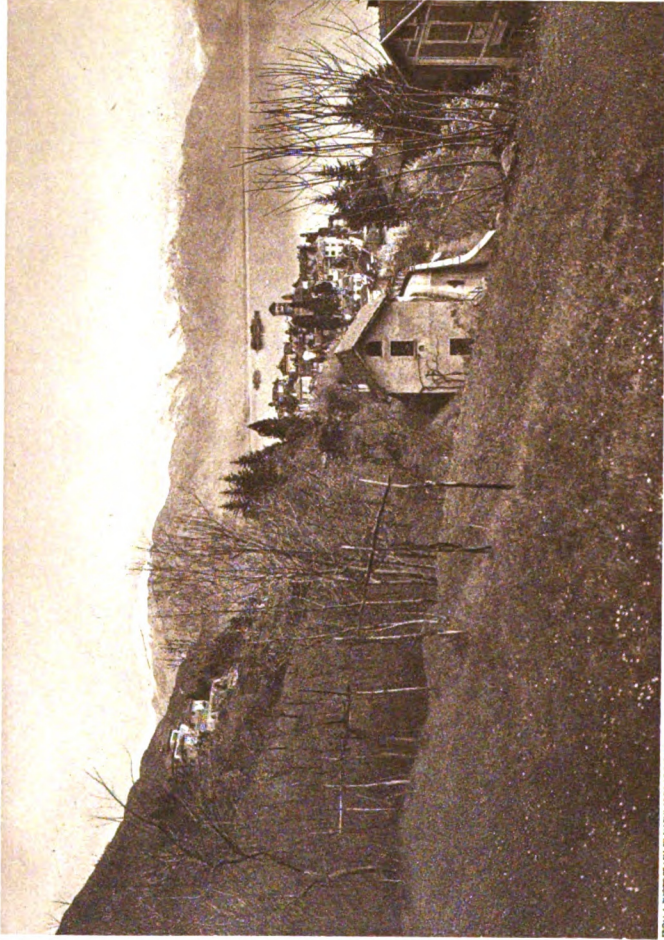
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**THE WORKS OF  
H. G. WELLS  
ATLANTIC EDITION  
VOLUME XXI**









FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY EUGENIE LOCKHART

ON THE WAY TO THE MEADOWS ABOVE BRISSAGO

THE HISTORY OF THE FUTURE  
AS TOLD BY TWO MEN IN A  
CAB

BY  
H. G. WELLS



LONDON

GEORGE ALLEN AND UNWIN, LTD.  
MCMXXVI



FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY JACQUES-LOUIS BOISSAC

ON THE WAY TO THE MEADOWS ABOVE BRISSAGO

**THE WORLD SET FREE  
AND OTHER WAR PAPERS**

**BY  
H. G. WELLS**



**LONDON**  
**T. FISHER UNWIN, LTD.**  
**MCMXXVI**

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## PREFACE TO VOLUME XXI

“The World Set Free” was written in 1913 and published just before the war. It is distinctly a prophetic book. The writer thinks it a good one, but nobody else has ever done so, and it was a failure. It was, he admits, carelessly written; it was written on a sudden impulse on the Alps, where the air is overconfident; and the writer had no idea then how near was this great war he foresaw. With a certain lack of docility, reality has followed him; war and social disintegration have occurred and are going on, and though the council at Brissago has still to assemble, conferences to restore the affairs of mankind have met at Versailles, San Remo, Genoa, The Hague, and so forth. Locarno is only a few miles from Brissago. The reader must remember that all this account of the Last War here was done and published before August, 1914. A bright scion of British royalty who will give the people of the world ideas, remains the most extravagant of the writer’s imaginations. We British have seen our future king go round and about the world since 1914, but to borrow a bagman’s phrase he travels only in his own goods.

The early phase of the war provoked the author to great journalistic activity and much that he wrote at that time he has not reprinted; he repeated much in these articles that he had already said, and he sometimes mitigated his statements to persuade. He

## PREFACE

has exhumed here an article, "The Peace of the World," first printed in *The English Review* in March, 1915, and afterwards published by *The Daily Chronicle* (June, 1915) as a pamphlet. It deals with the war-making forces in human society. Following this is a series of articles written in 1917-18, and gathered here under the common title of "The League of Free Nations." They were intended to clear the ground for a possible organisation of the peace of mankind. Any one who reads them will realise what a bitter disappointment the existing League of Nations has been to the writer.

Then comes a document of some historical interest. In May, 1918, the writer was persuaded by Lord Northcliffe to organise a propaganda to influence opinion in Germany for peace. He drew up a memorandum which received the indorsement of both Lord Northcliffe and Mr. Wickham Steed, who became later Lord Northcliffe's editor of *The Times*. Subsequently, as Lord Northcliffe seemed unable to control a noisy and mischievous campaign of distrust in the newspapers he owned, a campaign entirely contrary to the spirit of this memorandum, the writer severed his connection with Lord Northcliffe's activities. How widely Lord Northcliffe and his editor departed from the paths of sanity they seemed disposed to follow in 1918 is now history. Party conflicts and in particular a violent personal feud with Mr. Lloyd George served to deflect their untrained minds and wills to the measureless injury of the world. A sane proprietor and a sane editor of *The Times* might have done enormous services in the

## PREFACE

cause of world reconstruction in 1918-19 and '20. But here is the memorandum on record to show by what promises Germany was lured to submission.

Finally in this volume come three papers grouped together under the common title of "Democracy." The writer offers them to the reader as his most characteristic and least valued contribution to contemporary political discussion. He shows in the plainest way how foolish and dangerous and disastrous are the electoral methods accepted with the utmost solemnity in Britain and America to-day. They entail with an absolute certainty such cheap, shallow, and incompetent government that the continuing collapse of our civilisation is assured if they persist.

These last words are words chosen and weighed; they are the plainest words the writer can find to convey his meaning. If he could discover plainer and more arresting words he would employ them. These criticisms of electoral methods apply with even more force to American than to British conditions.



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**THE WORLD SET FREE**





## PRELUDE

### THE SUN SNARERS

#### § 1



THE history of mankind is the history of the attainment of external power. Man is the tool-using, fire-making animal. From the outset of his terrestrial career we find him supplementing the natural strength and bodily weapons of a beast by the heat of burning and the rough implement of stone. So he passed beyond the ape. From that he expands. Presently he added to himself the power of the horse and the ox, he borrowed the carrying strength of water and the driving force of the wind, he quickened his fire by blowing, and his simple tools, pointed first with copper and then with iron, increased and varied and became more elaborate and efficient. He sheltered his heat in houses and made his way easier by paths and roads. He complicated his social relationships and increased his efficiency by the division of labour. He began to store up knowledge. Contrivance followed contrivance, each making it possible for a man to do more. Always down the lengthening record, save for a setback ever and again, he is doing more. . . .

A quarter of a million years ago the utmost man was a savage, a being scarcely articulate, sheltering in holes in the rocks, armed with a rough-hewn flint

## THE WORLD SET FREE

or a fire-pointed stick, naked, living in small family groups, killed by some younger man so soon as his virile activity declined. Over most of the great wildernesses of earth you would have sought him in vain; only in a few temperate and subtropical river-valleys would you have found the squatting lairs of his little herds, a male, a few females, a child or so.

He knew no future then, no kind of life except the life he led. He fled the cave-bear over the rocks full of iron ore and the promise of sword and spear; he froze to death upon a ledge of coal; he drank water muddy with the clay that would one day make cups of porcelain; he chewed the ear of wild wheat he had plucked and gazed with a dim speculation in his eyes at the birds that soared beyond his reach. Or suddenly he became aware of the scent of another male and rose up roaring, his roars the formless precursors of moral admonitions. For he was a great individualist, that original, he suffered none other than himself.

So through the long generations this heavy precursor, this ancestor of all of us, fought and bred and perished, changing almost imperceptibly.

Yet he changed. That keen chisel of necessity which sharpened the tiger's claw age by age and fined down the clumsy Orchippus to the swift grace of the horse, was at work upon him—is at work upon him still. The clumsier and more stupidly fierce among him were killed soonest and oftenest; the finer hand, the quicker eye, the bigger brain, the better-balanced body prevailed; age by age, the implements were a little better made, the man a little more delicately

## THE SUN SNARERS

adjusted to his possibilities. He became more social; his herd grew larger; no longer did each man kill or drive out his growing sons; a system of taboos made them tolerable to him, and they revered him alive and soon even after he was dead, and were his allies against the beasts and the rest of mankind. (But they were forbidden to touch the women of the tribe, they had to go out and capture women for themselves, and each son fled from his stepmother and hid from her lest the anger of the Old Man should be roused. All the world over, even to this day, these ancient inevitable taboos can be traced.) And now instead of caves came huts and hovels, and the fire was better tended and there were wrappings and garments; and so aided, the creature spread into colder climates, carrying food with him, storing food—until sometimes the neglected grass-seed sprouted again and gave a first hint of agriculture.

And already there were the beginnings of leisure and thought.

Man began to think. There were times when he was fed, when his lusts and his fears were all appeased, when the sun shone upon the squatting-place and dim stirrings of speculation lit his eyes. He scratched upon a bone and found resemblance and pursued it and began pictorial art, moulded the soft warm clay of the river brink between his fingers and found a pleasure in its patternings and repetitions, shaped it into the form of vessels and found that it would hold water. He watched the streaming river and wondered from what bountiful breast this incessant water came; he blinked at the sun and dreamt

## THE WORLD SET FREE

that perhaps he might snare it and spear it as it went down to its resting-place amidst the distant hills. Then he was roused to convey to his brother that once indeed he had done so—at least that some one had done so—he mixed that perhaps with another dream almost as daring, that one day a mammoth had been beset; and therewith began fiction—pointing a way to achievement—and the august prophetic procession of tales.

For scores and hundreds of centuries, for myriads of generations that life of our fathers went on. From the beginning to the ripening of that phase of human life, from the first clumsy eolith of rudely chipped flint to the first implements of polished stone, was two or three thousand centuries, ten or fifteen thousand generations. So slowly, by human standards, did humanity gather itself together out of the dim intimations of the beast. And that first glimmering of speculation, that first story of achievement, that story-teller bright-eyed and flushed under his matted hair gesticulating to his gaping incredulous listener, gripping his wrist to keep him attentive, was the most marvellous beginning this world has ever seen. It doomed the mammoths, and it began the setting of that snare that shall catch the sun.

### § 2

That dream was but a moment in a man's life, whose proper business it seemed was to get food and kill his fellows and beget after the manner of all that belongs to the fellowship of the beasts. About him,

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hidden from him by the thinnest of veils, were the untouched sources of Power, whose magnitude we scarcely do more than suspect even to-day, Power that could make his every conceivable dream come real. But the feet of the race were in the way of it, though he died blindly unknowing.

At last, in the generous levels of warm river-valleys, where food is abundant and life very easy, the emerging human, overcoming his earlier jealousies, becoming, as necessity persecuted him less urgently, more social and tolerant and amenable, achieved a larger community. There began a division of labour, certain of the older men specialised in knowledge and direction, a strong man took the fatherly leadership in war, and priest and king began to develop their rôles in the opening drama of man's history. The priest's solicitude was seed-time and harvest and fertility, and the king ruled peace and war. In a hundred river-valleys about the warm temperate zone of the earth there were already towns and temples, a score of thousand years ago. They flourished unrecorded, ignoring the past and unsuspecting of the future, for as yet writing had still to begin.

Very slowly did man increase his demand upon the illimitable wealth of Power that offered itself to him on every hand. He tamed certain animals, he developed his primordially haphazard agriculture into a ritual, he added first one metal to his resources and then another until he had copper and tin and iron and lead and gold and silver to supplement his stone, he hewed and carved wood, made pottery, paddled down his river until he came to the sea, dis-

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covered the wheel and made the first roads. But his chief activity for a hundred centuries and more was the subjugation of himself and others to larger and larger societies. The history of man is not simply the conquest of external power; it is first the conquest of those distrusts and fiercenesses, that self-concentration and intensity of animalism, that tie his hands from taking his inheritance. The ape in us still resents association. From the dawn of the age of polished stone to the achievement of the Peace of the World, man's dealings were chiefly with himself and his fellow man, trading, bargaining, lawmaking, propitiating, enslaving, conquering, exterminating; and every little increment in Power he turned at once and always turns to the purposes of this confused elaborate struggle to socialise. To incorporate and comprehend his fellow men into a community of purpose became the last and greatest of his instincts. Already before the last polished phase of the stone age was over he had become a political animal. He made astonishingly far-reaching discoveries within himself, first of counting and then of writing and making records, and with that his town communities began to stretch out to dominion; in the valleys of the Nile, the Euphrates and the great Chinese rivers, the first empires and the first written laws had their beginnings. Men specialised for fighting and rule as soldiers and knights. Later, as ships grew seaworthy, the Mediterranean which had been a barrier became a highway; and at last out of a tangle of pirate politics came the great struggle of Carthage and Rome. The history of Europe is the history of the victory

## THE SUN SNARERS

and breaking up of the Roman Empire. Every ascendant monarch in Europe up to the last aped Cæsar and called himself Kaiser or Tzar or Imperator or Kasir-i-Hind. Measured by the duration of human life it is a vast space of time between that first dynasty in Egypt and the coming of the aeroplane, but by the scale that looks back to the makers of the eoliths, it is all of it a story of yesterday.

Now during this period of two hundred centuries or more, this period of the warring states, while men's minds were chiefly preoccupied by politics and mutual aggression, their progress in the acquirement of external Power was slow—rapid in comparison with the progress of the old stone age, but slow in comparison with this new age of systematic discovery in which we live. They did not very greatly alter the weapons and tactics of warfare, the methods of agriculture, seamanship, their knowledge of the habitable globe, or the devices and utensils of domestic life between the days of the early Egyptians and the days when Christopher Columbus was a child. Of course there were inventions and changes, but there were also retrogressions; things were found out and then forgotten again; it was on the whole a progress, but it contained no steps; the peasant life was the same, there were already priests and lawyers and town craftsmen and territorial lords and rulers, doctors, wise women, soldiers and sailors in Egypt and China and Assyria and south-eastern Europe at the beginning of that period, and they were doing much the same things and living much the same life as they were in Europe in 1500 A. D. The English excavators

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of the year 1900 A. D. could delve into the remains of Babylon and Egypt and disinter legal documents, domestic accounts and family correspondence that they could read with the completest sympathy. There were great religious and moral changes throughout the period, empires and republics replaced one another, Italy tried a vast experiment in slavery, and indeed slavery was tried again and again and failed and failed and was still to be tested again and rejected again in the New World; Christianity and Mahometanism swept away a thousand more specialised cults, but were essentially progressive adaptations of mankind to material conditions that must have seemed fixed for ever. The idea of revolutionary changes in the material conditions of life would have been entirely strange to human thought through all that time.

Yet the dreamer, the story-teller, was there still, waiting for his opportunity amidst the busy preoccupations, the comings and goings, the wars and processions, the castle-building and cathedral-building, the arts and loves, the small diplomacies and incurable feuds, the crusades and trading journeys of the middle ages. He no longer speculated with the untrammelled freedom of the Stone-Age savage; authoritative explanations of everything barred his path; but he speculated with a better brain, sat idle and gazed at circling stars in the sky and mused upon the coin and crystal in his hand. Whenever there was a certain leisure for thought throughout these times, then men were to be found dissatisfied with the appearances of things, dissatisfied with the assurances of



## THE SUN SNARERS

orthodox belief, uneasy with a sense of unread symbols in the world about them, questioning the finality of scholastic wisdom. Through all the ages of history there were men to whom this whisper had come of hidden things about them. They could no longer lead ordinary lives nor content themselves with the common things of this world once they had heard this voice. And mostly they believed not only that all this world was as it were a painted curtain before things unguessed at, but that these secrets were Power. Hitherto Power had come to men by chance, but now there were these seekers, seeking, seeking among rare and curious and perplexing objects, sometimes finding some odd utilisable thing, sometimes deceiving themselves with fancied discovery, sometimes pretending to find. The world of every day laughed at these eccentric beings, or found them annoying and ill-treated them, or was seized with fear and made saints and sorcerers and warlocks of them, or with covetousness and entertained them hopefully; but for the greater part heeded them not at all. Yet they were of the blood of him who had first dreamt of attacking the mammoth; every one of them was of his blood and descent; and the thing they sought, all unwittingly, was the snare that will some day catch the sun.

### § 3

Such a man was that Leonardo da Vinci, who went about the court of Sforza in Milan in a state of dignified abstraction. His commonplace books are full of

## THE WORLD SET FREE

prophetic subtlety and ingenious anticipations of the methods of the early aviators. Dürer was his parallel and Roger Bacon—whom the Franciscans silenced—of his kindred. Such a man again in an earlier city was Hero of Alexandria, who knew of the power of steam nineteen hundred years before it was first brought into use. And earlier still was Archimedes of Syracuse, and still earlier the legendary Dædalus of Cnossos. All up and down the record of history whenever there was a little leisure from war and brutality the seekers appeared. And half the alchemists were of their tribe.

When Roger Bacon blew up his first batch of gunpowder one might have supposed that men would have gone at once to the explosive engine. But they could see nothing of the sort. They were not yet beginning to think of seeing things; their metallurgy was all too poor to make such engines even had they thought of them. For a time they could not make instruments sound enough to stand this new force even for so rough a purpose as hurling a missile. Their first guns had barrels of coopered timber, and the world waited for more than five hundred years before the explosive engine came.

Even when the seekers found, it was at first a long journey before the world could use their findings for any but the roughest, most obvious purposes. If man in general was not still as absolutely blind to the unconquered energies about him as his paleolithic precursor, he was at best purblind.

## THE SUN SNARERS

### § 4

The latent energy of coal and the power of steam waited long on the verge of discovery, before they began to influence human lives.

There were no doubt many such devices as Hero's toys devised and forgotten, time after time, in courts and palaces, but it needed that coal should be mined and burning with plenty of iron at hand before it dawned upon men that here was something more than a curiosity. And it is to be remarked that the first recorded suggestion for the use of steam was in war; there is an Elizabethan pamphlet in which it is proposed to fire shot out of corked iron bottles full of heated water. The mining of coal for fuel, the smelting of iron upon a larger scale than men had ever done before, the steam-pumping engine, the steam-engine and the steamboat, followed one another in an order that had a kind of logical necessity. It is the most interesting and instructive chapter in the history of the human intelligence, the history of steam from its beginning as a fact in human consciousness to the perfection of the great turbine engines that preceded the utilisation of intramolecular power. Nearly every human being must have seen steam, seen it incuriously for many thousands of years; the women in particular were always heating water, boiling it, seeing it boil away, seeing the lids of vessels dance with its fury; millions of people at different times must have watched steam pitching rocks out of volcanoes like cricket-balls and blowing pumice into foam, and yet you may search the whole human

## THE WORLD SET FREE

record through, letters, books, inscriptions, pictures, for any glimmer of a realisation that here was force, here was strength to borrow and use. . . . Then suddenly man woke up to it, the railways spread like a network over the globe, the ever-enlarging iron steamships began their staggering fight against wind and wave.

Steam was the first-comer in the new powers, it was the beginning of the Age of Energy that was to close the long history of the Warring States.

But for a long time men did not realise the importance of this novelty. They would not recognise, they were not able to recognise that anything fundamental had happened to their immemorial necessities. They called the steam-engine the "iron horse" and pretended that they had made the most partial of substitutions. Steam machinery and factory production were visibly revolutionising the conditions of industrial production, population was streaming steadily in from the countryside and concentrating in hitherto unthought-of masses about a few city centres, food was coming to them over enormous distances upon a scale that made the one sole precedent, the corn ships of imperial Rome, a petty incident; and a huge migration of peoples between Europe and western Asia and America was in progress, and—nobody seems to have realised that something new had come into human life, a strange swirl different altogether from any previous circling and mutation, a swirl like the swirl when at last the lock gates begin to open after a long phase of accumulating water and eddying inactivity. . . .

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The sober Englishman at the close of the nineteenth century could sit at his breakfast-table, decide between tea from Ceylon or coffee from Brazil, devour an egg from France with some Danish ham, or eat a New Zealand chop, wind up his breakfast with a West Indian banana, glance at the latest telegrams from all the world, scrutinise the prices current of his geographically distributed investments in South Africa, Japan, and Egypt, and tell the two children he had begotten (in the place of his father's eight) that he thought the world changed very little. They must play cricket, keep their hair cut, go to the old school he had gone to, shirk the lessons he had shirked, learn a few scraps of Horace and Virgil and Homer for the confusion of cads, and all would be well with them. . . .

### § 5

Electricity, though it was perhaps the earlier of the two to be studied, invaded the common life of men a few decades after the exploitation of steam. To electricity also, in spite of its provocative nearness all about him, mankind had been utterly blind for incalculable ages.

Could anything be more emphatic than the appeal of electricity for attention? It thundered at man's ears, it signalled to him in blinding flashes, occasionally it killed him, and he could not see it as a thing that concerned him enough to merit study. It came into the house with the cat on any dry day and crackled insinuatingly whenever he stroked her fur.

## THE WORLD SET FREE

It rotted his metals when he put them together. . . . There is no single record that any one questioned why the cat's fur crackles or why hair is so unruly to brush on a frosty day, before the sixteenth century. For endless years man seems to have done his very successful best not to think about it at all; until this new spirit of the Seeker turned itself to these things.

How often things must have been seen and dismissed as unimportant, before the speculative eye and the moment of vision came! It was Gilbert, Queen Elizabeth's court physician, who first puzzled his brains with rubbed amber and bits of glass and silk and shellac and so began the quickening of the human mind to the existence of this universal presence. And even then the science of electricity remained a mere little group of curious facts for nearly two hundred years, connected perhaps with magnetism—a mere guess that—perhaps with the lightning. Frogs' legs must have hung by copper hooks from iron railings and twitched upon countless occasions before Galvani saw them. Except for the lightning conductor, it was two hundred and fifty years after Gilbert before electricity stepped out of the cabinet of scientific curiosities into the life of the common man. . . . Then suddenly, in the half-century between 1880 and 1930, it ousted the steam-engine and took over traction, it ousted every other form of household heating, abolished distance with the perfected wireless telephone and the telephotograph. . . .

## THE SUN SNARERS

### § 6

And there was an extraordinary mental resistance to discovery and invention for at least a hundred years after the scientific revolution had begun. Each new thing made its way into practice against a scepticism that amounted at times to hostility. One writer upon these subjects gives a funny little domestic conversation that happened, he says, in the year 1898, within ten years, that is, of the time when the first aviators were fairly on the wing. He tells us how he sat at his desk in his study and conversed with his little boy.

His little boy was in profound trouble. He felt he had to speak very seriously to his father, and as he was a kindly little boy he did not want to do it too harshly.

This is what happened.

"I wish, Daddy," he said, coming to his point, "that you wouldn't write all this stuff about flying. The chaps rot me."

"Yes?" said his father.

"And old Broomie, the Head I mean, he rots me. Everybody rots me."

"But there is going to be flying—quite soon."

The little boy was too well bred to say what he thought of that. "Anyhow," he said, "I wish you wouldn't write about it."

"You'll fly—lots of times—before you die," the father assured him.

The little boy looked unhappy.

The father hesitated. Then he opened a drawer

## THE WORLD SET FREE

and took out a blurred and underdeveloped photograph. "Come and look at this," he said.

The little boy came round to him. The photograph showed a stream and a meadow beyond and some trees, and in the air a black pencil-like object with flat wings on either side of it. It was the first record of the first apparatus heavier than air that ever maintained itself in the air by mechanical force. Across the margin was written: "Here we go up, up, up—from S. P. Langley, Smithsonian Institution, Washington."

The father watched the effect of this reassuring document upon his son. "Well?" he said.

"That," said the schoolboy after reflection, "is only a model."

"Model to-day, man to-morrow."

The boy seemed divided in his allegiance. Then he decided for what he believed quite firmly to be omniscience. "But old Broomie," he said, "he told all the boys in his class only yesterday, 'no man will ever fly.' No one, he says, who has ever shot grouse or pheasants on the wing would ever believe anything of the sort. . . ."

Yet that boy lived to fly across the Atlantic and edit his father's reminiscences.

### § 7

At the close of the nineteenth century, as a multitude of passages in the literature of that time witness, it was thought that the fact that man had at last had successful and profitable dealings with the



## THE SUN SNARERS

steam that scalded him and the electricity that flashed and banged about the sky at him, was an amazing and perhaps a culminating exercise of his intelligence and his intellectual courage. The air of "Nunc Dimittis" sounds in some of these writings. "The great things are discovered," wrote Gerald Brown in his summary of the nineteenth century. "For us there remains little but the working out of detail." The spirit of the seeker was still rare in the world; education was unskilled, unstimulating, scholarly and but little valued, and few people even then could have realised that Science was still but the flimsiest of trial sketches and discovery scarcely beginning. No one seems to have been afraid of science and its possibilities. Yet now where there had been but a score or so of seekers, there were many thousands, and for one needle of speculation that had been probing the curtain of appearances in 1800, there were now hundreds. And already Chemistry, which had been content with her atoms and molecules for the better part of a century, was preparing herself for that vast next stride that was to revolutionise the whole life of man from top to bottom.

One realises how crude was the science of that time when one considers the case of the composition of air. This was determined by that strange genius and recluse, that man of mystery, that disembowelled intelligence, Henry Cavendish, towards the end of the eighteenth century. So far as he was concerned the work was admirably done. He separated all the known ingredients of the air with a precision altogether remarkable; he even put it upon record that

## THE WORLD SET FREE

he had some doubt about the purity of the nitrogen. For more than a hundred years his determination was repeated by chemists all the world over, his apparatus was treasured in London, he became as they used to say "classic," and always, at every one of the innumerable repetitions of his experiment, that sly element argon was hiding among the nitrogen (and with a little helium and traces of other substances, and indeed all the hints that might have led to the new departures of the twentieth-century chemistry) and every time it slipped unobserved through the professorial fingers that repeated his procedure.

Is it any wonder then with this margin of inaccuracy, that up to the very dawn of the twentieth century scientific discovery was still rather a procession of happy accidents than an orderly conquest of nature?

Yet the spirit of seeking was spreading steadily through the world. Even the schoolmaster could not check it. For the mere handful who grew up to feel wonder and curiosity about the secrets of nature in the nineteenth century, there were now at the beginning of the twentieth myriads escaping from the limitations of intellectual routine and the habitual life, in Europe, in America, North and South, in Japan, in China and all about the world.

It was in 1910 that the parents of young Holsten, who was to be called by a whole generation of scientific men "the greatest of European chemists," were staying in a villa near Santo Domenico between Fiesole and Florence. He was then only fifteen, but he was already distinguished as a mathematician and

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possessed by a savage appetite to understand. He had been particularly attracted by the mystery of phosphorescence and its apparent unrelatedness to every other source of light. He was to tell afterwards in his reminiscences how he watched the fireflies drifting and glowing among the dark trees in the garden of the villa under the warm blue night sky of Italy; how he caught and kept them in cages, dissected them, first studying the general anatomy of insects very elaborately, and how he began to experiment with the effect of various gases and varying temperature upon their light. Then the chance present of a little scientific toy invented by Sir William Crookes, a toy called the spintharoscope, on which radium particles impinge upon sulphide of zinc and make it luminous, induced him to associate the two sets of phenomena. It was a happy association for his inquiries. It was a rare and fortunate thing, too, that any one with the mathematical gift should have been taken by these curiosities.

### § 8

And while the boy Holsten was mooning over his fireflies at Fiesole, a certain professor of physics named Rufus was giving a course of afternoon lectures upon Radium and Radioactivity in Edinburgh. They were lectures that had attracted a very considerable amount of attention. He gave them in a small lecture-theatre that had become more and more congested as his course proceeded.

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At his concluding discussion it was crowded right up to the ceiling at the back, and there people were standing, standing without any sense of fatigue, so fascinating did they find his suggestions. One youngster in particular, a chuckle-headed, scrub-haired lad from the Highlands, sat hugging his knee with great sand-red hands and drinking in every word, eyes aglow, cheeks flushed and ears burning.

“And so,” said the professor, “we see that this Radium, which seemed at first a fantastic exception, a mad inversion of all that was most established and fundamental in the constitution of matter, is really at one with the rest of the elements. It does noticeably and forcibly what probably all the other elements are doing with an imperceptible slowness. It is like the single voice crying aloud that betrays the silent breathing multitude in the darkness. Radium is an element that is breaking up and flying to pieces. But perhaps all elements are doing that at less perceptible rates. Uranium certainly is; thorium—the stuff of this incandescent gas mantle—certainly is; actinium. I feel that we are but beginning the list. And we know now that the atom, that once we thought hard and impenetrable, and indivisible and final and—lifeless—lifeless, is really a reservoir of immense energy. That is the most wonderful thing about all this work. A little while ago we thought of the atoms as we thought of bricks, as solid building material, as substantial matter, as unit masses of lifeless stuff, and behold! these bricks are boxes, treasure boxes, boxes full of the intensest force. This little bottle contains about a pint of uranium oxide;

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that is to say about fourteen ounces of the element uranium. It is worth about a pound. And in this bottle, ladies and gentlemen, in the atoms in this bottle there slumbers at least as much energy as we could get by burning a hundred and sixty tons of coal. If at a word, in one instant I could suddenly release that energy here and now it would blow us and everything about us to fragments; if I could turn it into the machinery that lights this city, it could keep Edinburgh brightly lit for a week. But at present no man knows, no man has an inkling of how this little lump of stuff can be made to hasten the release of its store. It does release it, as a burn trickles. Slowly the uranium changes into radium, the radium changes into a gas called the radium emanation, and that again to what we call radium A, and so the process goes on, giving out energy at every stage, until at last we reach the last stage of all, which is, so far as we can tell at present, lead. But we cannot hasten it."

"I take ye, man," whispered the chuckle-headed lad, with his red hands tightening like a vice upon his knee. "I take ye, man. Go on! Oh, go on!"

The professor went on after a little pause. "Why is the change gradual?" he asked. "Why does only a minute fraction of the radium disintegrate in any particular second? Why does it dole itself out so slowly and so exactly? Why does not all the uranium change to radium and all the radium change to the next lowest thing at once? Why this decay by dribbets; why not a decay *en masse*? . . . Suppose presently we find it is possible to quicken that decay?"

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The chuckle-headed lad nodded rapidly. The wonderful inevitable idea was coming. He drew his knee up towards his chin and swayed in his seat with excitement. "Why not?" he echoed, "why not?"

The professor lifted his forefinger.

"Given that knowledge," he said, "mark what we should be able to do! We should not only be able to use this uranium and thorium; not only should we have a source of power so potent that a man might carry in his hand the energy to light a city for a year, fight a fleet of battleships or drive one of our giant liners across the Atlantic; but we should also have a clew that would enable us at last to quicken the process of disintegration in all the other elements, where decay is still so slow as to escape our finest measurements. Every scrap of solid matter in the world would become an available reservoir of concentrated force. Do you realise, ladies and gentlemen, what these things would mean for us?"

The scrub head nodded. "Oh! go on. Go on."

"It would mean a change in human conditions that I can only compare to the discovery of fire, that first discovery that lifted man above the brute. We stand to-day towards radioactivity exactly as our ancestor stood towards fire before he had learned to make it. He knew it then only as a strange thing utterly beyond his control, a flare on the crest of the volcano, a red destruction that poured through the forest. So it is that we know radioactivity to-day. This—this is the dawn of a new day in human living. At the climax of that civilisation which had its beginning in the hammered flint and the fire-stick of

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the savage, just when it is becoming apparent that our ever-increasing needs cannot be borne indefinitely by our present sources of energy, we discover suddenly the possibility of an entirely new civilisation. The energy we need for our very existence, and with which Nature supplies us still so grudgingly, is in reality locked up in inconceivable quantities all about us. We cannot pick that lock at present, but——”

He paused. His voice sank so that everybody strained a little to hear him.

“—we will.”

He put up that lean finger again, his solitary gesture.

“And then,” he said. . . .

“Then that perpetual struggle for existence, that perpetual struggle to live on the bare surplus of Nature’s energies will cease to be the lot of Man. Man will step from the pinnacle of this civilisation to the beginning of the next. I have no eloquence, ladies and gentlemen, to express the vision of man’s material destiny that opens out before me. I see the desert continents transformed, the poles no longer wildernesses of ice, the whole world once more Eden. I see the power of man reach out among the stars. . . .”

He stopped abruptly with a catching of the breath that many an actor or orator might have envied. . . .

The lecture was over, the audience hung silent for a few seconds, sighed, became audible, stirred, fluttered, prepared for dispersal. More light was turned on and what had been a dim mass of figures became a bright confusion of movement. Some of the people

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signalled to friends, some crowded down towards the platform to examine the lecturer's apparatus and make notes of his diagrams. But the chuckle-headed lad with the scrub-hair wanted no such detailed frittering away of the thoughts that had inspired him. He wanted to be alone with them; he elbowed his way out almost fiercely, he made himself as angular and bony as a cow, fearing lest some one should speak to him, lest some one should invade his glowing sphere of enthusiasm.

He went through the streets with a rapt face, like a saint who sees visions. He had arms disproportionately long, and ridiculous big feet.

He must get alone, get somewhere high out of all this crowding commonness of every-day life.

He made his way to the top of Arthur's Seat, and there he sat for a long time in the golden evening sunshine, still, except that ever and again he whispered to himself some precious phrase that had stuck in his mind.

"If," he whispered, "if only we could pick that lock. . . ."

The sun was sinking over the distant hills. Already it was shorn of its beams, a globe of ruddy gold, hanging over the great banks of cloud that would presently engulf it.

"Eh!" said the youngster. "Eh!"

He seemed to wake up at last out of his entrancement, and the red sun was there before his eyes. He stared at it, at first without intelligence and then with a gathering recognition. Into his mind came a strange echo of that ancestral fancy, that fancy of a



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stone-age savage, dead and scattered bones among the drift two hundred thousand years ago.

“Ye auld thing,” he said,—and his eyes were shining, and he made a kind of grabbing gesture with his hand; “ye auld red thing. . . . We’ll have ye *yet*.”

# CHAPTER THE FIRST

## THE NEW SOURCE OF ENERGY

### § 1

THE problem which was already being mooted by such scientific men as Ramsay, Rutherford, and Soddy in the very beginning of the twentieth century, the problem of inducing radioactivity in the heavier elements and so tapping the internal energy of atoms, was solved by a wonderful combination of induction, intuition and luck by Holsten so soon as the year 1933. From the first detection of radioactivity to its first subjugation to human purpose measured little more than a quarter of a century. For twenty years after that, indeed, minor difficulties prevented any striking practical application of his success, but the essential thing was done, this new boundary in the march of human progress was crossed, in that year. He set up atomic disintegration in a minute particle of bismuth; it exploded with great violence into a heavy gas of extreme radioactivity, which disintegrated in its turn in the course of seven days; and it was only after another year's work that he was able to show practically that the last result of this rapid release of energy was gold. But the thing was done—at the cost of a blistered chest and an injured finger; and from the moment when the invisible speck of bismuth flashed into riving and rending energy, Holsten knew that he had

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opened a way for mankind, however narrow and dark it might still be, to worlds of limitless power. He recorded as much in the strange diary biography he left the world, a diary that was up to that particular moment a mass of speculations and calculations, and which suddenly became for a space an amazingly minute and human record of sensations and emotions that all humanity might understand.

He gives, in broken phrases and often single words, it is true, but none the less vividly for that, a record of the twenty-four hours following the demonstration of the correctness of his intricate tracery of computations and guesses. "I thought I should not sleep," he writes—the words he omitted are supplied in parentheses—(on account of) "pain in (the) hand and chest and (the) wonder of what I had done. . . . Slept like a child."

He felt strange and disconcerted the next morning; he had nothing to do, he was living alone in apartments in Bloomsbury, and he decided to go up to Hampstead Heath, which he had known when he was a little boy as a breezy playground. He went up by the underground tube that was then the recognised means of travel from one part of London to another, and walked up Heath Street from the tube station to the open heath. He found it a gully of planks and scaffoldings between the hoardings of house-wreckers. The spirit of the times had seized upon that narrow, steep, and winding thoroughfare, and was in the act of making it commodious and interesting according to the remarkable ideals of Neo-Georgian æstheticism. Such is the illogical quality

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of humanity that Holsten, fresh from work that was like a petard under the seat of current civilisation, saw these changes with regret. He had come up Heath Street perhaps a thousand times, had known the windows of all the little shops, spent hours in the vanished cinematograph theatre, and marvelled at the high-flung early Georgian houses upon the westward bank of that old gully of a thoroughfare; he felt strange with these remembered things gone. He escaped at last with a feeling of relief from this choked alley of trenches and holes and cranes, and emerged upon the old familiar scene about the White Stone Pond. That, at least, was very much as it used to be.

There were still the fine old red-brick houses to left and right of him; the reservoir had been improved by a portico of marble, the white-fronted inn with the clustering flowers above its porch still stood out at the angle of the ways, and the blue view to Harrow Hill and Harrow spire, a view of hills and trees and shining waters and wind-driven cloud shadows, was like the opening of a great window to the ascending Londoner. All that was very reassuring. There was the same strolling crowd, the same perpetual miracle of motors dodging through it harmlessly, escaping headlong into the country from the Sabbatical stuffiness behind and below them. There was a band still, a women's suffrage meeting—for the suffrage women had won their way back to the tolerance, a trifle derisive, of the populace again—Socialist orators, politicians, a band, and the same wild uproar of dogs, frantic with the gladness of their one blessed weekly release from the back yard and the chain. And away

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along the road to the Spaniards strolled a vast multitude, saying as ever that the view of London was exceptionally clear that day.

Young Holsten's face was white. He walked with that uneasy affectation of ease that marks an overstrained nervous system and an underexercised body. He hesitated at the White Stone Pond whether to go to the left of it or the right, and again at the fork of the roads. He kept shifting his stick in his hand, and every now and then he would get in the way of people on the footpath or be jostled by them because of the uncertainty of his movements. He felt, he confesses, "inadequate to ordinary existence." He seemed to himself to be something inhuman and mischievous. All the people about him looked fairly prosperous, fairly happy, fairly well adapted to the lives they had to lead,—a week of work and a Sunday of best clothes and mild promenading—and he had launched something that would disorganise the entire fabric that held their contentments and ambitions and satisfactions together. "Felt like an imbecile who has presented a box full of loaded revolvers to a Crêche," he notes.

He met a man named Lawson, an old schoolfellow, of whom history now knows only that he was red-faced and had a terrier. He and Holsten walked together, and Holsten was sufficiently pale and jumpy for Lawson to tell him he overworked and needed a holiday. They sat down at a little table outside the County Council house of Golders Hill Park and sent one of the waiters to the Bull and Bush for a couple of bottles of beer, no doubt at Lawson's suggestion.

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The beer warmed Holsten's rather dehumanised system. He began to tell Lawson as clearly as he could to what his great discovery amounted. Lawson feigned attention, but indeed he had neither the knowledge nor the imagination to understand. "In the end, before many years are out, this must eventually change war, transit, lighting, building, and every sort of manufacture, even agriculture, every material human concern——"

Then Holsten stopped short. Lawson had leaped to his feet. "Damn that dog!" cried Lawson. "Look at it now. Hi! Here! *Phewoo—phewoo—phewoo!* Come *here*, Bobs! Come *here!*"

The young man of science with his bandaged hand sat at the green table, too tired to convey the wonder of the thing he had sought so long, his friend whistled and bawled for his dog, and the Sunday people drifted about them through the spring sunshine. For a moment or so Holsten stared at Lawson in astonishment, for he had been too intent upon what he had been saying to realise how little Lawson had attended.

Then he remarked, "*Well!*" and smiled faintly and—finished the tankard of beer before him.

Lawson sat down again. "One must look after one's dog," he said with a note of apology. "What was it you were telling me?"

### § 2

In the evening Holsten went out again. He walked to Saint Paul's Cathedral and stood for a time near

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the door listening to the evening service. The candles upon the altar reminded him in some odd way of the fireflies at Fiesole. Then he walked back through the evening lights to Westminster. He was oppressed, he was indeed scared, by his sense of the immense consequences of his discovery. He had a vague idea that night that he ought not to publish his results, that they were premature, that some secret association of wise men should take care of his work and hand it on from generation to generation until the world was riper for its practical application. He felt that nobody in all the thousands of people he passed had really awakened to the fact of change, they trusted the world for what it was, not to alter too rapidly, to respect their trusts, their assurances, their habits, their little accustomed traffics and hard-won positions.

He went into the embankment gardens beneath the overhanging brightly lit masses of the Savoy Hotel and the Hotel Cecil. He sat down on a seat and became aware of the talk of the two people next to him. It was the talk of a young couple evidently on the eve of marriage. The man was congratulating himself on having regular employment at last; "they like me," he said, "and I like the job. If I work up—in'r dozen years or so I ought to be gettin' somethin' pretty comfortable. That's the plain sense of it, Hetty. There ain't no reason whatsoever why we shouldn't get along very decently—very decently indeed."

The desire for little successes amidst conditions securely fixed! So it struck upon Holsten's mind.

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He added in his diary, "I had a sense of all this globe as that. . . ."

By that phrase he meant a kind of clairvoyant vision of this populated world as a whole, of all its cities and towns and villages, its highroads and the inns beside them, its gardens and farms and upland pastures, its boatmen and sailors, its ships coming along the great circles of the ocean, its time-tables and appointments and payments and dues as it were one unified and progressive spectacle. Sometimes such visions came to him; his mind, accustomed to great generalisations and yet acutely sensitive to detail, saw things far more comprehensively than the minds of most of his contemporaries. Usually the teeming sphere moved on to its predestined ends and circled with a stately swiftness on its path about the sun. Usually it was all a living progress that altered under his regard. But now fatigue a little deadened him to that incessancy of life, it seemed now just an eternal circling. He lapsed to the commoner persuasion of the great fixities and recurrences of the human routine. The remoter past of wandering savagery, the inevitable changes of to-morrow were veiled, and he saw only day and night, seed-time and harvest, loving and begetting, births and deaths, walks in the summer sunlight and tales by the winter fireside, the ancient sequence of hope and acts and age perennially renewed, eddying on for ever and ever, save that now the impious hand of research was raised to overthrow this drowsy, gently humming, habitual, sunlit spinning-top of man's existence. . . .



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For a time he forgot wars and crimes and hates and persecutions, famine and pestilence, the cruelties of beasts, weariness and the bitter wind, failure and insufficiency and retrocession. He saw all mankind in terms of the humble Sunday couple upon the seat beside him, who schemed their inglorious outlook and improbable contentments. "I had a sense of all this globe as that."

His intelligence struggled against this mood and struggled for a time in vain. He reassured himself against the invasion of this disconcerting idea that he was something strange and inhuman, a loose wanderer from the flock returning with evil gifts from his sustained unnatural excursions amidst the dark-nesses and phosphorescences beneath the fair surfaces of life. Man had not been always thus; the instincts and desires of the little home, the little plot, was not all his nature; also he was an adventurer, an experimenter, an unresting curiosity, an insatiable desire. For a few thousand generations indeed he had tilled the earth and followed the seasons, saying his prayers, grinding his corn and trampling the October wine-press, yet not for so long but that he was still full of restless stirrings. . . .

"If there have been home and routine and the field," thought Holsten, "there have also been wonder and the sea."

He turned his head and looked up over the back of the seat at the great hotels above him, full of softly shaded lights and the glow and colour and stir of feasting. Might his gift to mankind mean simply more of that? . . .

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He got up and walked out of the garden, surveyed a passing tramcar, laden with warm light, against the deep blues of evening, dripping and trailing long skirts of shining reflection; he crossed the Embankment and stood for a time watching the dark river and turning ever and again to the lit buildings and bridges. His mind began to scheme conceivable replacements of all those clustering arrangements. . . .

“It has begun,” he writes in the diary in which these things are recorded. “It is not for me to reach out to consequences I cannot foresee. I am a part, not a whole; I am a little instrument in the armoury of Change. If I were to burn all these papers, before a score of years had passed some other man would be doing this. . . .”

### § 3

Holsten, before he died, was destined to see atomic energy dominating every other source of power, but for some years yet a vast network of difficulties in detail and application kept the new discovery from any effective invasion of ordinary life. The path from the laboratory to the workshop is sometimes a tortuous one; electromagnetic radiations were known and demonstrated for twenty years before Marconi made them practically available, and in the same way it was twenty years before induced radioactivity could be brought to practical utilisation. The thing of course was discussed very much, more perhaps at the time of its discovery than during the interval of technical adaptation, but with very little realisation of

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the huge economic revolution that impended. What chiefly impressed the journalists of 1933 was the production of gold from bismuth and the realisation albeit upon unprofitable lines of the alchemist's dreams; there was a considerable amount of discussion and expectation in that more intelligent section of the educated publics of the various civilised countries which followed scientific development; but for the most part the world went about its business—as the inhabitants of those Swiss villages which live under the perpetual threat of overhanging rocks and mountains go about their business—just as though the possible was impossible, as though the inevitable was postponed for ever because it was delayed.

It was in 1953 that the first Holsten-Roberts engine brought induced radioactivity into the sphere of industrial production, and its first general use was to replace the steam-engine in electrical generating stations. Hard upon the appearance of this came the Dass-Tata engine—the invention of two among the brilliant galaxy of Bengali inventors the modernisation of Indian thought was producing at this time—which was used chiefly for automobiles, aeroplanes, water-planes, and suchlike mobile purposes. The American Kemp engine, differing widely in principle but equally practicable, and the Krupp-Erlanger came hard upon the heels of this, and by the autumn of 1954 a gigantic replacement of industrial methods and machinery was in progress all about the habitable globe. Small wonder was this when the cost, even of these earliest and clumsiest of atomic engines, is compared with that of the power they superseded.

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Allowing for lubrication the Dass-Tata engine, once it was started, cost a penny to run thirty-seven miles, and added only nine and a quarter pounds to the weight of the carriage it drove. It made the heavy alcohol-driven automobile of the time ridiculous in appearance as well as preposterously costly. For many years the price of coal and every form of liquid fuel had been clambering to levels that made even the revival of the draft-horse seem a practicable possibility, and now with the abrupt relaxation of this stringency the change in appearance of the traffic upon the world's roads was instantaneous. In three years the frightful armoured monsters that had hooted and smoked and thundered about the world for four awful decades were swept away to the dealers in old metal, and the highways thronged with light and clean and shimmering shapes of silvered steel. At the same time a new impetus was given to aviation by the relatively enormous power for weight of the atomic engine, it was at last possible to add Redmayne's ingenious helicopter ascent and descent engine to the vertical propeller that had hitherto been the sole driving force of the aeroplane without overweighting the machine, and men found themselves possessed of an instrument of flight that could hover or ascend or descend vertically and gently as well as rush wildly through the air. The last dread of flying vanished. As the journalists of the time phrased it, this was the epoch of the Leap into the Air. The new atomic aeroplane became indeed a mania; every one of means was frantic to possess a thing so controllable, so secure and so free from the

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dust and danger of the road, and in France alone in the year 1943 thirty thousand of these new aeroplanes were manufactured and licensed, and soared humming softly into the sky.

And with an equal speed atomic engines of various types invaded industrialism. The railways paid enormous premiums for priority in the delivery of atomic traction-engines, atomic smelting was embarked upon so eagerly as to lead to a number of disastrous explosions due to inexperienced handling of the new power, and the revolutionary cheapening of both materials and electricity made the entire reconstruction of domestic buildings a matter merely dependent upon a reorganisation of the methods of the builder and the house-furnisher. Viewed from the side of the new power and from the point of view of those who financed and manufactured the new engines and material it required, the age of the Leap into the Air was one of astonishing prosperity. Patent-holding companies were presently paying dividends of five or six hundred per cent and enormous fortunes were made and fantastic wages earned by all who were concerned in the new developments. This prosperity was not a little enhanced by the fact that in both the Dass-Tata and Holsten-Roberts engines one of the recoverable waste products was gold—the former disintegrated dust of bismuth and the latter dust of lead—and that this new supply of gold led quite naturally to a rise in prices throughout the world.

This spectacle of feverish enterprise, this vast productivity, this crowding flight of happy and fortunate

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rich people—every great city was as if a crawling ant-hill had suddenly taken wing—was the bright side of the opening phase of the new epoch in human history. Beneath that brightness was a gathering darkness, a deepening dismay. If there was a vast development of production there was also a huge destruction of values. These glaring factories working night and day, these glittering new vehicles swinging noiselessly along the roads, these flights of dragonflies that swooped and soared and circled in the air, were indeed no more than the brightnesses of lamps and fires that gleam out when the world sinks towards twilight and the night. Between these high lights accumulated disaster, social catastrophe. The coal-mines were manifestly doomed to closure at no very distant date, the vast amount of capital invested in oil was becoming unsaleable, millions of coal-miners, steel-workers upon the old lines, vast swarms of unskilled or underskilled labourers in innumerable occupations were being flung out of employment by the superior efficiency of the new machinery, the rapid fall in the cost of transit was destroying high land values at every centre of population, the value of existing house property had become problematical, gold was undergoing headlong depreciation, all the securities upon which the credit of the world rested were slipping and sliding, banks were tottering, the stock exchanges were scenes of feverish panic;—this was the reverse of the spectacle, these were the black and monstrous underconsequences of the Leap into the Air.

There is a story of a demented London stock-

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broker running out into Threadneedle Street and tearing off his clothes as he ran. "The Steel Trust is scrapping the whole of its plant," he shouted. "The State Railways are going to scrap all their engines. Everything's going to be scrapped—everything. Come and scrap the mint, you fellows, come and scrap the mint!"

In the year 1955 the suicide rate for the United States of America quadrupled any previous record. There was an enormous increase also in violent crime throughout the world. The thing had come upon an unprepared humanity; it seemed as though human society was to be smashed by its own magnificent gains.

For there had been no foresight of these things. There had been no attempt anywhere even to compute the probable dislocations this flood of inexpensive energy would produce in human affairs. The world in these days was not really governed at all, in the sense in which government came to be understood in subsequent years. Government was a treaty, not a design; it was forensic, conservative, disputatious, unseeing, unthinking, uncreative; throughout the world, except where the vestiges of absolutism still sheltered the court favourite and the trusted servant, it was in the hands of the predominant caste of lawyers, who had an enormous advantage in being the only trained caste. Their professional education and every circumstance in the manipulation of the fantastically naïve electoral methods by which they clambered to power, conspired to keep them contemptuous of facts, conscientiously unimaginative,

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alert to claim and seize advantages and suspicious of every generosity. Government was an obstructive business of energetic factions, progress went on outside of and in spite of public activities, and legislation was the last crippling recognition of needs so clamorous and imperative and facts so aggressively established as to invade even the dingy seclusions of the judges and threaten the very existence of the otherwise inattentive political machine.

The world was so little governed that with the very coming of plenty, in the full tide of an incalculable abundance, when everything necessary to satisfy human needs and everything necessary to realise such will and purpose as existed then in human hearts was already at hand, one has still to tell of hardship, famine, anger, confusion, conflict, and incoherent suffering. There was no scheme for the distribution of this vast new wealth that had come at last within the reach of men; there was no clear conception that any such distribution was possible. As one attempts a comprehensive view of those opening years of the new age, as one measures it against the latent achievement that later years have demonstrated, one begins to measure the blindness, the narrowness, the insensate unimaginate individualism of the pre-atomic time. Under this tremendous dawn of power and freedom, under a sky ablaze with promise, in the very presence of science standing like some bountiful goddess over all the squat darknesses of human life, holding patiently in her strong arms, until men chose to take them, security, plenty, the solution of riddles, the key of the bravest adventures, in her very



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presence, and with the earnest of her gifts in court, the world was to witness such things as the squalid spectacle of the Dass-Tata patent litigation.

There in a stuffy court in London, a grimy oblong box of a room, during the exceptional heat of the May of 1956, the leading counsel of the day argued and shouted over a miserable little matter of more royalties or less and whether the Dass-Tata company might not bar the Holsten-Roberts' methods of utilising the new power. The Dass-Tata people were indeed making a strenuous attempt to secure a world monopoly in atomic engineering. The judge, after the manner of those times, sat raised above the court, wearing a preposterous gown and a foolish huge wig, the counsel also wore dirty-looking little wigs and queer black gowns over their usual costume, wigs and gowns that were held to be necessary to their pleading, and upon unclean wooden benches stirred and whispered artful-looking solicitors, busily scribbling reporters, the parties to the case, expert witnesses, interested people, and a jostling confusion of subpoenaed persons, briefless young barristers (forming a style on the most esteemed and truculent examples) and casual eccentric spectators who preferred this pit of iniquity to the free sunlight outside. Every one was damply hot, the examining King's Counsel wiped the perspiration from his huge, clean-shaven upper lip; and into this atmosphere of grasping contention and human exhalations the daylight filtered through a window that was manifestly dirty. The jury sat in a double pew to the left of the judge, looking as uncomfortable as frogs that have fallen

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into an ash-pit, and in the witness-box lied the would-be omnivorous Dass, under cross-examination. . . .

Holsten had always been accustomed to publish his results so soon as they appeared to him to be sufficiently advanced to furnish a basis for further work, and to that confiding disposition and one happy flash of adaptive invention the alert Dass owed his claim. . . .

But indeed a vast multitude of such sharp people were clutching, patenting, pre-empting, monopolising this or that feature of the new development, seeking to subdue this gigantic winged power to the purposes of their little lusts and avarice. That trial is just one of innumerable disputes of the same kind. For a time the face of the world festered with patent legislation. It chanced however to have one oddly dramatic feature in the fact that Holsten, after being kept waiting about the court for two days as a beggar might have waited at a rich man's door, after being bullied by ushers and watched by policemen, was called as a witness, rather severely handled by counsel, and told not to "quibble" by the judge when he was trying to be absolutely explicit.

The judge scratched his nose with a quill pen, and sneered at Holsten's astonishment round the corner of his monstrous wig. Holsten was a great man, was he? Well, in a law-court great men were put in their places.

"We want to know has the plaintiff added anything to this or hasn't he?" said the judge, "we don't want to have your views whether Sir Philip Dass's improvements were merely superficial adaptations or

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whether they were implicit in your paper. No doubt—after the manner of inventors—you think most things that were ever likely to be discovered are implicit in your papers. No doubt also you think too that most subsequent additions and modifications are merely superficial. Inventors have a way of thinking that. The law isn't concerned with that sort of thing. The law has nothing to do with the vanity of inventors. The law is concerned with the question whether these patent rights have the novelty the plaintiff claims for them. What that admission may or may not stop, and all these other things you are saying in your overflowing zeal to answer more than the questions addressed to you—none of these things has anything whatever to do with the case in hand. It is a matter of constant astonishment to me in this court to see how you scientific men, with all your extraordinary claims to precision and veracity, wander and wander so soon as you get into the witness-box. I know no more unsatisfactory class of witness. The plain and simple question is, has Sir Philip Dass made any real addition to existing knowledge and methods in this matter or has he not? We don't want to know whether they were large or small additions nor what the consequences of your admission may be. That you will leave to us."

Holsten was silent.

"Surely?" said the judge almost pityingly.

"No, he hasn't," said Holsten, perceiving that for once in his life he must disregard infinitesimals.

"Ah!" said the judge. "Now why couldn't you say that when counsel put the question? . . ."

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An entry in Holsten's diary-autobiography, dated five days later, runs: "Still amazed. The law is the most dangerous thing in this country. It is hundreds of years old. It hasn't an idea. The oldest of old bottles and this new wine, the most explosive wine. Something will overtake them."

### § 4

There was a certain truth in Holsten's assertion that the law was "hundreds of years old." It was, in relation to current thought and widely accepted ideas, an archaic thing. While almost all the material and methods of life had been changing rapidly and were now changing still more rapidly, the law-courts and the legislatures of the world were struggling desperately to meet modern demands with devices and procedures, conceptions of rights and property and authority and obligation that dated from the rude compromises of relatively barbaric times. The horse-hair wigs and antic dresses of the British judges, their musty courts and overbearing manners, were indeed only the outward and visible intimations of profounder anachronisms. The legal and political organisation of the earth in the middle twentieth century was indeed everywhere like a complicated garment, outworn yet strong, that now fettered the governing body that once it had protected.

Yet that same spirit of freethinking and outspoken publication that in the field of natural science had been the beginning of the conquest of nature was at work throughout all the eighteenth and nineteenth

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centuries preparing the spirit of the new world within the degenerating body of the old. The idea of a greater subordination of individual interests and established institutions to the collective future is traceable more and more clearly in the literature of those times, and movement after movement fretted itself away in criticism of and opposition to first this aspect and then that of the legal, social, and political order. Already in the early nineteenth century Shelley, with no scrap of alternative, is denouncing the established rulers of the world as Anarchs, and the entire system of ideas and suggestions that was known as Socialism, and more particularly its international side, feeble as it was in creative proposals or any method of transition, still witnesses to the growth of a conception of a modernised system of interrelationships that should supplant the existing tangle of proprietary legal ideas.

The word "Sociology" was invented by Herbert Spencer, a popular writer upon philosophical subjects who flourished about the middle of the nineteenth century, but the idea of a state, planned as an electric traction system is planned, without reference to pre-existing apparatus, upon scientific lines, did not take a very strong hold upon the popular imagination of the world until the twentieth century. Then the growing impatience of the American people with the monstrous and socially paralysing party systems that had sprung out of their absurd electoral arrangements, led to the appearance of what came to be called the "Modern State" movement, and a galaxy of brilliant writers, in America, Europe, and the East,

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stirred up the world to the thought of bolder rearrangements of social interaction, property, employment, education, and government, than had ever been contemplated before. No doubt these Modern State ideas were very largely the reflection upon social and political thought of the vast revolution in material things that had been in progress for two hundred years, but for a long time they seemed to be having no more influence upon existing institutions than the writings of Rousseau and Voltaire seemed to have had at the time of the death of the latter. They were fermenting in men's minds, and it needed only just such social and political stresses as the coming of the atomic mechanisms brought about to thrust them forward abruptly into crude and startling realisation.

### § 5

“Frederick Barnet's *Wanderjahre*” is one of those autobiographical novels that were popular throughout the third and fourth decades of the twentieth century. It was published in 1970 and one must understand *Wanderjahre* rather in a spiritual and intellectual than in a literal sense. It is indeed an allusive title carrying the world back to the “*Wilhelm Meister*” of Goethe, a century and a half earlier.

Its author, Frederick Barnet, gives a minute and curious history of his life and ideas between his nineteenth and his twenty-third birthdays. He was neither a very original nor a very brilliant man, but he had a trick of circumstantial writing; and though

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no authentic portrait was to survive for the information of posterity, he betrays by a score of casual phrases that he was short, sturdy, inclined to be plump, with a "rather blobby" face, and full, rather projecting blue eyes. He belonged until the financial débâcle of 1956 to the class of fairly prosperous people, he was a student in London, he aeroplaned to Italy and then had a pedestrian tour from Genoa to Rome, crossed in the air to Greece and Egypt and came back over the Balkans and Germany. His family fortunes, which were largely invested in bank shares, coal-mines, and house property, were destroyed. Reduced to penury, he sought to earn a living. He suffered great hardship, and was then caught up by the war and had a year of soldiering, first as an officer in the English infantry and then in the army of pacification. His book tells all these things so simply and at the same time so explicitly that it remains as it were an eye by which future generations may have at least one man's vision of the years of the Great Change.

And he was, he tells us, a "Modern State" man "by instinct" from the beginning. He breathed in these ideas in the classrooms and laboratories of the Carnegie Foundation school that rose, a long and delicately beautiful façade, along the south bank of the Thames opposite the ancient dignity of Somerset House. Such thought was interwoven with the very fabric of that pioneer school in the educational renaissance in England. After the customary exchange years in Heidelberg and Paris, he went into the classical school of London University. The older so-called

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“classical” education of the British pedagogues, probably the most paralysing, ineffective, and foolish routine that ever wasted human life, had already been swept out of this great institution in favour of modern methods; and he learned Greek and Latin as well as he had learned German, Spanish, and French, so that he wrote and spoke them freely and used them with an unconscious ease in his study of the foundation civilisations of the European system to which they were the key. (This change was still so recent that he mentions an encounter in Rome with an “Oxford don” who “spoke Latin with a Wiltshire accent and manifest discomfort, wrote Greek letters with his tongue out, and seemed to think a Greek sentence a charm when it was a quotation and an impropriety when it wasn’t.”)

Barnet saw the last days of the coal-steam engines upon the English railways and the gradual cleansing of the London atmosphere as the smoke-creating sea-coal fires gave place to electric heating. The building of laboratories at Kensington was still in progress and he took part in the students’ riots that delayed the removal of the Albert Memorial. He carried a banner with “We like Funny Statuary” on one side and on the other “Seats and Canopies for Statues, Why should our Great Departed Stand in the Rain?” He learned the rather athletic aviation of those days at the university grounds at Sydenham, and he was fined for flying over the new prison for political libellers at Wormwood Scrubs, “in a manner calculated to exhilarate the prisoners while at exercise.” That was the time of the attempted suppression of



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any criticism of the public judicature, and the place was crowded with journalists who had ventured to call attention to the dementia of Chief-Justice Abrahams. Barnet was not a very good aviator, he confesses he was always a little afraid of his machine—there was excellent reason for every one to be afraid of those clumsy early types—and he never attempted steep descents or very high flying. He also, he records, owned one of those oil-driven motor-bicycles whose clumsy complexity and extravagant filthiness still astonish the visitors to the museum of machinery at South Kensington. He mentions running over a dog and complains of the ruinous price of “spatchcocks” in Surrey. “Spatchcocks,” it seems, was a slang term for crushed hens.

He passed the examinations necessary to reduce his military service to a minimum, and his want of any special scientific or technical qualification and a certain precocious corpulence that handicapped his aviation indicated the infantry of the line as his sphere of training. That was the most generalised form of soldiering. The development of the theory of war had been for some decades but little assisted by any practical experience. What fighting had occurred in recent years had been fighting in minor or uncivilised states, with peasant or barbaric soldiers and with but a small equipment of modern contrivances, and the great powers of the world were content for the most part to maintain armies that sustained in their broader organisation the traditions of the European wars of thirty and forty years earlier. There was the infantry arm to which Barnet

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belonged and which was supposed to fight on foot with a rifle and be the main portion of the army. There were cavalry forces (horse soldiers), having a ratio to the infantry that had been determined by the experiences of the Franco-German War in 1871. There was also artillery, and for some unexplained reason much of this was still drawn by horses; though there were also in all the European armies a small number of motor-guns with wheels so constructed that they could go over broken ground. In addition there were large developments of the engineering arm, concerned with motor transport, motor-bicycle scouting, aviation, and the like.

No first-class intelligence had been sought to specialise in and work out the problem of warfare with the new appliances and under modern conditions, but a succession of able jurists, Lord Haldane, Chief Justice Briggs, and that very brilliant King's Counsel Philbrick, had reconstructed the army frequently and thoroughly and placed it at last, with the adoption of national service, upon a footing that would have seemed very imposing to the public of 1900. At any moment the British Empire could now put a million and a quarter of arguable soldiers upon the board of Welt-Politik. The traditions of Japan and the central European armies were more princely and less forensic; the Chinese still refused resolutely to become a military power and maintained a small standing army upon the American model that was said, so far as it went, to be highly efficient, and Russia, secured by a stringent administration against internal criticism, had scarcely altered the design of a

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uniform or the organisation of a battery since the opening decades of the century. Barnett's opinion of his military training was manifestly a poor one, his Modern State ideas disposed him to regard it as a bore and his common sense condemned it as useless. Moreover his habit of body made him peculiarly sensitive to the fatigues and hardships of service.

“For three days in succession we turned out before dawn and—for no earthly reason—without breakfast,” he relates. “I suppose that is to show us that when the Day comes the first thing will be to get us thoroughly uncomfortable and rotten. We then proceeded to Kriegspiel according to the mysterious ideas of those in authority over us. On the last day we spent three hours under a hot if early sun getting over eight miles of country to a point we could have reached in a motor omnibus in nine minutes and a half—I did it the next day in that—and then we made a massed attack upon intrenchments that could have shot us all about three times over if only the umpires had let them. Then came a little bayonet exercise, but I doubt if I am sufficiently a barbarian to stick this long knife into anything living. Anyhow in this battle I shouldn't have had a chance. Assuming that by some miracle I hadn't been shot three times over, I was far too hot and blown when I got up to the intrenchments even to lift my beastly rifle. It was those others would have begun the sticking. . . .

“For a time we were watched by two hostile aeroplanes; then our own came up and asked them not to, and—the practice of aerial warfare still being un-

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known—they very politely desisted and went away and did dives and circles of the most charming description over the Fox Hills.”

All Barnet's accounts of his military training were written in the same half-contemptuous, half-protesting tone. He was of opinion that his chances of participating in any real warfare were very slight, and that, if after all he should participate, it was bound to be so entirely different from these peace manoeuvres that his only course as a rational man would be to keep as observantly out of danger as he could until he had learned the tricks and possibilities of the new conditions. He states this quite frankly. Never was a man more free from sham heroics.

### § 6

Barnet welcomed the appearance of the atomic engine with the zest of masculine youth in all fresh machinery, and it is evident that for some time he failed to connect the rush of wonderful new possibilities with the financial troubles of his family. “I knew my father was worried,” he admits. That cast the smallest of shadows upon his delighted departure for Italy and Greece and Egypt with three congenial companions in one of the new atomic models. They flew over the Channel Isles and Touraine, he mentions, and circled about Mont Blanc—“These new helicopters, we found,” he notes, “had abolished all the danger and strain of sudden drops to which the old-time aeroplanes were liable,”—and then he went

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on by way of Pisa, Pæstum, Ghirgenti, and Athens to visit the Pyramids by moonlight, flying thither from Cairo, and to follow the Nile up to Khartoum. Even by later standards it must have been a very gleeful holiday for a young man, and it made the tragedy of his next experiences all the darker. A week after his return his father, who was a widower, announced himself ruined, and committed suicide by means of an unscheduled opiate.

At one blow Barnet found himself flung out of the possessing, spending, enjoying class to which he belonged, penniless and with no calling by which he could earn a living. He tried teaching and some journalism, but in a little while he found himself on the underside of a world in which he had always reckoned to live in the sunshine. For innumerable men such an experience has meant mental and spiritual destruction, but Barnet, in spite of his bodily gravitation towards comfort, showed himself, when put to the test, of the more valiant modern quality. He was saturated with the creative stoicism of the heroic times that were already dawning, and he took his difficulties and discomforts stoutly as his appointed material, and turned them to expression.

Indeed, in his book he thanks fortune for them. "I might have lived and died," he says, "in that neat fool's paradise of secure lavishness above there. I might never have realised the gathering wrath and sorrow of the ousted and exasperated masses. In the days of my own prosperity things had seemed to me to be very well arranged." Now from his new point of view he was to find they were not arranged

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at all; that government was a compromise of aggressions and powers and lassitudes, and law a convention between interests, and that the poor and the weak though they had many negligent masters had few friends.

“I had thought things were looked after,” he wrote. “It was with a kind of amazement that I tramped the roads and starved—and found that no one in particular cared.”

He was turned out of his lodging in a backward part of London.

“It was with difficulty I persuaded my landlady—she was a needy widow, poor soul, and I was already in her debt—to keep an old box for me in which I had locked a few letters, keepsakes and the like. She lived in great fear of the Public Health and Morality Inspectors because she was sometimes too poor to pay the customary tip to them, but at last she consented to put it in a dark tiled place under the stairs, and then I went forth into the world—to seek first the luck of a meal and then shelter.”

He wandered down into the thronging gayer parts of London in which a year or so ago he had been numbered among the spenders.

London, under the Visible Smoke Law, by which any production of visible smoke with or without excuse was punishable by a fine, had already ceased to be the sombre, smoke-darkened city of the Victorian time; it had been and indeed was constantly being rebuilt, and its main streets were already beginning to take on those characteristics that distinguished them throughout the latter half of the twentieth cen-

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ture. The insanitary horse and the plebeian bicycle had been banished from the roadway, which was now of a resilient glass-like surface, spotlessly clean; and the foot-passenger was restricted to a narrow vestige of the ancient footpath on either side of the track and forbidden at the risk of a fine, if he survived, to cross the roadway. People descended from their automobiles upon this pavement and went through the lower shops to the lifts and stairs to the new ways for pedestrians, the Rows, that ran along the front of the houses at the level of the first story and, being joined by frequent bridges, gave the newer parts of London a curiously Venetian appearance. In some streets there were upper and even third story Rows. For most of the day and all night the shop-windows were lit by electric light, and many establishments had made as it were canals of public footpaths through their premises in order to increase their window space.

Barnet made his way along this night-scene rather apprehensively since the police had power to challenge and demand the Labour Card of any indigent-looking person, and if the record failed to show he was in employment dismiss him to the traffic pavement below.

But there was still enough of his former gentility about Barnet's appearance and bearing to protect him from this; the police, too, had other things to think of that night, and he was permitted to reach the galleries about Leicester Square,—that great focus of London life and pleasure.

He gives a vivid description of the scene that eve-

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ning. In the centre was a garden raised on arches lit by festoons of lights and connected with the Rows by eight graceful bridges, beneath which hummed the interlacing streams of motor traffic, pulsating as the current alternated between east and west and north and south. Above rose great frontages of intricate rather than beautiful reinforced porcelain, studded with lights, barred by bold illuminated advertisements, and glowing with reflections. There were the two historical music-halls of this place, the Shakespear Memorial Theatre, in which the municipal players revolved perpetually through the cycle of Shakespear's plays, and four other great houses of refreshment and entertainment whose pinnacles streamed up into the blue obscurity of the night. The south side of the square was in dark contrast to the others; it was still being rebuilt, and a lattice of steel bars surmounted by the frozen gestures of monstrous cranes rose over the excavated sites of vanished Victorian buildings.

This framework attracted Barnet's attention for a time to the exclusion of other interests. It was absolutely still, it had a dead rigidity, a stricken inaction, no one was at work upon it and all its machinery was quiet; but the constructors' globes of vacuum light filled its every interstice with a quivering green moonshine and showed alert but motionless—soldier sentinels!

He questioned a passing stroller, and was told that the men had struck that day against the use of an atomic riveter that would have doubled the individual efficiency and halved the number of steel workers.



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“Shouldn’t wonder if they didn’t get chucking bombs,” said Barnet’s informant, hovered for a moment, and then went on his way to the Alhambra music-hall.

Barnet became aware of an excitement in the newspaper kiosks at the corners of the square. Something very sensational had been flashed upon the transparencies. Forgetting for a moment his penniless condition he made his way over a bridge to buy a paper, for in those days the papers, which were printed upon thin sheets of metallic foil, were sold at determinate points by specially licensed purveyors. Half over he stopped short at a change in the traffic below, and was astonished to see that the police signals were restricting vehicles to the half roadway. When presently he got within sight of the transparencies that had replaced the placards of Victorian times, he read of the Great March of the Unemployed that was already in progress through the West End, and so without expenditure he was able to understand what was coming.

He watched, and his book describes this procession which the police had considered it unwise to prevent and which had been spontaneously organised in imitation of the Unemployed Processions of earlier times. He had expected a mob, but there was a kind of sullen discipline about the procession when at last it arrived. What seemed for a time an unending column of men marched wearily, marched with a kind of implacable futility, along the roadway underneath him. He was, he says, moved to join them, but instead he remained watching. They were a

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dingy, shabby, ineffective-looking multitude, for the most part incapable of any but obsolete and superseded types of labour. They bore a few banners with the time-honoured inscription "Work, not Charity," but otherwise their ranks were unadorned.

They were not singing, they were not even talking, there was nothing truculent nor aggressive in their bearing, they had no definite objective, they were just marching and showing themselves in the more prosperous parts of London. They were a sample of that great mass of unskilled cheap labour which the now still cheaper mechanical powers had superseded for evermore. They were being "scrapped"—as horses had been "scrapped."

Barnet leaned over the parapet watching them, his mind quickened by his own precarious condition. For a time, he says, he felt nothing but despair at the sight; what should be done, what could be done for this gathering surplus of humanity? They were so manifestly useless—and incapable—and pitiful.

What were they asking for?

They had been overtaken by unexpected things. Nobody had foreseen——

It flashed suddenly into his mind just what the multitudinous shambling enigma below meant. It was an appeal against the unexpected, an appeal to those others who, more fortunate, seemed wiser and more powerful, for something—for *intelligence*. This mute mass, weary-footed, rank following rank, protested its persuasion that some of these others must have foreseen these dislocations,—that anyhow they ought to have foreseen—and arranged.

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That was what this crowd of wreckage was feeling and seeking so dumbly to assert.

“Things came to me like the turning on of a light in a darkened room,” he says. “These men were praying to their fellow creatures as once they prayed to God! The last thing that men will realise about anything is that it is inanimate. They had transferred their animation to mankind. They still believed there was intelligence somewhere, even if it was careless or malignant. . . . It had only to be aroused to be conscience-stricken, to be moved to exertion. . . . And I saw too that as yet *there was no such intelligence*. The world waits for intelligence. That intelligence has still to be made, that will for good and order has still to be gathered together, out of scraps of impulse and wandering seeds of benevolence and whatever is fine and creative in our souls, into a common purpose. It’s something still to come. . . .”

It is characteristic of the widening thought of the time that this not very heroic young man who, in any previous age, might well have been altogether occupied with the problem of his own individual necessities, should be able to stand there and generalise about the needs of the race.

But upon all the stresses and conflicts of that chaotic time there was already dawning the light of a new era. The spirit of humanity was escaping, even then it was escaping, from its extreme imprisonment in individuals. Salvation from the bitter intensities of self, which had been a conscious religious end for thousands of years, which men had sought in morti-

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fications, in the wilderness, in meditation and by innumerable strange paths, was coming at last with the effect of naturalness into the talk of men, into the books they read, into their unconscious gestures, into their newspapers and daily purposes and every-day acts. The broad horizons, the magic possibilities that the spirit of the seeker had revealed to them, were charming them out of those ancient and instinctive preoccupations from which the very threat of hell and torment had failed to drive them. And this young man, homeless and without provision even for the immediate hours, in the presence of social disorganisation, distress, and perplexity, in a blazing wilderness of thoughtless pleasure that blotted out the stars, could think as he tells us he thought.

“I saw life plain,” he wrote. “I saw the gigantic task before us, and the very splendour of its intricate and immeasurable difficulty filled me with exaltation. I saw that we have still to discover government, that we have still to discover education, which is the necessary reciprocal of government, and that all this—in which my own little speck of a life was so manifestly overwhelmed—this and its yesterday in Greece and Rome and Egypt were nothing, the mere first dust swirls of the beginning, the movements and dim murmurings of a sleeper who will presently be awake. . . .”

### § 7

And then the story tells, with an engaging simplicity, of his descent from this ecstatic vision of reality.

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“Presently I found myself again and I was beginning to feel cold and a little hungry.”

He bethought himself of the John Burns Relief Offices which stood upon the Thames Embankment. He made his way through the galleries of the booksellers and the National Gallery, which had been open continuously day and night to all decently dressed people now for more than twelve years, and across the rose-gardens of Trafalgar Square, and so by the hotel colonnade to the Embankment. He had long known of these admirable offices, which had swept the last beggars and matchsellers and all the casual indigent from the London streets, and he believed that he would as a matter of course be able to procure a ticket for food and a night's lodging and some indication of possible employment.

But he had not reckoned upon the new labour troubles, and when he got to the Embankment he found the offices hopelessly congested and besieged by a large and rather unruly crowd. He hovered for a time on the outskirts of the waiting multitude, perplexed and dismayed, and then he became aware of a movement, a purposive trickling away of people, up through the arches of the great buildings that had arisen when all the railway-stations were removed to the south side of the river, and so to the covered ways of the Strand. And here in the open glare of midnight he found unemployed men begging, and not only begging but begging with astonishing assurance, from the people who were emerging from the small theatres and other such places of entertainment which abounded in that thoroughfare.

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This was an altogether unexampled thing. There had been no begging in London streets for a quarter of a century. But that night the police were evidently unwilling or unable to cope with the destitute who were invading those well-kept quarters of the town. They had become stonily blind to anything but manifest disorder.

Barnet walked through the crowd unable to bring himself to ask; indeed his bearing must have been more valiant than his circumstances, for twice he says that he was begged from. Near the Trafalgar Square gardens, a girl with reddened cheeks and blackened eyebrows who was walking alone spoke to him with a peculiar friendliness.

“I’m starving,” he said to her abruptly.

“Oh! poor dear!” she said; and with the impulsive generosity of her kind glanced round and slipped a silver piece into his hand. . . .

It was a gift that, in spite of the precedent of De Quincey, might under the repressive social legislation of those times have brought Barnet within reach of the prison lash. But he took it, he confesses, and thanked her as well as he was able and went off very gladly to get food.

### § 8

A day or so later—and again his freedom to go as he pleased upon the roads may be taken as a mark of increasing social disorganisation and police embarrassment—he wandered out into the open country.

He speaks of the roads of that plutocratic age as

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being "fenced with barbed wire against unpropertied people," of the high-walled gardens and trespass warnings that kept him to the dusty narrowness of the public ways. In the air, happy rich people were flying, heedless of the misfortunes about them, as he himself had been flying two years ago, and along the road swept the new traffic light and swift and wonderful. One was rarely out of earshot of its whistles and gongs and siren cries even in the field paths or over the open downs. The officials of the labour exchanges were everywhere overworked and infuriated, the casual wards were so crowded that the surplus wanderers slept in ranks under sheds or in the open air, and since giving to wayfarers had been made a punishable offence there was no longer friendship or help for a man from the rare foot-passenger or the wayside cottage. . . .

"I wasn't angry," said Barnet. "I saw an immense selfishness, a monstrous disregard for anything but pleasure and possession in all those people above us; but I saw how inevitable that was, how certainly if the richest had changed places with the poorest, that things would have been the same. What else can happen when men use science and every new thing that science gives and all their available intelligence and energy to manufacture wealth and appliances, and leave government and education to the rusting traditions of hundreds of years ago? Those traditions come from the dark ages when there was really not enough for every one, when life was a fierce struggle that might be masked but could not be escaped. Of course this famished grabbing, this fierce dispossession

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of others, must follow from such a disharmony between material and training. Of course the rich were vulgar and the poor grew savage, and every added power that came to men made the rich richer and the poor less necessary and less free. The men I met in the casual wards and the relief offices were all smouldering for revolt, talking of justice and injustice and revenge. I saw no hope in that talk, nor in anything but patience. . . .”

But he did not mean a passive patience. He meant that the method of social reconstruction was still a riddle, that no effectual rearrangement was possible until this riddle in all its tangled aspects was solved. “I tried to talk to those discontented men,” he wrote, “but it was hard for them to see things as I saw them. When I talked of patience and the larger scheme, they answered, ‘But then we shall all be dead’—and I could not make them see, what is so simple to my own mind, that that did not affect the question. Men who think in lifetimes are of no use to statesmanship.”

He does not seem to have seen a newspaper during those wanderings, and a chance sight of the transparency of a kiosk in the market-place at Bishop’s Stortford announcing a “Grave International Situation” did not excite him very much. There had been so many grave international situations in recent years.

This time it was talk of the Central European powers suddenly attacking the Slav Confederacy, with France and England going to the help of the Slavs.



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But the next night he found a tolerable meal awaiting the vagrants in the casual ward, and learned from the workhouse master that all serviceable trained men were to be sent back on the morrow to their mobilisation centres. The country was on the eve of war. He was to go back through London to Surrey. His first feeling, he records, was one of extreme relief that his days of "hopeless battering at the underside of civilisation" were at an end. Here was something definite to do, something definitely provided for. But his relief was greatly modified when he found that the mobilisation arrangements had been made so hastily and carelessly that for nearly thirty-six hours at the improvised depot at Epsom he got nothing either to eat or to drink but a cup of cold water. The depot was absolutely unprovisioned, and no one was free to leave it.

## CHAPTER THE SECOND

### THE LAST WAR

#### § 1

VIEWED from the standpoint of a sane and ambitious social order, it is difficult to understand and it would be tedious to follow the motives that plunged mankind into the war that fills the histories of the middle decades of the twentieth century.

It must always be remembered that the political structure of the world at that time was everywhere extraordinarily behind the collective intelligence. That is the central fact of that history. For two hundred years there had been no great changes in political or legal methods and pretensions, the utmost change had been a certain shifting of boundaries and a slight readjustment of procedure, while in nearly every other aspect of life there had been fundamental revolutions, gigantic releases and an enormous enlargement of scope and outlook. The absurdities of courts and the indignities of representative parliamentary government, coupled with the opening of vast fields of opportunity in other directions, had withdrawn the best intelligences more and more from public affairs. The ostensible governments of the world in the twentieth century were following in the wake of the ostensible religions. They were ceasing to command the services of any but second-rate men. After the middle of the eighteenth century there are

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no more great ecclesiastics upon the world's memory, after the opening of the twentieth no more statesmen. Everywhere one finds an energetic, ambitious, short-sighted, commonplace type in the seats of authority, blind to the new possibilities and litigiously reliant upon the traditions of the past.

Perhaps the most dangerous of those outworn traditions were the boundaries of the various "sovereign states," and the conception of a general predominance in human affairs on the part of some one particular state. The memory of the empires of Rome and Alexander squatted, an unlaidd carnivorous ghost, in the human imagination—it bored into the human brain like some grisly parasite and filled it with disordered thoughts and violent impulses. For more than a century the French system exhausted its vitality in belligerent convulsions, and then the infection passed to the German-speaking peoples who were the heart and centre of Europe, and from them onward to the Slavs. Later ages were to store and neglect the vast insane literature of this obsession, the intricate treaties, the secret agreements, the infinite knowingness of the political writer, the cunning refusals to accept plain facts, the strategic devices, the tactical manœuvres, the records of mobilisations and counter-mobilisations. It ceased to be credible almost as soon as it ceased to happen, but in the very dawn of the new age their statecraftsmen sat with their historical candles burning, and, in spite of strange new reflections and unfamiliar lights and shadows, still wrangling and planning to rearrange the maps of Europe and the world.

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It was to become a matter for subtle inquiry how far the millions of men and women outside the world of these specialists sympathised and agreed with their portentous activities. One school of psychologists inclined to minimise this participation, but the balance of evidence goes to show that there were massive responses to these suggestions of the belligerent schemer. Primitive man had been a fiercely combative animal; innumerable generations had passed their lives in tribal warfare, and the weight of tradition, the example of history, the ideals of loyalty and devotion fell in easily enough with the incitements of the international mischief-maker. The political ideas of the common man were picked up haphazard, there was practically nothing in such education as he was given that was ever intended to fit him for citizenship as such (that conception appeared indeed only with the development of Modern State ideas) and it was therefore a comparatively easy matter to fill his vacant mind with the sounds and fury of exasperated suspicion and national aggression.

For example, Barnett describes the London crowd as noisily patriotic when presently his battalion came up from the depot to London, to entrain for the French frontier. He tells of children and women and lads and old men cheering and shouting, of the streets and rows hung with the flags of the allied powers, of a real enthusiasm even among the destitute and unemployed. The Labour Bureaux were now partially transformed into enrolment offices and were centres of hotly patriotic excitement. At every convenient place upon the line on either side of the Channel

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Tunnel there were enthusiastic spectators, and the feeling in the regiment, if a little stiffened and darkened by grim anticipations, was none the less warlike.

But all this emotion was the fickle emotion of minds without established ideas; it was with most of them, **Barnet** says, as it was with himself, a natural response to collective movement, and to martial sounds and colours, and the exhilarating challenge of vague dangers. And people had been so long oppressed by the threat of and preparation for war that its arrival came with an effect of positive relief.

### § 2

The plan of campaign of the allies assigned the defence of the lower Meuse to the English, and the troop-trains were run direct from the various British depots to the points in the Ardennes where they were intended to intrench themselves.

Most of the documents bearing upon the campaign were destroyed during the war, from the first the scheme of the allies seems to have been confused, but it is highly probable that the formation of an aerial park in this region, from which attacks could be made upon the vast industrial plant of the lower Rhine, and a flanking raid through Holland upon the German naval establishments at the mouth of the Elbe, were integral parts of the original project. Nothing of this was known to such pawns in the game as **Barnet** and his company, whose business it was to do what they were told by the mysterious intelligences at the direction of things in Paris, to which

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city the Whitehall staff had also been transferred. From first to last these directing intelligences remained mysterious to the body of the army, veiled under the name of "Orders." There was no Napoleon, no Cæsar to embody enthusiasm. Barnett says, "We talked of Them. *They* are sending us up into Luxembourg. *They* are going to turn the central European right."

Behind the veil of this vagueness the little group of more or less worthy men which constituted Headquarters was beginning to realise the enormity of the thing it was supposed to control. . . .

In the great hall of the War Control whose windows looked out across the Seine to the Trocadero and the palaces of the western quarter, a series of big-scale relief maps were laid out upon tables to display the whole seat of war, and the staff-officers of the control were continually busy shifting the little blocks which represented the contending troops, as the reports and intelligence came drifting in to the various telegraphic bureaux in the adjacent rooms. In other smaller apartments there were maps of a less detailed sort, upon which for example the reports of the British Admiralty and of the Slav commanders were recorded as they kept coming to hand. Upon these maps as upon chess-boards Marshal Dubois, in consultation with General Viard and the Earl of Delhi, was to play the great game for world supremacy against the central European powers. Very probably he had a definite idea of his game; very probably he had a coherent and admirable plan.

But he had reckoned without a proper estimate

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either of the new strategy of aviation or of the possibilities of atomic energy that Holsten had opened for mankind. While he planned intrenchments and invasions and a frontier war, the central European generalship was striking at the eyes and the brain. And while, with a certain diffident hesitation, he developed his gambit that night upon the lines laid down by Napoleon and Moltke, his own scientific corps in a state of mutinous activity was preparing a blow for Berlin. "These old fools!" was the key in which the scientific corps was thinking.

The War Control in Paris on the night of July the second was an impressive display of the paraphernalia of scientific military organisation, as the first half of the twentieth century understood it. To one human being at least the consulting commanders had the likeness of world-wielding gods. . . .

She was a skilled typist, capable of nearly sixty words a minute, and she had been engaged in relay with other similar women to take down orders in duplicate and hand them over to the junior officers in attendance to be forwarded and filed. There had come a lull, and she had been sent out from the dictating room to take the air upon the terrace before the great hall and to eat such scanty refreshment as she had brought with her until her services were required again.

From her position upon the terrace this young woman had a view not only of the wide sweep of the river below her, and all the eastward side of Paris from the Arc de Triomphe to Saint Cloud, great blocks and masses of black or pale darkness with

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pink and golden flashes of illumination and endless interlacing bands of dotted lights under a still and starless sky, but also the whole spacious interior of the great hall with its slender pillars and gracious arching and clustering lamps was visible to her. There, over a wilderness of tables, lay the huge maps, done on so large a scale that one might fancy them small countries; the messengers and attendants went and came perpetually, altering, moving the little pieces that signified hundreds and thousands of men, and the great commander and his two consultants stood amidst all these things and near where the fighting was nearest, scheming, directing. They had but to breathe a word and presently away there, in the world of reality, the punctual myriads moved. Men rose up and went forward and died. The fate of nations lay behind the eyes of these three men. Indeed they were like gods.

Most godlike of the three was Dubois. It was for him to decide; the others at most might suggest. Her woman's soul went out to this grave, handsome, still, old man, in a passion of instinctive worship. . . .

Once she had taken words of instruction from him direct. She had awaited them in an ecstasy of happiness—and fear. For her exaltation was made terrible by the dread that some error might dishonour her. . . .

She watched him now through the glass with all the unpenetrating minuteness of an impassioned woman's observation.

He said little, she remarked. He looked but little at the maps. The tall Englishman beside him was



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manifestly troubled by a swarm of ideas, conflicting ideas; he craned his neck at every shifting of the little red, blue, black, and yellow pieces on the board and wanted to draw the commander's attention to this and that. Dubois listened, nodded, emitted a word and became still again, brooding like the national eagle.

His eyes were so deeply sunken under his white eyebrows that she could not see them; his moustache overhung the mouth from which those words of decision came. Viard, too, said little; he was a dark man with a drooping head and melancholy watchful eyes. He was more intent upon the French right, which was feeling its way now through Alsace to the Rhine. He was, she knew, an old colleague of Dubois; he knew him better, she decided, he trusted him more than this unfamiliar Englishman. . . .

Not to talk, to remain impassive and as far as possible in profile; these were the lessons that old Dubois had mastered years ago. To seem to know all, to betray no surprise, to refuse to hurry—itsself a confession of miscalculation; by attention to these simple rules, Dubois had built up a steady reputation from the days when he had been a promising junior officer, a still, almost abstracted young man, deliberate but ready. Even then men had looked at him and said: "He will go far." Through fifty years of peace he had never once been found wanting, and at manœuvres his impassive persistence had perplexed and hypnotised and defeated many a more actively intelligent man. Deep in his soul Dubois had hidden his one profound discovery about the modern art of

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warfare, the key to his career. And this discovery was that *nobody knew*, that to act therefore was to blunder, that to talk was to confess; and that the man who acted slowly and steadfastly and above all silently had the best chance of winning through. Meanwhile one fed the men. Now by this same strategy he hoped to shatter those mysterious unknowns of the central European command. Delhi might talk of a great flank march through Holland with all the British submarines and hydroplanes and torpedo craft pouring up the Rhine in support of it; Viard might crave for brilliance with the motor-bicycles, aeroplanes, and ski-men among the Swiss mountains and a sudden swoop upon Vienna; the thing was to listen—and wait for the other side to begin experimenting. It was all experimenting. And meanwhile he remained in profile, with an air of assurance—like a man who sits in an automobile after the chauffeur has had his directions.

And every one about him was the stronger and surer for that quiet face, that air of knowledge and unruffled confidence. The clustering lights threw a score of shadows of him upon the maps, great bunches of him, versions of a commanding presence, lighter or darker, dominated the field, and pointed in every direction. Those shadows symbolised his control. When a messenger came from the wireless room to shift this or that piece in the game, to replace under amended reports one central European regiment by a score, to draw back or thrust out or distribute this or that force of the allies, the Marshal would turn his head and seem not to see, or look and nod slightly,

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as a master nods who approves a pupil's self-correction. "Yes, that's better."

How wonderful he was, thought the woman at the window, how wonderful it all was. This was the brain of the western world, this was Olympus with the warring earth at its feet. And he was guiding France, France so long a resentful exile from imperialism, back to her old predominance.

It seemed to her beyond the desert of a woman that she should be privileged to participate. . . .

It is hard to be a woman, full of the stormy impulse to personal devotion, and to have to be impersonal, abstract, exact, punctual. She must control herself. . . .

She gave herself up to fantastic dreams, dreams of the days when the war would be over and victory enthroned. Then perhaps this harshness, this armour would be put aside and the gods might unbend. Her eyelids drooped. . . .

She roused herself with a start. She became aware that the night outside was no longer still. That there was an excitement down below on the bridge and a running in the street and a flickering of search-lights among the clouds from some high place away beyond the Trocadero. And then the excitement came surging up past her and invaded the hall within.

One of the sentinels from the terrace stood at the upper end of the room gesticulating and shouting something.

And all the world had changed. A kind of throbbing. She couldn't understand. It was as if all the water-pipes and concealed machinery and cables of

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the ways beneath were beating—as pulses beat. And about her blew something like a wind—a wind that was dismay.

Her eyes went to the face of the Marshal as a frightened child might look towards its mother.

He was still serene. He was frowning slightly, she thought, but that was natural enough, for the Earl of Delhi with one hand gauntly gesticulating had taken him by the arm and was all too manifestly disposed to drag him towards the great door that opened on the terrace. And Viard was hurrying towards the huge windows and doing so in the strangest of attitudes, bent forward and with eyes upturned.

Something up there?

And then it was as if thunder broke overhead.

The sound struck her like a blow. She crouched together against the masonry and looked up. She saw three black shapes swooping down through the torn clouds, and from a point a little below two of them there had already started curling trails of red. . . .

Everything else in her being was paralysed, she hung through moments that seemed infinities, watching those red missiles whirl down towards her.

She felt torn out of the world. There was nothing else in the world but a crimson-purple glare and sound, deafening, all-embracing, continuing sound. Every other light had gone out about her and against this glare hung slanting walls, pirouetting pillars, projecting fragments of cornices and a disorderly flight of huge angular sheets of glass.

She had an impression of a great ball of crimson-

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purple fire like a maddened living thing that seemed to be whirling about very rapidly amidst a chaos of falling masonry, that seemed to be attacking the earth furiously, that seemed to be burrowing into it like a blazing rabbit. . . .

She had all the sensations of waking up out of a dream.

She found she was lying face downward on a bank of mould and that a little rivulet of hot water was running over one foot. She tried to raise herself and found her leg was very painful. She was not clear whether it was night or day nor where she was; she made a second effort, wincing and groaning, and turned over and got into a sitting position and looked about her.

Everything seemed very silent. She was in fact in the midst of a vast uproar, but she did not realise this because her hearing had been destroyed.

At first she could not join on what she saw to any previous experience.

She seemed to be in a strange world, a soundless ruinous world, a world of heaped broken things. And it was lit—and somehow this was more familiar to her mind than any other fact about her—by a flickering, purplish-crimson light. Then close to her, rising above a confusion of débris, she recognised the Trocadero; it was changed, something had gone from it, but its outline was unmistakable. It stood out against a streaming whirling uprush of red-lit steam. And with that she recalled Paris and the Seine and the warm overcast evening and the beautiful luminous organisation of the War Control. . . .

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She drew herself a little way up the slope of earth on which she lay and examined her surroundings with an increasing understanding. . . .

The earth on which she was lying projected like a cape into the river. Quite close to her was a brimming lake of dammed-up water from which these warm rivulets and torrents were trickling. Wisps of vapour came into circling existence a foot or so from its mirror-surface. Near at hand and reflected exactly in the water was the upper part of a familiar-looking stone pillar. On the side of her away from the water the heaped ruins rose steeply in a confused slope up to a glaring crest. Above and reflecting this glare towered pillowed masses of steam rolling swiftly upward to the zenith. It was from this crest that the livid glow that lit the world about her proceeded, and slowly her mind connected this mound with the vanished buildings of the War Control.

“*Mais!*” she whispered and remained with staring eyes quite motionless for a time, crouching close to the warm earth.

Then presently this dim, broken human thing began to look about it again. She began to feel the need of fellowship. She wanted to question, wanted to speak, wanted to relate her experience. And her foot hurt her atrociously. There ought to be an ambulance. A little gust of querulous criticisms blew across her mind. This surely was a disaster! Always after a disaster there should be ambulances and helpers moving about. . . .

She craned her head. There was something there. But everything was so still!

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*"Monsieur!"* she cried. Her ears, she noted, felt queer, and she began to suspect that all was not well with them.

It was terribly lonely in this chaotic strangeness, and perhaps this man—if it was a man, for it was difficult to see—might for all his stillness be merely insensible. He might have been stunned. . . .

The leaping glare beyond sent a ray into his corner and for a moment every little detail was distinct. It was Marshal Dubois. He was lying against a huge slab of the war map. To it there stuck and from it there dangled little wooden objects, the symbols of infantry and cavalry and guns as they were disposed upon the frontier. He did not seem to be aware of this at his back, he had an effect of inattention, not indifferent attention, but as if he were thinking. . . .

She could not see the eyes beneath his shaggy brows but it was evident he frowned. He frowned slightly, he had an air of not wanting to be disturbed. His face still bore that expression of assured confidence, that conviction that if things were left to him France might obey in security. . . .

She did not cry out to him again, but she crept a little nearer. A strange surmise made her eyes dilate. With a painful wrench she pulled herself up so that she could see completely over the intervening lumps of smashed-up masonry. Her hand touched something wet, and after one convulsive movement she became rigid.

It was not a whole man there; it was a piece of a man, the head and shoulders of a man that trailed

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down into a ragged darkness and a pool of shining black. . . .

And even as she stared the mound above her swayed and crumbled and a rush of hot water came pouring over her. Then it seemed to her that she was dragged downward. . . .

### § 3

When the rather brutish young aviator with the bullet head and the black hair close-cropped *en brosse* who was in charge of the French special scientific corps heard presently of this disaster to the War Control, he was so wanting in imagination in any sphere but his own, that he laughed. Small matter to him that Paris was burning. His mother and father and sister lived at Caudebec; and the only sweetheart he had ever had, and it was poor love-making then, was a girl in Rouen. He slapped his second-in-command on the shoulder. "Now," he said, "there's nothing on earth to stop us going to Berlin and giving them tit for tat. . . . Strategy and reasons of state—they're over. . . . Come along, my boy, and we'll just show these old women what we can do when they let us have our heads."

He spent five minutes telephoning and then he went out into the courtyard of the château in which he had been installed and shouted for his automobile. Things would have to move quickly because there was scarcely an hour and a half before dawn. He looked at the sky and noted with satisfaction a heavy bank of clouds athwart the pallid east.



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He was a young man of infinite shrewdness, and his material and aeroplanes were scattered all over the countryside, stuck away in barns, covered with hay, hidden in woods. A hawk could not have discovered any of them without coming within reach of a gun. But that night he only wanted one of the machines, and it was handy and quite prepared under a tarpaulin between two ricks not a couple of miles away; he was going to Berlin with that and just one other man. Two men would be enough for what he meant to do. . . .

He had in his hands the black complement to all those other gifts science was urging upon unregenerate mankind, the gift of destruction, and he was an adventurous rather than a sympathetic type. . . .

He was a dark young man with something negroid about his gleaming face. He smiled like one who is favoured and anticipates great pleasures. There was an exotic richness, a chuckling flavour, about the voice in which he gave his orders, and he pointed his remarks with the long finger of a hand that was hairy and exceptionally big.

“We’ll give them tit for tat,” he said. “We’ll give them tit for tat. No time to lose, boys. . . .”

And presently over the cloud-banks that lay above Westphalia and Saxony the swift aeroplane, with its atomic engine as noiseless as a dancing sunbeam and its phosphorescent gyroscopic compass, flew like an arrow to the heart of the Central European hosts.

It did not soar very high; it skimmed a few hundred feet above the banked darknesses of cumulus that hid the world, ready to plunge at once into their wet

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obscurities should some hostile flier range into vision. The tense young steersman divided his attention between the guiding stars above and the level tumbled surfaces of the vapour strata that hid the world below. Over great spaces those banks lay as even as a frozen lava-flow and almost as still, and then they were rent by ragged areas of translucency, pierced by clear chasms, so that dim patches of the land below gleamed remotely through abysses. Once he saw quite distinctly the plan of a big railway-station outlined in lamps and signals, and once the flames of a burning rick showing livid through a boiling drift of smoke on the side of some great hill. But if the world was masked it was alive with sounds. Up through that vapour floor came the deep roar of trains, the whistles of horns of motor-cars, a sound of rifle fire away to the south, and as he drew near his destination the crowing of cocks. . . .

The sky above the indistinct horizons of this cloud sea was at first starry and then paler with a light that crept from north to east as the dawn came on. The Milky Way was invisible in the blue, and the lesser stars vanished. The face of the adventurer at the steering-wheel, darkly visible ever and again by the oval greenish glow of the compass face, had something of that firm beauty which all concentrated purpose gives, and something of the happiness of an idiot child that has at last got hold of the matches. His companion, a less imaginative type, sat with his legs spread wide over the long coffin-shaped box which contained in its compartments the three atomic bombs, the new bombs that would continue to

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explode indefinitely and which no one so far had ever seen in action. Hitherto Carolum, their essential substance, had been tested only in almost infinitesimal quantities within steel chambers embedded in lead. Beyond the thought of great destruction slumbering in the black spheres between his legs, and a keen resolve to follow out very exactly the instructions that had been given him, the man's mind was a blank. His aquiline profile against the starlight expressed nothing but a profound gloom.

The sky below grew clearer as the central European capital was approached.

So far they had been singularly lucky and had been challenged by no aeroplanes at all. The frontier scouts they must have passed in the night; probably these were mostly under the clouds; the world was wide and they had had luck in not coming close to any soaring sentinel. Their machine was painted a pale grey that lay almost invisibly over the cloud levels below. But now the east was flushing with the near ascent of the sun, Berlin was but a score of miles ahead, and the luck of the Frenchmen held. By imperceptible degrees the clouds below dissolved. . . .

Away to the north-eastward, in a cloudless pool of gathering light and with all its nocturnal illuminations still blazing, was Berlin. The left finger of the steersman verified roads and open spaces below upon the mica-covered square of map that was fastened by his wheel. There in a series of lake-like expansions was the Havel away to the right; over by those forests must be Spandau; there the river split about the

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Potsdam island; and right ahead was Charlottenburg, cleft by a great thoroughfare that fell like an indicating beam of light straight to the imperial headquarters. There, plain enough, was the Thiergarten; beyond rose the imperial palace, and to the right those tall buildings, those clustering, beflagged, bemasted roofs, must be the offices in which the Central European staff was housed. It was all coldly clear and colourless in the dawn.

He looked up suddenly as a humming sound grew out of nothing and became swiftly louder. Nearly overhead a German aeroplane was circling down from an immense height to challenge him. He made a gesture with his left arm to the gloomy man behind and then gripped his little wheel with both hands, crouched over it and twisted his neck to look upward. He was attentive, tightly strung, but quite contemptuous of their ability to hurt him. No German alive, he was assured, could outfly him, or indeed any one of the best Frenchmen. He imagined they might strike at him as a hawk strikes, but they were men coming down out of the bitter cold up there, in a hungry, spiritless morning mood; they came slanting down like a sword swung by a lazy man, and not so rapidly but that he was able to slip away from under them and get between them and Berlin. They began challenging him in German with a megaphone when they were still perhaps a mile away. The words came to him rolled up into a mere blob of hoarse sound. Then, gathering alarm from his grim silence, they gave chase and swept down, a hundred yards above him perhaps and a couple of hundred behind. They

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were beginning to understand what he was. He ceased to watch them and concentrated himself on the city ahead and for a time the two aeroplanes raced. . . .

A bullet came tearing through the air by him, as though some one was tearing paper. A second followed. Something tapped the machine.

It was time to act. The broad avenues, the park, the palaces below rushed widening out nearer and nearer to them.

“Ready!” said the steersman.

The gaunt face hardened to grimness, and with both hands the bomb-thrower lifted the big atomic bomb from the box and steadied it against the side. It was a black sphere two feet in diameter. Between its handles was a little celluloid stud, and to this he bent his head until his lips touched it. Then he had to bite in order to let the air in upon the inducive. Sure of its accessibility, he craned his neck over the side of the aeroplane and judged his pace and distance. Then very quickly he bent forward, bit the stud and hoisted the bomb over the side.

“Round,” he whispered inaudibly.

The bomb flashed blinding scarlet in mid-air and fell, a descending column of blaze eddying spirally in the midst of a whirlwind. Both the aeroplanes were tossed like shuttlecocks, hurled high and sideways; and the steersman with gleaming eyes and set teeth fought in great banking curves for a balance. The gaunt man clung tight with hand and knees; his nostrils dilated, his teeth biting his lips. He was firmly strapped. . . .

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When he could look down again it was like looking down upon the crater of a small volcano. In the open garden before the Imperial castle a shuddering star of evil splendour spurted and poured up smoke and flame towards them like an accusation. They were too high to distinguish people clearly, or mark the bomb's effect upon the building until suddenly the façade tottered and crumbled before the flare as sugar dissolves in water. The man stared for a moment, showed all his long teeth, and then staggered into the cramped standing position his straps permitted, hoisted out and bit another bomb and sent it down after its fellow.

The explosion came this time more directly underneath the aeroplane and shot it upward edgeways. The bomb box tipped to the point of disgorgement, and the bomb-thrower was pitched forward upon the third bomb with his face close to its celluloid stud. He clutched its handles and with a sudden gust of determination that the thing should not escape him, bit its stud. Before he could hurl it over, the monoplane was slipping sideways. Everything was falling sideways. Instinctively he gave himself up to gripping, his body holding the bomb in its place.

Then that bomb had exploded also, and steersman, thrower, and aeroplane were just flying rags and splinters of metal and drops of moisture in the air, and a third column of fire rushed eddying down upon the doomed buildings below. . . .

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### § 4

Never before in the history of warfare had there been a continuing explosive; indeed up to the middle of the twentieth century the only explosives known were combustibles whose explosiveness was due entirely to their instantaneousness; and these atomic bombs which science burst upon the world that night were strange even to the men who used them. Those used by the allies were lumps of pure Carolinum, painted on the outside with unoxidised cydonator inducive inclosed hermetically in a case of membranum. A little celluloid stud between the handles by which the bomb was lifted was arranged so as to be easily torn off and admit air to the inducive, which at once became active and set up radioactivity in the outer layer of the Carolinum sphere. This liberated fresh inducive, and so in a few minutes the whole bomb was a blazing continual explosion. The central European bombs were the same except that they were larger and had a more complicated arrangement for animating the inducive.

Always before in the development of warfare the shells and rockets fired had been but momentarily explosive, they had gone off in an instant once for all, and if there was nothing living or valuable within reach of the concussion and the flying fragments then they were spent and over. But Carolinum, which belonged to the  $\beta$  group of Hyslop's so-called "suspended degenerator" elements, once its degenerative process had been induced, continued a furious radiation of energy and nothing could arrest it.

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Of all Hyslop's artificial elements Carolinum was the most heavily stored with energy and the most dangerous to make and handle. To this day it remains the most potent degenerator known. What the earlier twentieth-century chemists called its half period was seventeen days; that is to say, it poured out half of the huge store of energy in its great molecules in the space of seventeen days, the next seventeen days' emission was a half of that first period's outpouring, and so on. As with all radioactive substances this Carolinum, though every seventeen days its power is halved, though constantly it diminishes towards the imperceptible, is never entirely exhausted, and to this day the battle-fields and bomb-fields of that frantic time in human history are sprinkled with radiant matter and so centres of inconvenient rays. . . .

What happened when the celluloid stud was opened was that the inducive oxidised and became active. Then the surface of the Carolinum began to degenerate. This degeneration passed only slowly into the substance of the bomb. A moment or so after its explosion began it was still mainly an inert sphere exploding superficially, a big, inanimate nucleus wrapped in flame and thunder. Those that were thrown from aeroplanes fell in this state, they reached the ground still mainly solid and, melting soil and rock in their progress, bored into the earth. There, as more and more of the Carolinum became active, the bomb spread itself out into a monstrous cavern of fiery energy at the base of what became very speedily a miniature active volcano. The Carolinum, unable to disperse, freely drove into and mixed up with a boil-



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ing confusion of molten soil and superheated steam and so remained spinning furiously and maintaining an eruption that lasted for years or months or weeks according to the size of the bomb employed and the chances of its dispersal. Once launched the bomb was absolutely unapproachable and uncontrollable until its forces were nearly exhausted, and from the crater that burst open above it, puffs of heavy incandescent vapour and fragments of viciously punitive rock and mud, saturated with Carolinum, and each a centre of scorching and blistering energy, were flung high and far.

Such was the crowning triumph of military science, the ultimate explosive that was to give the "decisive touch" to war. . . .

### § 5

A recent historical writer has described the world of that time as one that "believed in established words and was invincibly blind to the obvious in things." Certainly it seems now that nothing could have been more obvious to the people of the earlier twentieth century than the rapidity with which war was becoming impossible. And as certainly they did not see it. They did not see it until the atomic bombs burst in their fumbling hands. Yet the broad facts *must* have glared upon any intelligent mind. All through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the amount of energy that men were able to command was continually increasing. Applied to warfare that meant that the power to inflict a blow, the power to

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destroy, was continually increasing. There was no increase whatever in the ability to escape. Every sort of passive defence, armour, fortifications and so forth was being outmastered by this tremendous increase on the destructive side. Destruction was becoming so facile that any little body of malcontents could use it; it was revolutionising the problems of police and internal rule. Before the last war began it was a matter of common knowledge that a man could carry about in a hand-bag an amount of latent energy sufficient to wreck half a city. These facts were before the minds of everybody; the children in the streets knew them. And yet the world still, as the Americans used to phrase it, "fooled around" with the paraphernalia and pretensions of war.

It is only by realising this profound, this fantastic divorce between the scientific and intellectual movement on the one hand and the world of the lawyer-politician on the other that the men of a later time can hope to understand this preposterous state of affairs. Social organisation was still in the barbaric stage. There were already great numbers of actively intelligent men and much private and commercial civilisation, but the community as a whole was aimless, untrained and unorganised to the pitch of imbecility. Collective civilisation, the "Modern State," was still in the womb of the future. . . .

### § 6

But let us return to Frederick Barnet's "Wanderjahre" and its account of the experiences of a

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common man during the war-time. While these terrific disclosures of scientific possibility were happening in Paris and Berlin, Barnett and his company were industriously intrenching themselves in Belgian Luxembourg.

He tells of the mobilisation and of his summer day's journey through the north of France and the Ardennes in a few vivid phrases. The country was browned by a warm summer, the trees a little touched with autumnal colour, and the wheat already golden. When they stopped for an hour at Hirson men and women with tricolour badges upon the platform distributed cakes and glasses of beer to the thirsty soldiers and there was much cheerfulness. "Such good cool beer it was," he wrote. "I had had nothing to eat nor drink since Epsom."

A number of monoplanes "like giant swallows," he notes, were scouting in the pink evening sky.

Barnett's battalion was sent through the Sedan country to a place called Virton and thence to a point in the woods on the line to Jemelle. Here they detrained, bivouacked uneasily by the railway—trains and stores were passing along it all night—and next morning he marched eastward through a cold overcast dawn and a morning, first cloudy and then blazing, over a large spacious countryside interspersed by forest towards Arlon.

There the infantry were set to work upon a line of masked intrenchments and hidden rifle-pits between St. Hubert and Virton that were designed to check and delay any advance from the east upon the fortified line of the Meuse. They had their orders, and

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for two days they worked without either a sight of the enemy or any suspicion of the disaster that had abruptly decapitated the armies of Europe, and turned the west of Paris and the centre of Berlin into blazing miniatures of the destruction of Pompeii.

And the news, when it did come, came attenuated. "We heard there had been mischief with aeroplanes and bombs in Paris," Barnet relates; "but it didn't seem to follow that 'They' weren't still somewhere elaborating their plans and issuing orders. When the enemy began to emerge from the woods in front of us, we cheered and blazed away, and didn't trouble much more about anything but the battle in hand. If now and then one cocked up an eye into the sky to see what was happening there, the rip of a bullet soon brought one down to the horizontal again. . . ."

That battle went on for three days all over a great stretch of country between Louvain on the north and Longwy to the south. It was essentially a rifle and infantry struggle. The aeroplanes do not seem to have taken any decisive share in the actual fighting, though no doubt they affected the strategy from the first by preventing surprise movements. They were aeroplanes with atomic engines, but they were not provided with atomic bombs, which were manifestly unsuitable for field use, nor indeed had they any very effective kind of bomb. And though they manoeuvred against each other, and there was rifle shooting at them and between them, there was little actual aerial fighting. Either the air-men were indisposed to fight or the commanders on both sides preferred to reserve these machines for scouting. . . .

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After a day or so of digging and scheming, Barnet found himself in the forefront of a battle. He had made his section of rifle-pits chiefly along a line of deep dry ditch that gave a means of intercommunication, he had had the earth scattered over the adjacent field and he had masked his preparations with tussocks of corn and poppy. The hostile advance came blindly and unsuspectingly across the fields below and would have been very cruelly handled indeed if some one away to the right had not opened fire too soon.

“It was a queer thrill when these fellows came into sight,” he confesses; “and not a bit like manoeuvres. They halted for a time on the edge of the wood and then came forward in an open line. They kept walking nearer to us and not looking at us, but away to the right of us. Even when they began to be hit, and their officers’ whistles woke them up, they didn’t seem to see us. One or two halted to fire and then they all went back towards the wood again. They went slowly at first, looking round at us, then the shelter of the wood seemed to draw them and they trotted. I fired rather mechanically and missed, then I fired again, and then I became earnest to hit something, made sure of my sighting and aimed very carefully at a blue back that was dodging about in the corn. At first I couldn’t satisfy myself and didn’t shoot, his movements were so spasmodic and uncertain; then I think he came to a ditch or some such obstacle and halted for a moment. ‘Got you,’ I whispered, and pulled the trigger.

“I had the strangest sensations about that man.

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In the first instance when I felt that I had hit him I was irradiated with joy and pride. . . .

“I sent him spinning. He jumped and threw up his arms. . . .

“Then I saw the corn tops waving and had glimpses of him flapping about. Suddenly I felt sick. I hadn't killed him. . . .

“In some way he was disabled and smashed up and yet able to struggle about. I began to think. . . .

“For nearly two hours that Prussian was agonising in the corn. Either he was calling out or some one was shouting to him. . . .

“Then he jumped up,—he seemed to try and get up upon his feet with one last effort; and then he fell like a sack and lay quite still and never moved again.

“He had been unendurable, and I believe some one had shot him dead. I had been wanting to do so for some time. . . .”

The enemy began sniping the rifle-pits from shelters they made for themselves in the woods below. A man was hit in the pit next to Barnet and began cursing and crying out in a violent rage. Barnet crawled along the ditch to him and found him in great pain, covered with blood, frantic with indignation and with the half of his right hand smashed to a pulp. “Look at this,” he kept repeating, hugging it and then extending it. “Damned foolery! Damned foolery! My right hand, sir! My right hand!”

For some time Barnet could do nothing with him. The man was consumed by his tortured realisation of the evil silliness of war, the realisation which had

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come upon him in a flash with the bullet that had destroyed his skill and use as an artificer for ever. He was looking at the vestiges with a horror that made him impenetrable to any other idea. At last the poor wretch let Barnet tie up his bleeding stump and help him along the ditch that conducted him deviously out of range. . . .

When Barnet returned his men were already calling out for water, and all day long the line of pits suffered greatly from thirst. For food they had chocolate and bread.

"At first," he says, "I was extraordinarily excited by my baptism of fire. Then as the heat of the day came on I experienced an enormous tedium and discomfort. The flies became extremely troublesome and my little grave of a rifle-pit was invaded by ants. I could not get up or move about, for some one in the trees had got a mark on me. I kept thinking of the dead Prussian down among the corn and of the bitter outcries of my own man. Damned foolery! It *was* damned foolery. But who was to blame? How had we got to this? . . .

"Early in the afternoon an aeroplane tried to dislodge us with dynamite bombs, but she was hit by bullets once or twice and suddenly dived down over beyond the trees.

"'From Holland to the Alps this day,' I thought, 'there must be crouching and lying upward of half a million of men, trying to inflict irreparable damage upon one another. The thing is idiotic to the pitch of impossibility. It is a dream. Presently I shall wake up.' . . .

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“Then the phrase changed itself in my mind. ‘Presently mankind will wake up.’

“I lay speculating just how many thousands of men there were among these hundreds of thousands whose spirits were in rebellion against all these ancient traditions of flag and empire. Weren't we perhaps already in the throes of the last crisis, in that darkest moment of a nightmare's horror before the sleeper will endure no more of it—and wakes?

“I don't know how my speculations ended. I think they were not so much ended as distracted by the distant thudding of the guns that were opening fire at long range upon Namur.”

### § 7

But as yet Barnet had seen no more than the mildest beginnings of modern warfare. So far he had taken part only in a little shooting. The bayonet attack by which the advanced line was broken was made at a place called Croix Rouge more than twenty miles away, and that night under cover of the darkness the rifle-pits were abandoned and he got his company away without further loss.

His regiment fell back unpressed behind the fortified lines between Namur and Sedan, entrained at a station called Mettet, and was sent northward by Antwerp and Rotterdam to Haarlem. Hence they marched into North Holland. It was only after the march into Holland that he began to realise the monstrous and catastrophic nature of the struggle in which he was playing his undistinguished part.



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He describes very pleasantly the journey through the hills and open land of Brabant, the repeated crossing of arms of the Rhine, and the change from the undulating scenery of Belgium to the flat rich meadows, the sunlit dike roads, and the countless windmills of the Dutch levels. In those days there was unbroken land from Alkmaar and Leiden to the Dollart. Three great provinces, South Holland, North Holland, and Zuiderzeeland, reclaimed at various times between the early tenth century and 1945 and all many feet below the level of the waves outside the dikes, spread out their lush polders to the northern sun and sustained a dense industrious population. An intricate web of laws and custom and tradition insured a perpetual vigilance and a perpetual defence against the beleaguering sea. For more than two hundred and fifty miles from Walcheren to Friesland stretched a line of embankments and pumping-stations that was the admiration of the world.

If some curious god had chosen to watch the course of events in those northern provinces while that flanking march of the British was in progress, he would have found a convenient and appropriate seat for his observation upon one of the great cumulus clouds that were drifting slowly across the blue sky during all these eventful days before the great catastrophe. For that was the quality of the weather, hot and clear with something of a breeze, and underfoot dry and a little inclined to be dusty. This watching god would have looked down upon broad stretches of sunlit green, sunlit save for the creeping patches of shadow cast by the clouds, upon sky-reflecting meres, fringed

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and divided up by masses of willow and large areas of silvery weeds, upon white roads lying bare to the sun and upon a tracery of blue canals. The pastures were alive with cattle, the roads had a busy traffic of beasts and bicycles and gaily coloured peasants' automobiles, the hues of the innumerable motor barges in the canal vied with the eventfulness of the roadways; and everywhere in solitary steadings, amidst ricks and barns, in groups by the wayside, in straggling villages, each with its fine old church, or in compact towns laced with canals and abounding in bridges and clipped trees, were human habitations.

The people of this countryside were not belligerents. The interests and sympathies alike of Holland had been so divided that to the end she remained undecided and passive in the struggle of the world powers. And everywhere along the roads taken by the marching armies clustered groups and crowds of impartially observant spectators, women and children in peculiar white caps and old-fashioned sabots, and elderly, clean-shaven men quietly thoughtful over their long pipes. They had no fear of their invaders; the days when "soldiering" meant bands of licentious looters had long since passed away. . . .

That watcher among the clouds would have seen a great distribution of khaki-uniformed men and khaki-painted material over the whole of the sunken area of Holland. He would have marked the long trains, packed with men or piled with great guns and war material, creeping slowly, alert for train-wreckers, along the north-going lines; he would have seen the Scheldt and Rhine choked with shipping

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and pouring out still more men and still more material; he would have noticed halts and provisionings and detrainments, and the long bustling caterpillars of cavalry and infantry, the maggot-like waggons, the huge beetles of great guns, crawling under the poplars along the dikes and roads northward, along ways lined by the neutral, unmolested, ambiguously observant Dutch. All the barges and shipping upon the canals had been requisitioned for transport. In that clear bright warm weather it would all have looked from above like some extravagant festival of animated toys.

As the sun sank westward the spectacle must have become a little indistinct because of a golden haze; everything must have become warmer and more glowing, and because of the lengthening of the shadows more manifestly in relief. The shadows of the tall churches grew longer and longer until they touched the horizon and mingled in the universal shadow; and then, slow and soft, and wrapping the world in fold after fold of deepening blue, came the night—the night at first obscurely simple, and then with faint points here and there, and then jewelled in darkling splendour with a hundred thousand lights. Out of that mingling of darkness and ambiguous glares the noise of an unceasing activity would have arisen, the louder and plainer now because there was no longer any distraction of sight.

It may be that watcher drifting in the pellucid gulf beneath the stars watched all through the night; it may be that he dozed. But if he gave way to so natural a proclivity assuredly on the fourth night of

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the great flank march he was aroused, for that was the night of the battle in the air that decided the fate of Holland.

The aeroplanes were fighting at last, and suddenly about him, above and below, with cries and uproar rushing out of the four quarters of heaven, striking, plunging, oversetting, soaring to the zenith and dropping to the ground, they came to assail or defend the myriads below.

Secretly the Central European power had gathered his flying-machines together, and now he threw them as a giant might fling a handful of ten thousand knives over the low country. And amidst that swarming flight were five that drove headlong for the sea-walls of Holland, carrying atomic bombs. From north and west and south the allied aeroplanes rose in response and swept down upon this sudden attack. So it was that war in the air began. Men rode upon the whirlwind that night and slew and fell like archangels. The sky rained heroes upon the astonished earth. Surely the last fights of mankind were the best. What was the heavy pounding of your Homeric swordsmen, what was the creaking charge of chariots, beside this swift rush, this crash, this giddy triumph, this headlong swoop to death?

And then athwart this whirling rush of aerial duels that swooped and locked and dropped in the void between the lamp-lights and the stars came a great wind and a crash louder than thunder, and first one and then a score of lengthening fiery serpents plunged hungrily down upon the Dutchmen's dikes and struck between land and sea and flared up again

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in enormous columns of glare and crimsoned smoke and steam.

And out of the darkness leaped the little land, with its spires and trees, aghast with terror, still and distinct, and the sea, tumbled with anger, red-foaming like a sea of blood. . . .

Over the populous country below went a strange multitudinous crying and a flurry of alarm-bells. . . .

The surviving aeroplanes turned about and fled out of the sky, like things that suddenly know themselves to be wicked. . . .

Through a dozen thunderously flaming gaps that no water might quench, the waves came roaring in upon the land. . . .

### § 8

“We had cursed our luck,” says Barnet, “that we could not get to our quarters at Alkmaar that night. There, we were told, were provisions, tobacco, and everything for which we craved. But the main canal from Zaandam and Amsterdam was hopelessly jammed with craft, and we were glad of a chance opening that enabled us to get out of the main column and lie up in a kind of little harbour very much neglected and weed-grown before a deserted house. We broke into this and found some herrings in a barrel, a heap of cheeses, and stone bottles of gin in the cellar; and with this I cheered my starving men. We made fires and toasted the cheese and grilled our herrings. None of us had slept for nearly forty hours

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and I determined to stay in this refuge until dawn, and then if the traffic was still choked leave the barge and march the rest of the way into Alkmaar.

“This place we had got into was perhaps a hundred yards from the canal, and underneath a little brick bridge we could see the flotilla still and hear the voices of the soldiers. Presently five or six other barges came through and lay up in the meer near by us, and with two of these, full of men of the Antrim regiment, I shared my find of provisions. In return we got tobacco. A large expanse of water spread to the westward of us and beyond were a cluster of roofs and one or two church towers. The barge was rather cramped for so many men and I let several squads, thirty or forty perhaps altogether, bivouac on the bank. I did not let them go into the house on account of the furniture, and I left a note of indebtedness for the food we had taken. We were particularly glad of our tobacco and fires because of the numerous mosquitoes that rose about us.

“The gate of the house from which we had provisioned ourselves was adorned with the legend *Vreugde bij Vrede*, ‘Joy with Peace,’ and it bore every mark of the busy retirement of a comfort-loving proprietor. I went along his garden, which was gay and delightful with big bushes of rose and sweetbriar, to a quaint little summer-house, and there I sat and watched the men in groups cooking and squatting along the bank. The sun was setting in a nearly cloudless sky.

“For the last two weeks I had been a wholly occupied man, intent only upon obeying the orders that

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came down to me. All through this time I had been working to the very limit of my mental and physical faculties, and my only moments of rest had been devoted to snatches of sleep. Now came this rare unexpected interlude, and I could look detachedly upon what I was doing and feel something of its infinite wonderfulness. I was irradiated with affection for the men of my company and with admiration at their cheerful acquiescence in the subordination and needs of our positions. I watched their proceedings and heard their pleasant voices. How willing those men were! How ready to accept leadership and forget themselves in collective ends! I thought how manfully they had gone through all the strains and toil of the last two weeks, how they had toughened and shaken down to comradeship together, and how much sweetness there is after all in our foolish human blood. For they were just one casual sample of the species—their patience and readiness lay, as the energy of the atom had lain, still waiting to be properly utilised. Again it came to me with overpowering force that the supreme need of our race is leading, that the supreme task is to discover leading, to forget oneself in realising the collective purpose of the race. Once more I saw life plain. . . .”

Very characteristic is that of the “rather too corpulent” young officer, who was afterwards to set it all down in the “Wanderjahre.” Very characteristic too it is of the change in men’s hearts that was even then preparing a new phase of human history.

He goes on to write of the escape from individuality in science and service and of his discovery of this

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“salvation.” All that was then no doubt very moving and original; now it seems only the most obvious commonplace of human life.

The glow of the sunset faded, the twilight deepened into night. The fires burned the brighter, and some Irishmen away across the meer started singing. But Barnet's men were too weary for that sort of thing, and soon the bank and the barge were heaped with sleeping forms.

“I alone seemed unable to sleep. I suppose I was overtired, and after a little feverish slumber by the tiller of the barge I sat up, awake and uneasy. . . .

“That night Holland seemed all sky. There was just a little black lower rim to things, a steeple perhaps or a line of poplars, and then the great hemisphere swept over us. As at first, the sky was empty. Yet my uneasiness referred itself in some vague way to the sky.

“And now I was melancholy. I found something strangely sorrowful and submissive in the sleepers all about me, those men who had marched so far, who had left all the established texture of their lives behind them to come upon this mad campaign, this campaign that signified nothing and consumed everything, this mere fever of fighting. I saw how little and feeble is the life of man, a thing of chances, preposterously unable to find the will to realise even the most timid of its dreams. And I wondered if always it would be so, if man was a doomed animal who would never to the last days of his time take hold of fate and change it to his will. Always, it may be, he will remain kindly but jealous, desirous but



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discursive, able and unwisely impulsive, until Saturn who begot him shall devour him in his turn. . . .

“I was roused from these thoughts by the sudden realisation of the presence of a squadron of aeroplanes far away to the north-east and very high. They looked like little black dashes against the midnight blue. I remember that I looked up at them at first rather idly—as one might notice a flight of birds. Then I perceived that they were only the extreme wing of a great fleet that was advancing in a long line very swiftly from the direction of the frontier and my attention tightened.

“Directly I saw that fleet I was astonished not to have seen it before.

“I stood up softly, undesirous of disturbing my companions, but with my heart beating now rather more rapidly with surprise and excitement. I strained my ears for any sound of guns along our front. Almost instinctively I turned about for protection to the south and west, and peered; and then I saw coming as fast and much nearer to me, as if they had sprung out of the darkness, three banks of aeroplanes; a group of squadrons very high, a main body at a height perhaps of one or two thousand feet, and a doubtful number flying low and very indistinct. The middle ones were so thick they kept putting out groups of stars. And I realised that after all there was to be fighting in the air.

“There was something extraordinarily strange in this swift, noiseless convergence of nearly invisible combatants above the sleeping hosts. Every one about me was still unconscious; there was no sign as

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yet of any agitation among the shipping on the main canal whose whole course, dotted with unsuspecting lights and fringed with fires, must have been clearly perceptible from above. Then a long way off towards Alkmaar I heard bugles, and after that shots, and then a wild clamour of bells. I determined to let my men sleep on for as long as they could. . . .

“The battle was joined with the swiftness of dreaming. I do not think it could have been five minutes from the moment when I first became aware of the central European air-fleet to the contact of the two forces. I saw it quite plainly in silhouette against the luminous blue of the northern sky. The allied aeroplanes—they were mostly French—came pouring down like a fierce shower upon the middle of the central European fleet. They looked exactly like a coarser sort of rain. There was a crackling sound—the first sound I heard—it reminded one of the Aurora Borealis and I supposed it was an interchange of rifle-shots. There were flashes like summer lightning; and then all the sky became a whirling confusion of battle that was still largely noiseless. Some of the central European aeroplanes were certainly charged and upset; others seemed to collapse and fall and then flare out with so bright a light that it took the edge off one’s vision and made the rest of the battle disappear as though it had been snatched back out of sight.

“And then while I still peered and tried to shade these flames from my eyes with my hand, and while the men about me were beginning to stir, the atomic bombs were thrown at the dikes. They made a

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mighty thunder in the air, and fell like Lucifer in the picture, leaving a flaring trail in the sky. The night which had been pellucid and detailed and eventful seemed to vanish, to be replaced abruptly by a black background to these tremendous pillars of fire. . . .

“Hard upon the sound of them came a roaring wind, and the sky was filled with flickering lightnings and rushing clouds. . . .

“There was something discontinuous in this impact. At one moment I was a lonely watcher in a sleeping world; the next saw every one about me afoot, the whole world awake and amazed. . . .

“And then the wind had struck me a buffet, taken my helmet and swept aside the summer-house of *Vreugde bij Vrede*, as a scythe sweeps away grass. I saw the bombs fall, and then watched a great crimson flare leap responsive to each impact, and mountainous masses of red-lit steam and flying fragments clamber up towards the zenith. Against the glare I saw the countryside for miles standing black and clear, churches, trees, chimneys. And suddenly I understood. The central Europeans had burst the dikes. Those flares meant the bursting of the dikes, and in a little while the sea-water would be upon us. . . .”

He goes on to tell with a certain prolixity of the steps he took—and all things considered they were very intelligent steps—to meet this amazing crisis. He got his men aboard and hailed the adjacent barges; he got the man who acted as barge engineer at his post and the engines working, he cast loose from his moorings. Then he bethought himself of food and contrived to land five men, get in a few dozen cheeses

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and ship his men again before the inundation reached them.

He is reasonably proud of this piece of coolness. His idea was to take the wave head-on and with his engines full speed ahead. And all the while he was thanking Heaven he was not in the jam of traffic in the main canal. He rather, I think, overestimated the probable rush of waters; he dreaded being swept away, he explains, and smashed against houses and trees.

He does not give any estimate of the time it took between the bursting of the dikes and the arrival of the waters, but it was probably an interval of about twenty minutes or half an hour. He was working now in darkness—save for the light of his lantern—and in a great wind. He hung out head and stern lights. . . .

Whirling torrents of steam were pouring up from the advancing waters, which had rushed, it must be remembered, through nearly incandescent gaps in the sea defences, and this vast uprush of vapour soon veiled the flaring centres of explosion altogether. . . .

“The waters came at last, an advancing cascade. It was like a broad roller sweeping across the country. They came with a deep roaring sound. I had expected a Niagara, but the total fall of the front could not have been much more than twelve feet. Our barge hesitated for a moment, took a dose over her bows and then lifted. I signalled for full speed ahead and brought her head up-stream, and held on like grim death to keep her there.

“There was a wind about as strong as the flood, and I found we were pounding against every con-

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ceivable buoyant object that had been between us and the sea. The only light in the world now came from our lamps, the steam became impenetrable at a score of yards from the boat, and the roar of the wind and water cut us off from all remoter sounds. The black shining waters swirled by, coming into the light of our lamps out of an ebony blackness and vanishing again into impenetrable black. And on the waters came shapes, came things that flashed upon us for a moment, now a half-submerged boat, now a cow, now a huge fragment of a house's timberings, now a muddle of packing-cases and scaffolding. The things clapped into sight like something shown by the opening of a shutter, and then bumped shatteringly against us or rushed by us. Once I saw very clearly a man's white face. . . .

"All the while a group of labouring, half-submerged trees remained ahead of us drawing very slowly nearer. I steered a course to avoid them. They seemed to gesticulate a frantic despair against the black steam clouds behind. Once a great branch detached itself and tore shuddering by me. We did on the whole make headway. The last I saw of *Vreugde bij Vrede* before the night swallowed it was almost dead astern of us. . . ."

### § 9

Morning found Barnet still afloat. The bows of his barge had been badly strained, and his men were pumping or baling in relays. He had got about a dozen half-drowned people aboard whose boat had

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capsized near him, and he had three other boats in tow. He was afloat, and somewhere between Amsterdam and Alkmaar, but he could not tell where. It was a day that was still half night. Grey waters stretched in every direction under a dark grey sky, and out of the waves rose the upper parts of houses, in many cases ruined, the tops of trees, windmills, in fact the upper third of all the familiar Dutch scenery; and on it there drifted a dimly seen flotilla of barges, small boats, many overturned, furniture, rafts, timbering and miscellaneous objects.

The drowned were under water that morning. Only here and there did a dead cow or a stiff figure still clinging stoutly to a box or chair or suchlike buoy hint at the hidden massacre. It was not till the Thursday that the dead came to the surface in any quantity. The view was bounded on every side by a grey mist that closed overhead in a grey canopy. The air cleared in the afternoon, and then, far away to the west under great banks of steam and dust, the flaming red eruption of the atomic bombs came visible across the waste of water.

They showed flat and sullen through the mist, like London sunsets. "They sat upon the sea," says Barnett, "like frayed-out water-lilies of flame."

Barnet seems to have spent the morning in rescue work along the track of the canal, in helping people who were adrift, in picking up derelict boats and in taking people out of imperilled houses. He found other military barges similarly employed, and it was only as the day wore on and the immediate appeals for aid were satisfied that he thought of food and

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<sup>drink</sup>  
<sup>sue.</sup> for his men and what course he had better pursue. They had a little cheese but no water. "Orders," <sup>that</sup> mysterious direction, had at last altogether disappeared. He perceived he had now to act upon his own responsibility.

"One's sense was of a destruction so far-reaching and of a world so altered that it seemed foolish to go in any direction and expect to find things as they had been before the war began. I sat on the quarter-deck with Mylius my engineer and Kemp and two others of the non-commissioned officers, and we consulted upon our line of action. We were foodless and aimless. We agreed that our fighting value was extremely small, and that our first duty was to get ourselves in touch with food and instructions again. Whatever plan of campaign had directed our movements was manifestly smashed to bits. Mylius was of opinion that we could take a line westward and get back to England across the North Sea. He calculated that with such a motor-barge as ours it would be possible to reach the Yorkshire coast within four-and-twenty hours. But this idea I overruled because of the shortness of our provisions, and more particularly because of our urgent need of water.

"Every boat we drew near now hailed us for water, and their demands did much to exasperate our thirst. I decided that if we went away to the south we should reach hilly country, or at least country that was not submerged, and then we should be able to land, find some stream, drink, and get supplies and news. Many of the barges adrift in the haze about us were filled with British soldiers and had floated up from

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the Nord See Canal, but none of them were any better informed than ourselves of the course of events. 'Orders' had in fact vanished out of the sky.

" 'Orders' made a temporary reappearance late that evening in the form of a megaphone hail from a British torpedo-boat, announcing a truce, and giving the welcome information that food and water were being hurried down the Rhine and were to be found on the barge flotilla lying over the old Rhine above Leiden." . . .

We will not follow Barnet, however, in the description of his strange overland voyage among trees and houses and churches by Zaandam and between Haarlem and Amsterdam, to Leiden. It was a voyage in a red-lit mist, in a world of steamy silhouette, full of strange voices and perplexity and with every other sensation dominated by a feverish thirst. "We sat," he says, "in a huddled group, saying very little, and the men forward were mere knots of silent endurance. Our only continuing sound was the persistent mewing of a cat one of the men had rescued from a floating hayrick near Zaandam. We kept a southward course by a watch-chain compass Mylius had produced. . . .

"I do not think any of us felt we belonged to a defeated army, nor had we any strong sense of the war as the dominating fact about us. Our mental setting had far more of the effect of a huge natural catastrophe. The atomic bombs had dwarfed the international issues to complete insignificance. When our minds wandered from the preoccupations of our immediate needs, we speculated upon the possibility of



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stopping the use of these frightful explosives before the world was utterly destroyed. For to us it seemed quite plain that these bombs and the still greater power of destruction of which they were the precursors might quite easily shatter every relationship and institution of mankind.

“‘What will they be doing,’ asked Mylius, ‘what will they be doing? It’s plain we’ve got to put an end to war. It’s plain things have to be run some way. *This*—all this—is impossible.’

“I made no immediate answer. Something—I cannot think what—had brought back to me the figure of that man I had seen wounded on the very first day of actual fighting. I saw again his angry tearful eyes and that poor dripping bloody mess that had been a skilful human hand five minutes before, thrust out in indignant protest. ‘Damned foolery,’ he had stormed and sobbed, ‘damned foolery. My right hand, sir! My *right* hand. . . .’

“My faith had for a time gone altogether out of me. ‘I think we are too—too silly,’ I said to Mylius, ‘ever to stop war. If we’d had the sense to do it, we should have done it before this. I think this—’ I pointed to the gaunt black outline of a smashed windmill that stuck up, ridiculous and ugly, above the blood-lit waters—‘this is the end.’”

### § 10

But now our history must part company with Frederick Barnet and his barge-load of hungry and starving men.

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For a time in western Europe at least it was indeed as if civilisation had come to a final collapse. These crowning buds upon the tradition that Napoleon planted and Bismarck watered, opened and flared "like water-lilies of flame" over nations destroyed, over churches smashed or submerged, towns ruined, fields lost to mankind for ever and a million weltering bodies. Was this lesson enough for mankind, or would the flames of war still burn amidst the ruins?

Neither Barnet nor his companions, it is clear, had any assurance in their answers to that question. Already once in the history of mankind, in America, before its discovery by the whites, an organised civilisation had given way to a mere cult of warfare, specialised and cruel, and it seemed for a time to many a thoughtful man as if the whole world was but to repeat on a larger scale this ascendancy of the warrior, this triumph of the destructive instincts of the race.

The subsequent chapters of Barnet's narrative do but supply body to this tragic possibility. He gives a series of vignettes of civilisation shattered, it seemed, almost irreparably. He found the Belgian hills swarming with refugees and desolated by cholera; the vestiges of the contending armies keeping order under a truce, without actual battles but with the cautious hostility of habit, and a great absence of plan everywhere.

Overhead aeroplanes went on mysterious errands, and there were rumours of cannibalism and hysterical fanaticisms in the valleys of the Semoy and the forest region of the eastern Ardennes. There was the re-

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port of an attack upon Russia by the Chinese and Japanese and of some huge revolutionary outbreak in America. The weather was stormier than men had ever known it in those regions, with much thunder and lightning and wild cloudbursts of rain. . . .

## CHAPTER THE THIRD

### THE ENDING OF WAR

#### § 1

ON the mountainside above the town of Brissago and commanding two long stretches of Lake Maggiore, looking eastward to Bellinzona and southward to Luino, there is a shelf of grass meadows which is very beautiful in springtime with a great multitude of wild flowers. More particularly is this so in early June when the slender asphodel Saint Bruno's lily with its spike of white blossom is in flower. To the westward of this delightful shelf there is a deep and densely wooded trench, a great gulf of blue some mile or so in width out of which arise great precipices very high and wild. Above the asphodel-fields the mountains climb in rocky slopes to solitudes of stone and sunlight that curve round and join that wall of cliffs in one common sky-line. This desolate and austere background contrasts very vividly with the glowing serenity of the great lake below, with the spacious view of fertile hills and roads and villages and islands to south and east, and with the hotly golden rice-flats of the Val Maggia to the north.

And because it was a remote and insignificant place, far away out of the crowding tragedies of that year of disaster, away from burning cities and starving multitudes, bracing and tranquillising and hidden, it was here that there gathered the conference

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of rulers that was to arrest if possible, before it was too late, the débâcle of civilisation. Here, brought together by the indefatigable energy of that impassioned humanitarian, Leblanc, the French ambassador at Washington, the chief powers of the world were to meet in a last desperate conference to "save humanity."

Leblanc was one of those ingenuous men whose lot would have been insignificant in any period of security, but who have been caught up to an immortal rôle in history by the sudden simplification of human affairs through some tragical crisis, to the measure of their simplicity. Such a man was Abraham Lincoln and such was Garibaldi. And Leblanc with his transparent childish innocence, his entire self-forgetfulness, came into this confusion of distrust and intricate disaster with an invincible appeal for the manifest sanities of the situation. His voice when he spoke was "full of remonstrance." He was a little, bald, spectacled man, inspired by that intellectual idealism which has been one of the peculiar gifts of France to humanity. He was possessed of one clear persuasion, that war must end and that the only way to end war was to have but one government for mankind. He brushed aside all other considerations. At the very outbreak of the war, so soon as the two capitals of the belligerents had been wrecked, he went to the President in the White House with this proposal. He made it as if it was a matter of course. He was fortunate to be in Washington and in touch with that gigantic childishness which was the characteristic of the American imagination. For the

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Americans also were among the simple peoples by whom the world was saved. He won over the American President and the American Government to his general ideas; at any rate they supported him sufficiently to give him a standing with the more sceptical European governments, and with this backing he set to work—it seemed the most fantastic of enterprises—to bring together all the rulers of the world and unify them. He wrote innumerable letters, he sent messages, he went desperate journeys, he enlisted whatever support he could find; no one was too humble for an ally or too obstinate for his advances; through the terrible autumn of the last wars this persistent little visionary in spectacles must have seemed rather like a hopeful canary twittering during a thunder-storm. And no accumulation of disasters daunted his conviction that they could be ended.

For the whole world was flaring then into a monstrous phase of destruction. Power after power about the armed globe sought to anticipate attack by aggression. They went to war in a delirium of panic, in order to use their bombs first. China and Japan had assailed Russia and destroyed Moscow, the United States had attacked Japan, India was in anarchistic revolt with Delhi a pit of fire spouting death and flame; the redoubtable King of the Balkans was mobilising. It must have seemed plain at last to every one in those days that the world was slipping headlong to anarchy. By the spring of 1959 from nearly two hundred centres, and every week added to their number, roared the unquenchable crimson conflagrations of the atomic bombs; the

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flimsy fabric of the world's credit had vanished, industry was completely disorganised and every city, every thickly populated area was starving or trembled on the verge of starvation. Most of the capital cities of the world were burning; millions of people had already perished, and over great areas government was at an end. Humanity has been compared by one contemporary writer to a sleeper who handles matches in his sleep and wakes to find himself in flames.

For many months it was an open question whether there was to be found throughout all the race the will and intelligence to face these new conditions and make even an attempt to arrest the downfall of the social order. For a time the war spirit defeated every effort to rally the forces of preservation and construction. Leblanc seemed to be protesting against earthquakes, and as likely to find a spirit of reason in the crater of Etna. Even though the shattered official governments now clamoured for peace, bands of irreconcilables and invincible patriots, usurpers, adventurers and political desperadoes were everywhere in possession of the simple apparatus for the disengagement of atomic energy and the initiation of new centres of destruction. The stuff exercised an irresistible fascination upon a certain type of mind. Why should any one give in while he can still destroy his enemies? Surrender? While there is still a chance of blowing them to dust? The power of destruction which had once been the ultimate privilege of government was now the only power left in the world—and it was everywhere. There were few thoughtful men during that phase of blazing waste who did not pass through

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such moods of despair as Barnet describes, and declare with him: "This is the end. . . ."

And all the while Leblanc was going to and fro with glittering glasses and an inexhaustible persuasiveness urging the manifest reasonableness of his view upon ears that ceased presently to be inattentive. Never at any time did he betray a doubt that all this chaotic conflict would end. No nurse during a nursery uproar was ever so certain of the inevitable ultimate peace. From being treated as an amiable dreamer he came by insensible degrees to be regarded as an extravagant possibility. Then he began to seem even practicable. The people who listened to him in 1958 with a smiling impatience were eager before 1959 was four months old to know just exactly what he thought might be done. He answered with the patience of a philosopher and the lucidity of a Frenchman. He began to receive responses of a more and more hopeful type. He came across the Atlantic to Italy, and there he gathered in the promises for this congress. He chose those high meadows above Brisago for the reasons we have stated. "We must get away," he said, "from old associations." He set to work requisitioning material for his conference with an assurance that was justified by the replies. With a slight incredulity the conference which was to begin a new order in the world gathered itself together. Leblanc summoned it without arrogance, he controlled it by virtue of an infinite humility. Men appeared upon those upland slopes with the apparatus for wireless telegraphy; others followed with tents and provisions; a little cable was flung down to a con-



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venient point upon the Locarno road below. Leblanc arrived, sedulously directing every detail that would affect the tone of the assembly. He might have been a courier in advance rather than the originator of the gathering. And then there arrived, some by the cable, most by aeroplane, a few in other fashions, the men who had been called together to confer upon the state of the world. It was to be a conference without a name. Nine monarchs, the presidents of four republics, a number of ministers and ambassadors, powerful journalists, and suchlike prominent and influential men took part in it. There were even scientific men; and that world-famous old man Holsten came with the others to contribute his amateur statecraft to the desperate problem of the age. Only Leblanc would have dared so to summon figureheads and powers and intelligence, or have had the courage to hope for their agreement. . . .

### § 2

And one at least of those who were called to this conference of governments came to it on foot. This was King Egbert, the young king of the most venerable kingdom in Europe. He was a rebel and had always been of deliberate choice a rebel against the magnificence of his position. He affected long pedestrian tours and a disposition to sleep in the open air. He came now over the Pass of Sta Maria Maggiore and by boat up the lake to Brissago; thence he walked up the mountain, a pleasant path set with

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oaks and sweet chestnut. For provision on the walk, for he did not want to hurry, he carried with him a pocketful of bread and cheese. A certain small retinue that was necessary to his comfort and dignity upon occasions of state he sent on by the cable car, and with him walked his private secretary, Firmin, a man who had thrown up the Professorship of World Politics in the London School of Sociology, Economics and Political Science, to take up these duties. Firmin was a man of strong rather than rapid thought, he had anticipated great influence in this new position, and after some years he was still only beginning to apprehend how largely his function was to listen. Originally he had been something of a thinker upon international politics, an authority upon tariffs and strategy and a valued contributor to various of the higher organs of public opinion, but the atomic bombs had taken him by surprise and he had still to recover completely from his preatomic opinions and the silencing effect of those sustained explosives.

The king's freedom from the trammels of etiquette was very complete. In theory—and he abounded in theory—his manners were purely democratic. It was by sheer habit and inadvertency that he permitted Firmin, who had discovered a rucksack in a small shop in the town below, to carry both bottles of beer. The king had never as a matter of fact carried anything for himself in his life, and he had never noted that he did not do so.

“We will have nobody with us,” he said, “at all. We will be perfectly simple.”

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So **Firmin** carried the beer.

As they walked up—it was the king made the pace rather than **Firmin**—they talked of the conference before them, and **Firmin**, with a certain want of assurance that would have surprised him in himself in the days of his Professorship, sought to define the policy of his companion. “In its broader form, sir,” said **Firmin**, “I admit a certain plausibility in this project of **Leblanc’s**, but I feel that although it may be advisable to set up some sort of general control for International affairs—a sort of Hague Court with extended powers—that is no reason whatever for losing sight of the principles of national and imperial autonomy.”

“**Firmin**,” said the king, “I am going to set my brother kings a good example.”

**Firmin** intimated a curiosity that veiled a dread.

“By chucking all that nonsense,” said the king.

He quickened his pace as **Firmin**, who was already a little out of breath, betrayed a disposition to reply.

“I am going to chuck all that nonsense,” said the king as **Firmin** prepared to speak. “I am going to fling my royalty and empire on the table—and declare at once I don’t mean to haggle. It’s haggling—about rights—has been the devil in human affairs, for—always. I am going to stop this nonsense.”

**Firmin** halted abruptly. “But, sir!” he cried.

The king stopped six yards ahead of him and looked back at his adviser’s perspiring visage.

“Do you really think, **Firmin**, that I am here as—as an infernal politician to put my crown and my flag and my claims and so forth in the way of peace?”

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That little Frenchman is right. You know he is right as well as I do. Those things are over. We—we kings and rulers and representatives have been at the very heart of the mischief. Of course we imply separation, and of course separation means the threat of war, and of course the threat of war means the accumulation of more and more atomic bombs. The old game's up. But I say, we mustn't stand here, you know. The world waits. Don't you think the old game's up, Firmin?"

Firmin adjusted a strap, passed a hand over his wet forehead and followed earnestly. "I admit, sir," he said to a receding back, "that there has to be some sort of hegemony, some sort of Amphictyonic council——"

"There's got to be one simple government for all the world," said the king over his shoulder.

"But as for a reckless unqualified abandonment, sir——"

"*Bang!*" cried the king.

Firmin made no answer to this interruption. But a faint shadow of annoyance passed across his heated features.

"Yesterday," said the king by way of explanation, "the Japanese very nearly got San Francisco."

"I hadn't heard, sir."

"The Americans ran the Japanese aeroplane down into the sea and there the bomb got busted."

"Under the sea, sir?"

"Yes. Submarine volcano. The steam is in sight of the Californian coast. It was as near as that. And with things like this happening, you want me to go

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up this hill and haggle. Consider the effect of that upon my imperial cousin—and all the others!”

“*He* will haggle, sir.”

“Not a bit of it,” said the king.

“But, sir.”

“Leblanc won’t let him.”

Firmin halted abruptly and gave a vicious pull at the offending strap. “Sir, he will listen to his advisers,” he said, in a tone that in some subtle way seemed to implicate his master with the trouble of the knapsack.

The king considered him.

“We will go just a little higher,” he said. “I want to find this unoccupied village they spoke of, and then we will drink that beer. It can’t be far. We will drink the beer and throw away the bottles. And then, Firmin, I shall ask you to look at things in a more generous light. . . . Because, you know, you must. . . .”

He turned about and for some time the only sound they made was the noise of their boots upon the loose stones of the way and the irregular breathing of Firmin.

At length, as it seemed to Firmin, or quite soon, as it seemed to the king, the gradient of the path diminished, the way widened out, and they found themselves in a very beautiful place indeed. It was one of those upland clusters of sheds and houses that are still to be found in the mountains of North Italy, buildings that were used only in the high summer, and which it was the custom to leave locked up and deserted through all the winter and spring and up to

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the middle of June. The buildings were of a soft-toned grey stone, buried in rich green grass, shadowed by chestnut-trees and lit by an extraordinary blaze of yellow broom. Never had the king seen broom so glorious; he shouted at the light of it, for it seemed to give out more sunlight even than it received; he sat down impulsively on a lichenous stone, tugged out his bread and cheese, and bade Firmin thrust the beer into the shaded weeds to cool.

“The things people miss, Firmin,” he said, “who go up into the air in ships!”

Firmin looked around him with an ungenial eye. “You see it at its best, sir,” he said, “before the peasants come here again and make it filthy.”

“It would be beautiful anyhow,” said the king.

“Superficially, sir,” said Firmin. “But it stands for a social order that is fast vanishing away. Indeed, judging by the grass between the stones and in the huts, I am inclined to doubt if it is in use even now.”

“I suppose,” said the king, “they would come up immediately the hay on this flower meadow is cut. It would be those slow, creamy-coloured beasts, I expect, one sees on the roads below, and swarthy girls with red handkerchiefs over their black hair. . . . It is wonderful to think how long that beautiful old life lasted. In the Roman times and long ages before ever the rumour of the Romans had come into these parts, men drove their cattle up into these places as the summer came on. . . . How haunted is this place! There have been quarrels here, hopes, children have played here and lived to be old crones and old gaffers

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and died, and so it has gone on for thousands of lives. Lovers, innumerable lovers, have caressed amidst this golden broom. . . .”

He meditated over a busy mouthful of bread and cheese.

“We ought to have brought a tankard for that beer,” he said.

Firmin produced a folding aluminum cup, and the king was pleased to drink.

“I wish, sir,” said Firmin suddenly, “I could induce you at least to delay your decision——”

“It’s no good talking, Firmin,” said the king. “My mind’s as clear as daylight.”

“Sire,” protested Firmin, with his voice full of bread and cheese and genuine emotion, “have you no respect for your kingship?”

The king paused before he answered with unwonted gravity. “It’s just because I have, Firmin, that I won’t be a puppet in this game of international politics.” He regarded his companion for a moment and then remarked: “Kingship!—what do *you* know of kingship, Firmin?”

“Yes,” cried the king to his astonished counsellor. “For the first time in my life I am going to be a king. I am going to lead, and lead by my own authority. For a dozen generations my family has been a set of dummies in the hands of their advisers. Advisers! Now I am going to be a real king—and I am going to—to abolish, dispose of, finish, the crown to which I have been a slave. But what a world of paralysing shams this roaring stuff has ended! The rigid old world is in the melting-pot again, and I, who seemed

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to be no more than the stuffing inside a regal robe, I am a king among kings. I have to play my part at the head of things and put an end to blood and fire and idiot disorder.”

“But, sir,” protested Firmin.

“This man Leblanc is right. The whole world has got to be a Republic, one and indivisible. You know that, and my duty is to make that easy. A king should lead his people; you want me to stick on their backs like some Old Man of the Sea. To-day must be a sacrament of kings. Our trust for mankind is done with and ended. We must part our robes among them, we must part our kingship among them and say to them all, now the king in every one must rule the world. . . . Have you no sense of the magnificence of this occasion? You want me, Firmin, you want me to go up there and haggle like a damned little solicitor for some price, some compensation, some qualification. . . .”

Firmin shrugged his shoulders and assumed an expression of despair. Meanwhile, he conveyed, one must eat.

For a time neither spoke, and the king ate and turned over in his mind the phrases of the speech he intended to make to the conference. By virtue of the antiquity of his crown he was to preside, and he intended to make his presidency memorable. Reassured of his eloquence, he considered the despondent and sulky Firmin for a space.

“Firmin,” he said, “you have idealised kingship.”

“It has been my dream, sir,” said Firmin, sorrowfully, “to serve.”



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"At the levers, Firmin," said the king.

"You are pleased to be unjust," said Firmin, deeply hurt.

"I am pleased to be getting out of it," said the king.

"Oh, Firmin," he went on, "have you no thought for me? Will you never realise that I am not only flesh and blood but an imagination—with its rights. I am a king in revolt against that fetter they put upon my head. I am a king awake. My reverend grandparents never in all their august lives had a waking moment. They loved the job that you, you advisers, gave them; they never had a doubt of it. It was like giving a doll to a woman who ought to have a child. They delighted in processions and opening things and being read addresses to, and visiting triplets and nonagenarians and all that sort of thing. Incredibly. They used to keep albums of cuttings from all the illustrated papers showing them at it, and if the press-cutting parcels grew thin they were worried. It was all that ever worried them. But there is something atavistic in me; I hark back to unconstitutional monarchs. They christened me too retrogressively, I think. I wanted to get things done. I was bored. I might have fallen into vice, most intelligent and energetic princes do, but the palace precautions were unusually thorough. I was brought up in the purest court the world has ever seen. . . . Alertly pure. . . . So I read books, Firmin, and went about asking questions. The thing was bound to happen to one of us sooner or later. Perhaps, too, very likely I'm not vicious. I don't think I am."

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He reflected. "No," he said.

Firmin cleared his throat. "I don't think you are, sir," he said. "You prefer——"

He stopped short. He had been going to say "talking." He substituted "ideas."

"That world of royalty!" the king went on. "In a little while no one will understand it any more. It will become a riddle. . . ."

"Among other things it was a world of perpetual best clothes. Everything was in its best clothes for us and usually wearing bunting. With a cinema watching to see we took it properly. If you are a king, Firmin, and you go and look at a regiment it instantly stops whatever it is doing, changes into full uniform and presents arms. When my august parents went in a train the coal in the tender used to be whitened. It did, Firmin, and if coal had been white instead of black I have no doubt the authorities would have blackened it. That was the spirit of our treatment. People were always walking about with their faces to us. One never saw anything in profile. One got an impression of a world that was insanely focussed on ourselves. And when I began to poke my little questions into the Lord Chancellor and the archbishop and all the rest of them, about what I should see if people turned round, the general effect I produced was that I wasn't by any means displaying the Royal Tact they had expected of me. . . ."

He meditated for a time.

"And yet you know there is something in this kingship, Firmin. It stiffened up my august little grandfather. It gave my grandmother a kind of awkward

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dignity even when she was cross—and she was very often cross. They both had a profound sense of responsibility. My poor father's health was wretched during his brief career; nobody outside the circle knows just how he screwed himself up to things. 'My people expect it,' he used to say of this tiresome duty or that. Most of the things they made him do were silly—it was part of a bad tradition, but there was nothing silly in the way he set about them. . . . The spirit of kingship is a fine thing, Firmin; I feel it in my bones; I do not know what I might not be if I were not a king. I could die for my people, Firmin, and you couldn't. No, don't say you could die for me, because I know better. Don't think I forget my kingship, Firmin, don't imagine that. I am a king, a kingly king, by right divine. The fact that I am also a chattering young man makes not the slightest difference to that. But the proper text-book for kings, Firmin, is none of the Court memoirs and Welt-Politik books you would have me read; it is old Frazer's 'Golden Bough.' Have you read that, Firmin?"

Firmin had.

"Those were the authentic kings. In the end they were cut up and a bit given to everybody. They sprinkled the nations—with Kingship."

Firmin turned himself round and faced his royal master.

"What do you intend to do, sir?" he asked. "If you will not listen to me, what do you propose to do this afternoon?"

The king flicked crumbs from his coat.

## THE WORLD SET FREE

“Manifestly war has to stop for ever, Firmin. Manifestly this can only be done by putting all the world under one government. Our crowns and flags are in the way. Manifestly they must go.”

“Yes, sir,” interrupted Firmin, “but *what* government? I don’t see what government you get by a universal abdication!”

“Well,” said the king with his hands about his knees, “*We* shall be the government.”

“The conference?” exclaimed Firmin.

“Who else?” asked the king simply.

“It’s perfectly simple,” he added to Firmin’s tremendous silence.

“But,” cried Firmin, “you must have sanctions! Will there be no form of election, for example?”

“Why should there be?” asked the king with intelligent curiosity.

“The consent of the governed.”

“Firmin, we are just going to lay down our differences and take over government. Without any election at all. Without any sanction. The governed will show their consent by silence. If any effective opposition arises we shall ask it to come in and help. The true sanction of kingship is the grip upon the sceptre. We aren’t going to worry people to vote for us. I’m certain the mass of men does not want to be bothered with such things. . . . We’ll contrive a way for any one interested to join in. That’s quite enough in the way of democracy. Perhaps later—when things don’t matter. . . . We shall govern all right, Firmin. Government only becomes difficult when the lawyers get hold of it, and since these

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troubles began the lawyers are shy. Indeed, come to think of it, I wonder where all the lawyers are. . . . Where are they? A lot of course were bagged, some of the worst ones, when they blew up my legislature. You never knew the late Lord Chancellor. . . .

“Necessities bury rights. And create them. Lawyers live on dead rights disinterred. . . . We’ve done with that way of living. We won’t have more law than a code can cover and beyond that government will be free. . . .

“Before the sun sets to-day, Firmin, trust me, we shall have made our abdications, all of us, and declared the World Republic, supreme and indivisible. I wonder what my august grandmother would have made of it! All my rights! . . . And then we shall go on governing. What else is there to do? All over the world we shall declare that there is no longer mine or thine but ours. China, the United States, two-thirds of Europe, will certainly fall in and obey. They will have to do so. What else can they do? Their official rulers are here with us. They won’t be able to get together any sort of idea of not obeying us. . . . Then we shall declare that every sort of property is held in trust for the Republic. . . .”

“But, sir!” cried Firmin, suddenly enlightened. “Has this been arranged already?”

“My dear Firmin, do you think we have come here, all of us, to talk at large? The talking has been done for half a century. Talking and writing. We are here to set the new thing, the simple obvious necessary thing, going.”

He stood up.

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Firmin, forgetting the habits of a score of years, remained seated.

“*Well,*” he said at last. “And I have known nothing!”

The king smiled very cheerfully. He liked these talks with Firmin.

### § 3

That conference upon the Brissago meadows was one of the most heterogeneous collections of prominent people that has ever met together. Principalities and powers, stripped and shattered until all their pride and mystery were gone, met in a marvellous new humility. Here were kings and emperors whose capitals were lakes of flaming destruction, statesmen whose countries had become chaos, scared politicians and financial potentates. Here were leaders of thought and learned investigators dragged reluctantly to the control of affairs. Altogether there were ninety-three of them, Leblanc's conception of the head men of the world. They had all come to the realisation of the simple truths that the indefatigable Leblanc had hammered into them; and, drawing his resources from the King of Italy, he had provisioned his conference with a generous simplicity quite in accord with the rest of his character, and so at last was able to make his astonishing and entirely rational appeal. He had appointed King Egbert the president, he believed in this young man so firmly that he completely dominated him, and he

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spoke himself as a secretary might speak from the president's left hand and evidently did not realise himself that he was telling them all exactly what they had to do. He imagined he was merely recapitulating the obvious features of the situation for their convenience. He was dressed in ill-fitting white silk clothes, and he consulted a dingy little packet of notes as he spoke. They put him out. He explained that he had never spoken from notes before, but that this occasion was exceptional.

And then King Egbert spoke as he was expected to speak, and Leblanc's spectacles moistened at that flow of generous sentiment, most amiably and lightly expressed. "We haven't to stand on ceremony," said the king, "we have to govern the world. We have always pretended to govern the world and here is our opportunity."

"Of course," whispered Leblanc, nodding his head rapidly, "of course."

"The world has been smashed up, and we have to put it on its wheels again," said King Egbert. "And it is the simple common sense of this crisis for all to help and none to seek advantage. Is that our tone or not?"

The gathering was too old and seasoned and miscellaneous for any great displays of enthusiasm, but that was its tone; and with an astonishment that somehow became exhilarating it began to resign, repudiate, and declare its intentions. Firmin, taking notes behind his master, heard everything that had been foretold among the yellow broom come true. With a queer feeling that he was dreaming he assisted

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at the proclamation of the World State, and saw the message taken out to the wireless operators to be throbbled all round the habitable globe. "And next," said King Egbert with a cheerful excitement in his voice, "we have to get every atom of Carolinum and all the plant for making it into our control. . . ."

Firmin was not alone in his incredulity. Not a man there who was not a very amiable, reasonable, benevolent creature at bottom; some had been born to power and some had happened upon it, some had struggled to get it, not clearly knowing what it was and what it implied, but none was irreconcilably set upon its retention at the price of cosmic disaster. Their minds had been prepared by circumstances and sedulously cultivated by Leblanc; and now they took the broad obvious road along which King Egbert was leading them, with a mingled conviction of strangeness and necessity. Things went very smoothly; the King of Italy explained the arrangements that had been made for the protection of the camp from any fantastic attack; a couple of thousand of aeroplanes, each carrying a sharpshooter, guarded them, and there was an excellent system of relays and at night all the sky would be searched by scores of lights, and the admirable Leblanc gave luminous reasons for their camping just where they were and going on with their administrative duties forthwith. He knew of this place because he had happened upon it when holiday-making with Madame Leblanc twenty years and more ago. "There is very simple fare at present," he explained, "on account of the disturbed state of the countries about us. But we have excellent fresh



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milk, good red wine, beef, bread, salad, and lemons. . . . In a few days I hope to place things in the hands of a more efficient caterer. . . .”

The members of the new world government dined at three long tables on trestles, and down the middle of these tables Leblanc in spite of the barrenness of his menu had contrived to have a great multitude of beautiful roses. There was similar accommodation for the secretaries and attendants at a lower level down the mountain. The assembly dined as it had debated, in the open air, and over the dark crags to the west the glowing June sunset shone upon the banquet. There was no precedence now among the ninety-three, and King Egbert found himself between a pleasant little Japanese stranger in spectacles and his cousin of Central Europe, and opposite a great Bengali leader and the President of the United States of America. Beyond the Japanese was Holsten, the old chemist, and Leblanc was a little way down the other side.

The king was still cheerfully talkative and abounded in ideas. He fell presently into an amiable controversy with the American, who seemed to feel a lack of impressiveness in the occasion.

It was ever the Transatlantic tendency, due no doubt to the necessity of handling public questions in a bulky and striking manner, to overemphasise and overaccentuate, and the president was touched by his national failing. He suggested now that there should be a new era, starting from that day as the first day of the first year.

The king demurred.

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“From this day forth, sir, man enters upon his heritage,” said the American.

“Man,” said the king, “is always entering upon his heritage. You Americans have a peculiar weakness for anniversaries—if you will forgive me saying so. Yes—I accuse you of a lust for dramatic effect. Everything is happening always, but you want to say this or this is the real instant in time and subordinate all the others to it.”

The American said something about an epoch-making day.

“But surely,” said the king, “you don’t want us to condemn all humanity to a world-wide annual Fourth of July for ever and ever more. On account of this harmless necessary day of declarations. No conceivable day could ever deserve that. Ah! you do not know, as I do, the devastations of the memorable. My poor grandparents were—*rubricated*. The worst of these huge celebrations is that they break up the dignified succession of one’s contemporary emotions. They interrupt. They set back. Suddenly out come the flags and fireworks and the old enthusiasms are furbished up—and it’s sheer destruction of the proper thing that ought to be going on. Sufficient unto the day is the celebration thereof. Let the dead past bury its dead. You see in regard to the calendar I am for democracy and you are for aristocracy. All things I hold are august and have a right to be lived through on their merits. No day should be sacrificed on the grave of departed events. What do you think of it, Wilhelm?”

“For the noble, yes, all days should be noble.”

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"Exactly my position," said the king, and felt pleased at what he had been saying.

And then since the American pressed his idea the king contrived to shift the talk from the question of celebrating the epoch they were making to the question of the probabilities that lay ahead. Here every one became diffident. They could see the world unified and at peace, but what detail was to follow from that unification they seemed indisposed to discuss. This diffidence struck the king as remarkable. He plunged upon the possibilities of science. All the huge expenditure that had hitherto gone into unproductive naval and military preparations must now, he declared, place research upon a new footing. "Where one man worked we will have a thousand." He appealed to Holsten. "We have only begun to peep into these possibilities," he said. "You at any rate have sounded the vaults of the treasure-house."

"They are unfathomable," smiled Holsten.

"Man," said the American with a manifest resolve to justify and reinstate himself after the flickering contradictions of the king, "Man, I say, is only beginning to enter upon his heritage."

"Tell us some of the things you believe we shall presently learn, give us an idea of the things we may presently do," said the king to Holsten.

Holsten opened out the vistas. . . .

"Science," the king cried presently, "is the new king of the world."

"*Our* view," said the president, "is that sovereignty resides with the people."

"No!" said the king, "the sovereign is a being more

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subtle than that. And less arithmetical. Neither my family nor your emancipated people. It is something that floats about us, and above us, and through us. It is that common impersonal will and sense of necessity of which Science is the best understood and most typical aspect. It is the mind of the race. It is that which has brought us here, which has bowed us all to its demands. . . .”

He paused and glanced down the table at Leblanc and then reopened at his former antagonist.

“There is a disposition,” said the king, “to regard this gathering as if it were actually doing what it appears to be doing, as if we ninety-odd men of our own free will and wisdom were unifying the world. There is a temptation to consider ourselves exceptionally fine fellows, and masterful men, and all the rest of it. We are not. I doubt if we should average out as anything abler than any other casually selected body of ninety-odd men. We are no creators, we are consequences, we are salvagers—or salvagees. The thing to-day is not ourselves but the wind of conviction that has blown us hither. . . .”

The American had to confess he could hardly agree with the king's estimate of their average.

“Holsten perhaps and one or two others might lift us a little,” the king conceded. “But the rest of us?”

His eyes flitted once more towards Leblanc.

“Look at Leblanc,” he said. “He's just a simple soul. There are hundreds and thousands like him. I admit a certain dexterity, a certain lucidity; but there is not a country town in France where there is not a Leblanc or so to be found about two o'clock in

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its principal café. It's just that he isn't complicated or Super-Mannish or any of those things that has made all he has done possible. But in happier times, don't you think, Wilhelm, he would have remained just what his father was, a successful *épiciier*, very clean, very accurate, very honest. And on holidays he would have gone out with Madame Leblanc and her knitting in a punt with a jar of something gentle, and have sat under a large reasonable green-lined umbrella and fished very neatly and successfully for gudgeon. . . ."

The president and the Japanese prince in spectacles protested together.

"If I do him an injustice," said the king, "it is only because I want to elucidate my argument. I want to make it clear how small are men and days, and how great is man in comparison. . . ."

### § 4

So it was King Egbert talked at Brissago after they had proclaimed the unity of the world. Every evening after that the assembly dined together and talked at their ease and grew accustomed to each other and sharpened each other's ideas, and every day they worked together and really for a time believed that they were inventing a new government for the world. They discussed a constitution. But there were matters needing attention too urgently to wait for any constitution. They attended to these incidentally. The constitution it was that waited. It was presently found convenient to keep the consti-

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tution waiting indefinitely as King Egbert had foreseen, and meanwhile with an increasing self-confidence, that council went on governing. . . .

On this first evening of all the council's gatherings, after King Egbert had talked for a long time and drunken and praised very abundantly the simple red wine of the country that Leblanc had procured for them, he gathered about him a group of congenial spirits and fell into a discourse upon simplicity, praising it above all things and declaring that the ultimate aim of art, religion, philosophy, and science alike was to simplify. He instanced himself as a devotee to simplicity. And Leblanc he instanced as a crowning instance of the splendour of this quality. Upon that they all agreed.

When at last the company about the tables broke up, the king found himself brimming over with a peculiar affection and admiration for Leblanc, he made his way to him and drew him aside and broached what he declared was a small matter. There was, he said, a certain order in his gift that, unlike all other orders and decorations in the world, had never been corrupted. It was reserved for elderly men of supreme distinction, the acuteness of whose gifts was already touched to mellowness, and it had included the greatest names of every age so far as the advisers of his family had been able to ascertain them. At present, the king admitted, these matters of stars and badges were rather obscured by more urgent affairs, for his own part he had never set any value upon them at all, but a time might come when they would be at least interesting, and in short he

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wished to confer the Order of Merit upon Leblanc. His sole motive in doing so, he added, was his strong desire to signalise his personal esteem. He laid his hand upon the Frenchman's shoulder as he said these things with an almost brotherly affection. Leblanc received this proposal with a modest confusion that greatly enhanced the king's opinion of his admirable simplicity. He pointed out that eager as he was to snatch at the proffered distinction, it might at the present stage appear invidious, and he therefore suggested that the conferring of it should be postponed until it could be made the crown and conclusion of his services. The king was unable to shake this resolution, and the two men parted with expressions of mutual esteem.

The king then summoned Firmin in order to make a short note of a number of things that he had said during the day. But after about twenty minutes' work the sweet sleepiness of the mountain air overcame him, and he dismissed Firmin and went to bed and fell asleep at once, and slept with extreme satisfaction. He had had an active agreeable day.

### § 5

The establishment of the new order that was thus so humanly begun was, if one measures it by the *standard* of any preceding age, a rapid progress. The fighting spirit of the world was exhausted. Only here or there did fierceness linger. For long decades the combative side in human affairs had been monstrously exaggerated by the accidents of political

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separation. This now became luminously plain. An enormous proportion of the force that sustained armaments had been nothing more aggressive than the fear of war and warlike neighbours. It is doubtful if any large section of the men actually enlisted for fighting ever at any time really hungered and thirsted for bloodshed and danger. That kind of appetite was probably never very strong in the species after the savage stage was past. The army was a profession in which killing had become a disagreeable possibility rather than an eventful certainty. If one reads the old newspapers and periodicals of that time, which did so much to keep militarism alive, one finds very little about glory and adventure and a constant harping on the disagreeableness of invasion and subjugation. In one word militarism was funk. The belligerent resolution of the armed Europe of the twentieth century was the resolution of a fiercely frightened sheep to plunge. And now that its weapons were exploding in its hands Europe was only too eager to drop them, and abandon this fancied refuge of violence.

For a time the whole world had been shocked into frankness; nearly all the clever people who had hitherto sustained the ancient belligerent separations had now been brought to realise the need for simplicity of attitude and openness of mind; and in this atmosphere of moral renascence there was little attempt to get negotiable advantages out of resistance to the new order. Human beings are foolish enough no doubt, but few have stopped to haggle in a fire escape. The council had its way with them.



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The band of "patriots" who seized the laboratories and arsenal just outside Osaka and tried to rouse Japan to revolt against inclusion in the Republic of Mankind found they had miscalculated the national pride and met the swift vengeance of their own countrymen. That fight in the arsenal was a vivid incident in this closing chapter of the history of war. To the last the "patriots" were undecided whether in the event of a defeat they would explode their supply of atomic bombs or not. They were fighting with swords outside the iridium doors and the moderates of their number were at bay and on the verge of destruction, only ten indeed remained unwounded, when the republicans burst in to the rescue. . . .

### § 6

One single monarch held out against the general acquiescence in the new rule, and that was that *strange* survival of mediævalism, the "Slavic fox," the King of the Balkans. He debated and delayed his submissions. He showed an extraordinary combination of cunning and temerity in his evasion of the repeated summonses from Brissago. He affected *ill-health* and a great preoccupation with his new official mistress, for his semibarbaric court was arranged on the best romantic models. His tactics were ably seconded by Doctor Pestovitch, his chief minister. Failing to establish his claims to complete independence King Ferdinand Charles annoyed the conference by a proposal to be treated as a protected state. Finally he professed an unconvincing submis-

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sion, and put a mass of obstacles in the way of the transfer of his national officials to the new government. In these things he was enthusiastically supported by his subjects, still for the most part an illiterate peasantry, passionately if confusedly patriotic and so far with no practical knowledge of the effect of atomic bombs. More particularly he retained control of all the Balkan aeroplanes.

For once the extreme naïvete of Leblanc seems to have been mitigated by duplicity. He went on with the general pacification of the world as if the Balkan submission was made in absolute good faith, and he announced the disbandment of the force of aeroplanes that hitherto guarded the council at Brissago upon the approaching fifteenth of July. But instead he doubled the number upon duty on that eventful day, and made various arrangements for their disposition. He consulted certain experts, and when he took King Egbert into his confidence there was something in his neat and explicit foresight that brought back to that ex-monarch's mind his half-forgotten fantasy of Leblanc as a fisherman under a green umbrella.

About five o'clock in the morning of the seventeenth of July one of the outer sentinels of the Brissago fleet, which was soaring unobtrusively over the lower end of the lake of Garda, sighted and hailed a strange aeroplane that was flying westward and, failing to get a satisfactory reply, set its wireless apparatus talking and gave chase. A swarm of consorts appeared very promptly over the westward mountains, and before the unknown aeroplane had sighted Como, it had a dozen eager attendants closing in upon it.

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Its driver seems to have hesitated, dropped down among the mountains and then turned southward in flight, only to find an intercepting biplane sweeping across his bows. He then went round into the eye of the rising sun, and passed within a hundred yards of his original pursuer.

The sharpshooter therein opened fire at once, and showed an intelligent grasp of the situation by disabling the passenger first. The man at the wheel must have heard his companion cry out behind him, but he was too intent on getting away to waste even a glance behind. Twice after that he must have heard shots. He let his engine go, he crouched down, and for twenty minutes he must have steered in the continual expectation of a bullet. It never came, and when at last he glanced round three great planes were close upon him, and his companion, thrice hit, lay dead across his bombs. His followers manifestly did not mean either to upset or shoot him, but inexorably they drove him down, down. At last he was curving and flying a hundred yards or less over the level fields of rice and maize. Ahead of him and dark against the morning sunrise was a village with a very tall and slender campanile and a line of cable bearing metal standards that he could not clear. He stopped his engine abruptly and dropped flat. He may have hoped to get at the bombs when he came down, but his pitiless pursuers drove right over him and shot him as he fell.

Three other aeroplanes curved down and came to rest amidst grass close by the smashed machine. Their passengers descended, and ran holding their

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light rifles in their hands towards the débris and the two dead men. The coffin-shaped box that had occupied the centre of the machine had broken, and three black objects, each with two handles like the ears of a pitcher, lay peacefully amidst the litter.

These objects were so tremendously important in the eyes of their captors that they disregarded the two dead men who lay bloody and broken amidst the wreckage as they might have disregarded dead frogs by a country pathway.

“By God,” cried the first. “Here they are!”

“And unbroken!” said the second.

“I’ve never seen the things before,” said the first.

“Bigger than I thought,” said the second.

The third comer arrived. He stared for a moment at the bombs and then turned his eyes to the dead man with a crushed chest who lay in a muddy place among the green stems under the centre of the machine.

“One can take no risks,” he said with a faint suggestion of apology.

The other two now also turned to the victims. “We must signal,” said the first man. A shadow passed between them and the sun and they looked up to see the aeroplane that had fired the last shot.

“Shall we signal?” came a megaphone hail.

“Three bombs,” they answered together.

“Where do they come from?” asked the megaphone.

The three sharpshooters looked at each other and then moved towards the dead men. One of them had an idea. “Signal that first,” he said, “while we

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look." They were joined by their aviators for the search, and all six men began a hunt that was necessarily brutal in its haste, for some indication of identity. They examined the men's pockets, their blood-stained clothes, the machine, the framework. They turned the bodies over and flung them aside. There was not a tattoo mark. . . . Everything was elaborately free of any indication of its origin.

"We can't find out!" they called at last.

"Not a sign?"

"Not a sign."

"I'm coming down," said the man overhead. . . .

### § 7

The Slavic fox stood upon a metal balcony in his picturesque Art Nouveau palace that gave upon the precipice that overhung his bright little capital, and beside him stood Pestovitch, grizzled and cunning and now full of an ill-suppressed excitement. Behind them the window opened into a large room, richly decorated in aluminum and crimson enamel, across which the king, as he glanced ever and again over his shoulder with a gesture of inquiry, could see through the two open doors of a little azure walled ante-chamber the wireless operator in the turret working at his incessant transcription. Two pompously uniformed messengers waited listlessly in this apartment. The room was furnished with a stately dignity, and had in the middle of it a big green baize-covered table with the massive white metal ink-pots

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and antiquated sand-boxes natural to a new but romantic monarchy. It was the king's council-chamber and about it now, in attitudes of suspended intrigue, stood the half-dozen ministers who constituted his cabinet. They had been summoned for twelve o'clock, but still at half past twelve the king loitered in the balcony and seemed to be waiting for some news that did not come.

The king and his minister had talked at first in whispers; they had fallen silent, for they found little now to express except a vague anxiety. Away there on the mountainside were the white metal roofs of the long farm-buildings beneath which the bomb factory and the bombs were hidden. (The chemist who had made all these for the king had died suddenly after the declaration of Brissago.) Nobody knew of that store of mischief now but the king and his adviser and three heavily faithful attendants; the aviators who waited now in the midday blaze with their bomb-carrying machines and their passenger bomb-throwers in the exercising grounds of the motorcyclist barracks below were still in ignorance of the position of the ammunition they were presently to take up. It was time they started if the scheme was to work as Pestovitch had planned it. It was a magnificent plan. It aimed at no less than the Empire of the World. The government of idealists and professors away there at Brissago was to be blown to fragments, and then east, west, north, and south those aeroplanes would go swarming over a world that had disarmed itself, to proclaim Ferdinand Charles the new Cæsar, the Master, Lord of the Earth.

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It was a magnificent plan. But the tension of this waiting for news of the success of the first blow was—considerable.

The Slavic fox was of a pallid fairness, he had a remarkably long nose, a thick short moustache and small blue eyes that were a little too near together to be pleasant. It was his habit to worry his moustache with short nervous tugs whenever his restless mind troubled him, and now this motion was becoming so incessant that it irked Pestovitch beyond the limits of endurance.

“I will go,” said the minister, “and see what the trouble is with the wireless. They give us nothing, good or bad.”

Left to himself the king could worry his moustache without stint; he leaned his elbows forward on the balcony and gave both of his long white hands to the work, so that he looked like a pale dog gnawing a bone. Suppose they caught his men, what should he do? Suppose they caught his men?

The clocks in the light gold-capped belfries of the town below presently intimated the half-hour after *midday*.

Of course he and Pestovitch had thought it out. Even if they had caught those men, they were pledged to secrecy. . . . Probably they would be killed in the catching. . . . One could deny anyhow, deny and deny.

And then he became aware of half-a-dozen little shining specks very high in the blue. . . .

Pestovitch came out to him presently. “The government messages, Sire, have all dropped into cipher,” he said. “I have set a man——”

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“*Look!*” interrupted the king, and pointed upward with a long lean finger.

Pestovitch followed that indication and then glanced for one questioning moment at the white face before him.

“We have to face it out, Sire,” he said.

For some moments they watched the steep spirals of the descending messengers and then they began a hasty consultation. . . .

They decided that to be holding a council upon the details of an ultimate surrender to Brissago was as innocent-looking a thing as the king could well be doing, and so when at last the ex-king Egbert, whom the council had sent as its envoy, arrived upon the scene, he discovered the king almost theatrically posed at the head of his councillors in the midst of his court. The door upon the wireless operators was shut.

The ex-king from Brissago came like a draught through the curtains and attendants that gave a wide margin to King Ferdinand's state, and the familiar confidence of his manner belied a certain hardness in his eye. Firmin trotted behind him and no one else was with him. And as Ferdinand Charles rose to greet him, there came into the heart of the Balkan king again that same chilly feeling that he had felt upon the balcony—and it passed at the careless gestures of his guest. For surely any one might outwit this foolish talker who, for a mere idea and at the command of a little French rationalist in spectacles, had thrown away the most ancient crown in all the world.



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One must deny, deny. . . .

And then slowly and quite tiresomely he realised that there was nothing to deny. His visitor, with an amiable ease, went on talking about everything in debate between himself and Brissago except——

Could it be that they had been delayed? Could it be that they had had to drop for repairs and were still uncaptured? Could it be that even now while this fool babbled, they were over there among the mountains heaving their deadly charge over the side of the aeroplane?

Strange hopes began to lift the tail of the Slavic fox again.

What was the man saying? One must talk to him anyhow until one knew. At any moment the little brass door behind him might open with the news of Brissago blown to atoms. Then it would be a delightful relief to the present tension to arrest this chatterer forthwith. He might be killed perhaps. What?

The king was repeating his observation. "They have a ridiculous fancy that your confidence is based on the possession of atomic bombs."

King Ferdinand Charles pulled himself together. He protested.

"Oh, quite so," said the ex-king, "quite so."

"What grounds?"

The ex-king permitted himself a gesture and the ghost of a chuckle—why the devil should he chuckle? "Practically none," he said. "But of course with these things one has to be so careful."

And then again for an instant something—like the faintest shadow of derision—gleamed out of the

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envoy's eyes and recalled that chilly feeling to King Ferdinand's spine.

Some kindred depression had come to Pestovitch, who had been watching the drawn intensity of Firmin's face. He came to the help of his master who, he feared, might protest too much.

"A search!" cried the king. "An embargo on our aeroplanes?"

"Only as a temporary expedient," said the ex-king Egbert, "while the search is going on."

The king appealed to his council.

"The people will never permit it, Sire," said a bustling little man in a gorgeous uniform.

"You'll have to make 'em," said the ex-king, genially addressing all the councillors.

King Ferdinand glanced at the closed brass door through which no news would come.

"When would you want to have this search?"

The ex-king was radiant. "We couldn't possibly do it until the day after to-morrow," he said.

"Just the capital?"

"Where else?" asked the ex-king still more cheerfully.

"For my own part," said the ex-king, confidentially, "I think the whole business ridiculous. Who would be such a fool as to hide atomic bombs? Nobody. Certain hanging if he's caught—certain, and almost certain blowing up if he isn't. But nowadays I have to take orders like the rest of the world. And here I am."

The king thought he had never met such detestable geniality. He glanced at Pestovitch, who nodded

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almost imperceptibly. It was well anyhow to have a fool to deal with. They might have sent a diplomatist. "Of course," said the king, "I recognise the overpowering force—and a kind of logic—in these orders from Brissago."

"I knew you would," said the ex-king with an air of relief, "and so let us arrange——"

They arranged with a certain informality. No Balkan aeroplane was to adventure into the air until the search was concluded and meanwhile the fleets of the world government would soar and circle in the sky. The towns were to be placarded with offers of reward to any one who would help in the discovery of atomic bombs. . . .

"You will sign that," said the ex-king.

"Why?"

"To show that we aren't in any way hostile to you."

Pestovitch nodded "yes" to his master.

"And then you see," said the ex-king in that easy way of his, "we'll have a lot of men here, borrow help from your police and run through all your things. And then everything will be over. Meanwhile, if I may be your guest. . . ."

When presently Pestovitch was alone with the king again, he found him in a state of jangling emotions. His spirit was tossing like a wind-whipped sea. One moment he was exalted and full of contempt for "that ass" and his search; the next he was down in a pit of dread. "They will find them, Pestovitch, and then he'll hang us."

"Hang us?"

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The king put his long nose into his councillor's face. "That grinning brute *wants* to hang us," he said. "And hang us he will, if we give him a shadow of a chance."

"But all their Modern State Civilisation!"

"Do you think there's any pity in that crew of Godless, Vivisecting Prigs?" cried this last king of romance. "Do you think, Pestovitch, they understand anything of a high ambition or a splendid dream? Do you think that our gallant and sublime adventure has any appeal to them? Here am I, the last and greatest and most romantic of the Cæsars, and do you think they will miss the chance of hanging me like a dog if they can, killing me like a rat in a hole? And that renegade! He who was once an anointed king! . . ."

"I hate that sort of eye that laughs and keeps hard," said the king.

"I won't sit still here and be caught like a fascinated rabbit," said the king in conclusion. "We must shift those bombs."

"Risk it," said Pestovitch. "Leave them alone."

"No," said the king. "Shift them near the frontier. Then while they watch us here—they will always watch us here now—we can buy an aeroplane abroad, and pick them up. . . ."

The king was in a feverish irritable mood all that evening, but he made his plans nevertheless with infinite cunning. They must get the bombs away; there must be a couple of atomic hay lorries, the bombs could be hidden under the hay. . . . Pestovitch went and came, instructing trusty servants,

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planning and replanning. . . . The king and the ex-king talked very pleasantly of a number of subjects. All the while at the back of King Ferdinand Charles' mind fretted the mystery of his vanished aeroplane. There came no news of its capture and no news of its success. At any moment all that power at the back of his visitor might crumble away and vanish. . . .

It was past midnight when the king, in a cloak and slouch-hat that might equally have served a small farmer or any respectable middle-class man, slipped out from an inconspicuous service gate on the eastward side of his palace into the thickly wooded gardens that sloped in a series of terraces down to the town. Pestovitch and his guard-valet Peter, both wrapped about in a similar disguise, came out among the laurels that bordered the pathway and joined him. It was a clear warm night, but the stars seemed unusually little and remote because of the aeroplanes, each trailing a search-light, that drove hither and thither across the blue. One great beam had seemed to rest on the king for a moment as he came out of the palace; then instantly and reassuringly it had swept away. But while they were still in the palace gardens another found them and looked at them.

"They see us," cried the king.

"They make nothing of us," said Pestovitch.

The king glanced up and met a calm round eye of light, that seemed to wink at him and vanish, leaving him blinded. . . .

The three men went on their way. Near the little

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gate in the garden railings that Pestovitch had caused to be unlocked, the king paused under the shadow of an ilex and looked back at the palace. It was very high and narrow, a twentieth-century rendering of mediævalism, mediævalism in steel and bronze and sham stone and opaque glass. Against the sky it splashed a confusion of pinnacles. High up in the eastward wing were the windows of the apartments of the ex-king Egbert. One of them was brightly lit now, and against the light a little black figure stood very still and looked out upon the night.

The king snarled.

“He little knows how we slip through his fingers,” said Pestovitch.

And as he spoke they saw the ex-king stretch out his arms slowly like one who yawns, knuckle his eyes and turn inward—no doubt to his bed.

Down through the ancient winding back streets of his capital hurried the king, and at an appointed corner a shabby atomic automobile waited for the three. It was a hackney carriage of the lowest grade, with dented metal panels and deflated cushions. The driver was one of the ordinary drivers of the capital, but beside him sat the young secretary of Pestovitch who knew the way to the farm where the bombs were hidden.

The automobile made its way through the narrow streets of the old town, which were still lit and uneasy—for the fleet of airships overhead had kept the cafés open and people abroad—over the great new bridge and so by straggling outskirts to the country. And all through his capital the king who hoped to outdo

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Cæsar sat back and was very still and no one spoke. And as they got out into the dark country they became aware of the search-lights wandering over the countryside like the uneasy ghosts of giants. The king sat forward and looked at these flitting whitenesses and every now and then peered up to see the flying ships overhead.

"I don't like them," said the king.

Presently one of these patches of moonlight came to rest about them and seemed to be following their automobile. The king drew back.

"The things are confoundedly noiseless," said the king. "It's like being stalked by lean white cats."

He peered again. "That fellow is watching us," he said.

And then suddenly he gave way to panic. "Pestovitch," he said, clutching his minister's arm, "they are watching us. I'm not going through with this. They are watching us. I'm going back."

Pestovitch remonstrated. "Tell him to go back," said the king and tried to open the window. For a few moments there was a grim struggle in the automobile; a gripping of wrists and a blow. "I can't go through with it," repeated the king, "I can't go through with it."

"But they'll hang us," said Pestovitch.

"Not if we were to give up now. Not if we were to surrender the bombs. It is you who brought me into this. . . ."

At last Pestovitch compromised. There was an inn perhaps half a mile from the farm. They could alight there and the king could get brandy, and rest

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his nerves for a time. And if he still thought fit to go back he could go back.

"See," said Pestovitch, "the light has gone again."

The king peered up. "I believe he's following us without a light," said the king.

In the little old dirty inn the king hung doubtful for a time, and was for going back and throwing himself on the mercy of the council. "If there *is* a council," said Pestovitch. "By this time your bombs may have settled it."

"But if so, these infernal aeroplanes would go."

"They may not know yet."

"But, Pestovitch, why couldn't you do all this without me?"

Pestovitch made no answer for a moment. "I was for leaving the bombs in their place," he said at last and went to the window. About their conveyance shone a circle of bright light. Pestovitch had a brilliant idea. "I will send my secretary out to make a kind of dispute with the driver. Something that will make them watch up above there. Meanwhile you and I and Peter will go out by the back way and up by the hedges to the farm. . . ."

It was worthy of his subtle reputation and it answered passing well.

In ten minutes they were tumbling over the wall of the farmyard, wet, muddy and breathless but unobserved. But as they ran towards the barns the king gave vent to something between a groan and a curse and all about them shone the light—and passed.

But had it passed at once or lingered for just a second?



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"They didn't see us," said Peter.

"I don't think they saw us," said the king, and stared as the light went swooping up the mountain-side, hung for a second about a hay-rick and then came pouring back.

"In the barn!" cried the king.

He bruised his shin against something and then all three men were inside the huge steel-girdered barn in which stood the two motor hay lorries that were to take the bombs away. Kurt and Abel, the two brothers of Peter, had brought the lorries thither in daylight. They had the upper half of the loads of hay thrown off, ready to cover the bombs, so soon as the king should show the hiding-place. "There's a sort of pit here," said the king. "Don't light another lantern. This key of mine releases a ring. . . ."

For a time scarcely a word was spoken in the darkness of the barn. There was the sound of a slab being lifted and then of feet descending a ladder into a pit. Then whispering and then heavy breathing as Kurt came struggling up with the first of the hidden bombs.

"We shall do it yet," said the king. And then he gasped. "Curse that light. Why in the name of Heaven didn't we shut the barn door?" For the great door stood wide open and all the empty lifeless yard outside and the door and six feet of the floor of the barn were in the blue glare of an inquiring search-light.

"Shut the door, Peter," said Pestovitch.

"No," cried the king too late as Peter went forward into the light. "Don't show yourself!" cried the king. Kurt made a step forward and plucked his

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brother back. For a time all five men stood still. It seemed that light would never go and then abruptly it was turned off, leaving them blinded. "Now," said the king uneasily, "now shut the door."

"Not completely," cried Pestovitch. "Leave a chink for us to go out by. . . ."

It was hot work shifting those bombs, and the king worked for a time like a common man. Kurt and Abel carried the great things up and Peter brought them to the carts, and the king and Pestovitch helped him to place them among the hay. They made as little noise as they could. . . .

"Ssh!" cried the king. "What's that?"

But Kurt and Abel did not hear and came blundering up the ladder with the last of the load.

"Ssh!" Peter ran forward to them with a whispered remonstrance. Now they were still.

The barn door opened a little wider and against the dim blue light outside they saw the black shape of a man.

"Any one here?" he asked, speaking with an Italian accent.

The king broke into a cold perspiration. Then Pestovitch answered. "Only a poor farmer loading hay," he said, and picked up a huge hay-fork and went forward softly.

"You load your hay at a very bad time and in a very bad light," said the man at the door, peering in. "Have you no electric light here?"

Then suddenly he turned on an electric torch and as he did so Pestovitch sprang forward. "Get out of my barn!" he cried, and drove the fork full at the

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intruder's chest. He had a vague idea that so he might stab the man to silence. But the man shouted loudly as the prongs pierced him and drove him backward, and instantly there was a sound of feet running across the yard.

"Bombs," cried the man upon the ground, struggling with the prongs in his hand, and as Pestovitch staggered forward into view with the force of his own thrust, he was shot through the body by one of the two newcomers.

The man on the ground was badly hurt but plucky. "Bombs," he repeated and struggled up into a kneeling position and held his electric torch full upon the face of the king. "Shoot them," he cried, coughing and spitting blood, so that the halo of light round the king's head danced about.

For a moment in that shivering circle of light the two men saw the king kneeling up in the cart and Peter on the barn floor beside him. The old fox looked at them sideways—snared, a white-faced evil thing. And then as with a faltering suicidal heroism he leaned forward over the bomb before him they fired together and shot him through the head.

The upper part of his face seemed to vanish.

"Shoot them," cried the man who had been stabbed. "Shoot them all!"

And then his light went out and he rolled over with a groan at the feet of his comrades.

But each carried a light of his own, and in another moment everything in the barn was visible again. They shot Peter even as he held up his hands in sign of surrender.

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Kurt and Abel at the head of the ladder hesitated for a moment, and then plunged backward into the pit. "If we don't kill them," said one of the sharpshooters, "they'll blow us to rags. They've gone down that hatchway. Come! . . ."

"Here they are. Hands up! I say. Hold your light while I shoot. . . ."

### § 8

It was still quite dark when his valet and Firmin came together and told the ex-king Egbert that the business was settled.

He started up into a sitting position on the side of his bed.

"Did he go out?" asked the ex-king.

"He is dead," said Firmin. "He was shot."

The ex-king reflected. "That's about the best thing that could have happened," he said. "Where are the bombs? In that farmhouse on the opposite hillside! Why! the place is in sight! Let us go. I'll dress. Is there any one in the place, Firmin, to get us a cup of coffee?"

Through the hungry twilight of the dawn the ex-king's automobile carried him to the farmhouse where the last rebel king was lying among his bombs. The rim of the sky flashed, the east grew bright, and the sun was just rising over the hills when King Egbert reached the farmyard. There he found the hay lorries drawn out from the barn with the dreadful bombs still packed upon them. A couple of score of aviators held the yard, and outside a few peasants stood in a

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little group and stared, ignorant as yet of what had happened. Against the stone wall of the farmyard five bodies were lying neatly side by side, and Pestovitch had an expression of surprise on his face and the king was chiefly identifiable by his long white hands and his blond moustache. The wounded aeronaut had been carried down to the inn. And after the ex-king had given directions in what manner the bombs were to be taken to the new special laboratories above Zürich, where they could be unpacked in an atmosphere of chlorine, he turned to these five still shapes.

Their five pairs of feet stuck out with a curious stiff unanimity. . . .

"What else was there to do?" he said in answer to some internal protest.

"I wonder, Firmin, if there are any more of them?"

"Bombs, sir?" asked Firmin.

"No, such kings. . . .

"The pitiful folly of it!" said the ex-king, following his thoughts. "Firmin, as an ex-professor of International Politics, I think it falls to you to bury them. There? . . . No, don't put them near the well. People will have to drink from that well. Bury them over there some way off in the field."

## CHAPTER THE FOURTH

### THE NEW PHASE

#### § 1

THE task that lay before the Assembly of Brissago, viewed as we may view it now from the clarifying standpoint of things accomplished, was in its broad issues a simple one. Essentially it was to place social organisation upon the new footing that the swift accelerated advance of human knowledge had rendered necessary. The council was gathered together with the haste of a salvage expedition, and it was confronted with wreckage; but the wreckage was irreparable wreckage, and the only possibilities of the case were either the relapse of mankind to the agricultural barbarism from which it had emerged so painfully or the acceptance of achieved science as the basis of a new social order. The old tendencies of human nature, suspicion, jealousy, particularism and belligerency, were incompatible with the monstrous destructive power of the new appliances the inhuman logic of science had produced. The equilibrium could be restored only by civilisation destroying itself down to a level at which modern apparatus could no longer be produced, or by human nature adapting itself in its institutions to the new conditions. It was for the latter alternative that the assembly existed.

Sooner or later this choice would have confronted mankind. The sudden development of atomic science

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did but precipitate and render rapid and dramatic a clash between the new and the customary that had been gathering since ever the first flint was chipped or the first fire built together. From the day when man contrived himself a tool and suffered another male to draw near him, he ceased to be altogether a thing of instinct and untroubled convictions. From that day forth a widening breach can be traced between his egotistical passions and the social need. Slowly he adapted himself to the life of the homestead, and his passionate impulses widened out to the demands of the clan and the tribe. But widen though his impulses might, the latent hunter and wanderer and wonderer in his imagination outstripped their development. He was never quite subdued to the soil nor quite tamed to the home. Everywhere it needed teaching and the priest to keep him within the bounds of the plough-life and the beast-tending. Slowly a vast system of traditional imperatives superposed itself upon his instincts, imperatives that were admirably fitted to make him that cultivator, that cattle-minder, who was for twice ten thousand years the normal man.

And, unpremeditated, undesired, out of the accumulations of his tilling came civilisation. Civilisation was the agricultural surplus. It appeared as trade and tracks and roads, it pushed boats out upon the rivers and presently invaded the seas, and within its primitive courts, within temples grown rich and leisurely and amidst the gathering medley of the seaport towns rose speculation and philosophy and science and the beginning of the new order that has at

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last established itself as human life. Slowly at first as we traced it and then with an accumulating velocity the new powers were fabricated. Man as a whole did not seek them nor desire them; they were thrust into his hand. For a time man took up and used these new things and the new powers inadvertently as they came to him, recking nothing of the consequences. For endless generations change led him very gently. But when he had been led far enough change quickened the pace. It was with a series of shocks that he realised at last that he was living the old life less and less and a new life more and more.

Already before the release of atomic energy the tensions between the old way of living and the new were intense. They were far intenser than they had been even at the collapse of the Roman imperial system. On the one hand was the ancient life of the family and the small community and the petty industry, on the other was a new life on a larger scale with remoter horizons and a strange sense of purpose. Already it was growing clear that men must live on one side or the other. One could not have little tradespeople and syndicated businesses in the same market, sleeping carters and motor-trolleys on the same road, bows and arrows and aeroplane sharpshooters in the same army, or illiterate peasant industries and power-driven factories in the same world. And still less it was possible that one could have the ideas and ambitions and greed and jealousy of peasants equipped with the vast appliances of the new age. If there had been no atomic bombs to bring



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together most of the directing intelligence of the world to that hasty conference at Brissago, there would still have been, extended over great areas and a considerable space of time perhaps, a less formal conference of responsible and understanding people upon the perplexities of this world-wide opposition. If the work of Holsten had been spread over centuries and imparted to the world by imperceptible degrees, it would nevertheless have made it necessary for men to take counsel upon and set a plan for the future. Indeed already there had been accumulating for a hundred years before the crisis a literature of foresight; there was a whole mass of "Modern State" scheming available for the conference to go upon. These bombs did but accentuate and dramatise an already developing problem.

### § 2

This assembly was no leap of exceptional minds and superintelligences into the control of affairs. It was teachable, its members trailed ideas with them to the gathering, but these were the consequences of the "moral shock" the bombs had given humanity *and there is no reason for supposing its individual personalities were greatly above the average.* It would be possible to cite a thousand instances of error *and inefficiency* in its proceedings due to the forgetfulness, irritability or fatigue of its members. It experimented considerably and blundered often. *Excerpting Holsten*, whose gift was highly specialised, it

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is questionable whether there was a single man of the first order of human quality in the gathering. But it had a modest fear of itself, and a consequent directness that gave it a general distinction. There was of course a noble simplicity about Leblanc, but even of him it may be asked whether he was not rather good and honest-minded than in the fuller sense great.

The ex-king had wisdom and a certain romantic dash, he was a man among thousands even if he was not a man among millions, but his memoirs and indeed his decision to write memoirs give the quality of himself and his associates. The book makes admirable but astonishing reading. Therein he takes the great work the council was doing for granted as a little child takes God. It is as if he had no sense of it at all. He tells amusing trivialities about his cousin Wilhelm and his secretary Firmin, he pokes fun at the American President, who was indeed rather a little accident of the political machine than a representative American, and he gives a long description of how he was lost for three days in the mountains in the company of the only Japanese member, a loss that seems to have caused no serious interruption of the work of the council. . . .

The Brissago conference has been written about time after time as though it were a gathering of the very flower of humanity. Perched up there by the freak or wisdom of Leblanc, it had a certain Olympian quality, and the natural tendency of the human mind to elaborate such a resemblance would have us give its members the likenesses of gods. It would be

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equally reasonable to compare it to one of those enforced meetings upon the mountain-tops that must have occurred in the opening phases of the Deluge. The strength of the council lay not in itself but in the circumstances that had quickened its intelligence, dispelled its vanities, and emancipated it from traditional ambitions and antagonisms. It was stripped of the accumulations of centuries, a naked government with all that freedom of action that nakedness affords. And its problems were set before it with a plainness that was out of all comparison with the complicated and perplexing intimations of the former time.

### § 3

The world on which the council looked did indeed present a task quite sufficiently immense and altogether too urgent for any wanton indulgence in internal dissension. It may be interesting to sketch in a few phrases the condition of mankind at the close of the period of warring states, in the year of crisis that followed the release of atomic power. It was a world extraordinarily limited when one measures it by later standards, and it was now in a state of the direst confusion and distress.

It must be remembered that at this time men had still to spread into enormous areas of the land surface of the globe. There were vast mountain wildernesses, forest wildernesses, sandy deserts, and frozen lands. Men still clung closely to water and arable soil in temperate or subtropical climates, they lived abun-

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dantly only in river-valleys, and all their great cities had grown upon large navigable rivers or close to ports upon the sea. Over great areas even of this suitable land flies and mosquitoes, armed with infection, had so far defeated human invasion, and under their protection the virgin forests remained untouched. Indeed the whole world even in its most crowded districts was filthy with flies and swarming with needless insect life to an extent which is now almost incredible. A population map of the world in 1950 would have followed seashore and river course so closely in its darker shading as to give an impression that *homo sapiens* was an amphibious animal. His roads and railways lay also along the lower contours, only here and there to pierce some mountain barrier or reach some holiday resort did they clamber above 3,000 feet. And across the ocean his traffic passed in definite lines; there were hundreds of thousands of square miles of ocean no ship ever traversed except by mischance.

Into the mysteries of the solid globe under his feet he had not yet pierced for five miles, and it was still not forty years since with a tragic pertinacity he had clambered to the poles of the earth. The limitless mineral wealth of the Arctic and Antarctic circles was still buried beneath vast accumulations of immemorial ice, and the secret riches of the inner zones of the crust were untapped and indeed unsuspected. The higher mountain regions were known only to a sprinkling of guide-led climbers and the frequenters of a few gaunt hotels, and the vast rainless belts of land that lay across the continental masses, from

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Gobi to Sahara and along the backbone of America, with their perfect air, their daily baths of blazing sunshine, their nights of cool serenity and glowing stars, and their reservoirs of deep-lying water, were as yet only desolations of fear and death to the common imagination.

And now under the shock of the atomic bombs, the great masses of population which had gathered into the enormous dingy town centres of that period were dispossessed and scattered disastrously over the surrounding rural areas. It was as if some brutal force, grown impatient at last at man's blindness, had with the deliberate intention of a rearrangement of population upon more wholesome lines, shaken the world. The great industrial regions and the large cities that had escaped the bombs were, because of their complete economic collapse, in almost as tragic plight as those that blazed, and the countryside was disordered by a multitude of wandering and lawless strangers. In some parts of the world famine raged, and in many regions there was plague. . . . The plains of north India, which had become more and more dependent for the general welfare on the railways and that great system of irrigation canals which the malignant section of the patriots had destroyed, were in a state of peculiar distress, whole villages lay dead together, no man heeding, and the very tigers and panthers that preyed upon the emaciated survivors crawled back infected into the jungle to perish. Large areas of China were a prey to brigand bands. . . .

It is a remarkable thing that no complete contem-

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porary account of the explosion of the atomic bombs survives. There are of course innumerable allusions and partial records, and it is from these that subsequent ages must piece together the image of these devastations.

The phenomena, it must be remembered, changed greatly from day to day and even from hour to hour as the exploding bomb shifted its position, threw off fragments or came into contact with water or a fresh texture of soil. Barnett, who came within forty miles of Paris early in October, is concerned chiefly with his account of the social confusion of the countryside and the problems of his command, but he speaks of heaped cloud masses of steam "all along the sky to the south-west," and of a red glare beneath these at night. Parts of Paris were still burning, and numbers of people were camped in the fields even at this distance watching over treasured heaps of salvaged loot. He speaks too of the distant rumbling of the explosion—"like trains going over iron bridges."

Other descriptions agree with this; they all speak of the "continuous reverberations," or of the "thudding and hammering," or some such phrase; and they all testify to a huge pall of steam, from which rain would fall suddenly in torrents and amidst which lightning played. Drawing nearer to Paris an observer would have found the salvage camps increasing in number and blocking up the villages, and large numbers of people, often starving and ailing, camping under improvised tents because there was no place for them to go. The sky became more and more densely overcast until at last it blotted out the light

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of day and left nothing but a dull red glare "extraordinarily depressing to the spirit." In this dull glare great numbers of people were still living, clinging to their houses and in many cases subsisting in a state of partial famine upon the produce in their gardens and the stores in the shops of the provision dealers.

Coming in still closer the investigator would have reached the police cordon, which was trying to check the desperate enterprise of those who would return to their homes or rescue their more valuable possessions within the "zone of imminent danger."

That zone was rather arbitrarily defined. If our spectator could have got permission to enter it, he would have entered also a zone of uproar, a zone of perpetual thunderings, lit by a strange purplish-red light, and quivering and swaying with the incessant explosion of the radioactive substance. Whole blocks of buildings were alight and burning fiercely, the trembling ragged flames looking pale and ghastly and attenuated in comparison with the full-bodied crimson glare beyond. The shells of other edifices already burned rose pierced by rows of window-sockets against the red-lit mist.

Every step farther would have been as dangerous as a descent within the crater of an active volcano. These spinning, boiling bomb centres would shift or break unexpectedly into new regions, great fragments of earth or drain or masonry suddenly caught by a jet of disruptive force might come flying by the explorer's head, or the ground yawn a fiery grave beneath his feet. Few who adventured into these areas of destruction and survived attempted any repeti-

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tion of their experiences. There are stories of puffs of luminous, radioactive vapour drifting sometimes scores of miles from the bomb centre and killing and scorching all they overtook. And the first conflagrations from the Paris centre spread westward half-way to the sea.

Moreover the air in this infernal inner circle of red-lit ruins had a peculiar dryness and a blistering quality, so that it set up a soreness of the skin and lungs that was very difficult to heal. . . .

Such was the last state of Paris, and such on a larger scale was the condition of affairs in Chicago, and the same fate had overtaken Berlin, Moscow, Tokio, the eastern half of London, Toulon, Kiel and two hundred and eighteen other centres of population or armament. Each was a flaming centre of radiant destruction that only time could quench, that indeed in many instances time has still to quench. To this day, though indeed with a constantly diminishing uproar and vigour, these explosions continue. In the map of nearly every country of the world three or four or more red circles, a score of miles in diameter, mark the position of the dying atomic bombs and the death areas that men have been forced to abandon around them. Within these areas perished museums, cathedrals, palaces, libraries, galleries of masterpieces and a vast accumulation of human achievement, whose charred remains lie buried, a legacy of curious material that only future generations may hope to examine. . . .



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### § 4

The state of mind of the dispossessed urban population which swarmed and perished so abundantly over the countryside during the dark days of the autumnal months that followed the Last War was one of blank despair. Barnet gives sketch after sketch of groups of these people, camped among the vineyards of Champagne, as he saw them during his period of service with the army of pacification.

There was, for example, that "man-milliner" who came out from a field beside the road that rises up eastward out of Epernay, and asked how things were going in Paris. He was, says Barnet, a round-faced man dressed very neatly in black—so neatly that it was amazing to discover he was living close at hand in a tent made of carpets—and he had "an urbane but insistent manner," a carefully trimmed moustache and beard, expressive eyebrows and hair very neatly brushed.

"No one goes into Paris," said Barnet.

"But, Monsieur, that is very unenterprising," the man by the wayside submitted.

"The danger is too great. The radiations eat into people's skins."

The eyebrows protested. "But is nothing to be done?"

"Nothing can be done."

"But, Monsieur, it is extraordinarily inconvenient, this living in exile and waiting. My wife and my little boy suffer extremely. There is a lack of amenity. And the season advances. I say nothing

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of the expense and difficulty in obtaining provisions. . . . When does Monsieur think that something will be done to render Paris—possible?”

Barnet considered his interlocutor.

“I’m told,” said Barnet, “that Paris is not likely to be possible again for several generations.”

“Oh! but this is preposterous! Consider, Monsieur! What are people like ourselves to do in the meanwhile? I am a costumier. All my connections and interests, above all my style, demand Paris. . . .”

Barnet considered the sky, from which a light rain was beginning to fall, the wide fields about them from which the harvest had been taken, the trimmed poplars by the wayside.

“Naturally,” he agreed, “you want to go to Paris. But Paris is over.”

“Over!”

“Finished.”

“But then, Monsieur—what is to become—of *me*?”

Barnet turned his face westward whither the white road led.

“Where else, for example, may I hope to find—opportunity?”

Barnet made no reply.

“Perhaps on the Riviera. Or at some such place as Homburg. Or some place perhaps.”

“All that,” said Barnet, accepting for the first time facts that had lain evident in his mind for weeks, “all that must be over too.”

There was a pause. Then the voice beside him

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broke out. "But, Monsieur, it is impossible! It leaves—nothing."

"No. Not very much."

"One cannot suddenly begin to grow potatoes!"

"It would be good if Monsieur could bring himself——"

"To the life of a peasant! And my wife— You do not know the distinguished delicacy of my wife, a refined helplessness, a peculiar dependent charm. Like some slender tropical creeper—with great white flowers. . . . But all this is foolish talk. It is impossible that Paris, which has survived so many misfortunes, should not presently revive."

"I do not think it will ever revive. Paris is finished. London too, I am told—Berlin. All the great capitals were stricken. . . ."

"But—! Monsieur must permit me to differ."

"It is so."

"It is impossible. Civilisations do not end in this manner. Mankind will insist."

"On Paris?"

"On Paris."

"Monsieur, you might as well hope to go down the Maelstrom and resume business there."

"I am content, Monsieur, with my own faith."

"The winter comes on. Would not Monsieur be wiser to seek a house?"

"Farther from Paris? No, Monsieur. But it is not possible, Monsieur, what you say, and you are under a tremendous mistake. . . . Indeed you are in error. . . . I asked merely for information. . . ."

"When last I saw him," said Barnet, "he was

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standing under the sign-post at the crest of the hill, gazing wistfully yet it seemed to me a little doubtfully now towards Paris, and altogether heedless of a drizzling rain that was wetting him through and through. . . .”

### § 5

This effect of chill dismay, of a doom as yet imperfectly apprehended, deepens as Barnet's record passes on to tell of the approach of winter. It was too much for the great mass of those unwilling and incompetent nomads to realise that an age had ended, that the old help and guidance existed no longer, that times would not mend again however patiently they held out. They were still in many cases looking to Paris when the first snowflakes of that pitiless January came swirling about them. The story grows grimmer. . . .

If it is less monstrously tragic after Barnet's return to England it is, if anything, harder. England was a spectacle of fear-embittered householders, hiding food, crushing out robbery, driving the starving wanderers from every faltering place upon the roads lest they should die inconveniently and reproachfully on the door-steps of those who had failed to urge them onward. . . .

The remnants of the British troops left France finally in March, after urgent representations from the provisional government at Orleans that they could be supported no longer. They seem to have been a fairly well-behaved but highly parasitic force throughout, though Barnet is clearly of opinion that

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they did much to suppress sporadic brigandage and maintain social order. He came home to a famine-stricken country, and his picture of the England of that spring is one of miserable patience and desperate expedients. The country was suffering much more than France because of the cessation of the overseas supplies on which it had hitherto relied. His troops were given bread, dried fish and boiled nettles at Dover, and marched inland to Ashford and paid off. On the way thither they saw four men hanging from the telegraph-posts by the roadside, who had been hung for stealing swedes. The labour refuges of Kent, he discovered, were feeding their crowds of casual wanderers on bread into which clay and sawdust had been mixed. In Surrey there was a shortage of even such fare as that. He himself struck across country to Winchester, fearing to approach the bomb-poisoned district round London, and at Winchester he had the luck to be taken on as one of the wireless assistants at the central station and given regular rations. The station stood in a commanding position on the chalk hill that overlooks the town from the east. . . .

Thence he must have assisted in the transmission of the endless cipher messages that preceded the gathering at Brissago, and there it was that the Brissago proclamation of the end of the war and the establishment of a world government came under his hands.

He was feeling ill and apathetic that day, and he *did not* realise what it was he was transcribing. He *did it mechanically*, as a part of his tedious duty.

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Afterwards there came a rush of messages arising out of the declaration that strained him very much, and in the evening when he was relieved, he ate his scanty supper and then went out upon the little balcony before the station, to smoke and rest his brains after this sudden and as yet inexplicable press of duty. It was a very beautiful still evening. He fell talking to a fellow operator, and for the first time, he declares, "I began to understand what it was all about. I began to see just what enormous issues had been under my hands for the past four hours. But I became incredulous after my first stimulation. 'This is some sort of Bunkum,' I said very sagely.

"My colleague was more hopeful. 'It means an end to bomb-throwing and destruction,' he said. 'It means that presently corn will come from America.'

" 'Who is going to send corn when there is no more value in money?' I asked.

"Suddenly we were startled by a clashing from the town below. The cathedral bells, which had been silent ever since I had come into the district, were beginning, with a sort of rheumatic difficulty, to ring. Presently they warmed a little to the work, and we realised what was going on. They were ringing a peal. We listened with an unbelieving astonishment and looking into each other's yellow faces.

" 'They mean it,' said my colleague.

" 'But what can they do now?' I asked. 'Everything is broken down. . . .'

And on that sentence, with an unexpected artistry, Barnet abruptly ends his story.

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### § 6

From the first the new government handled affairs with a certain greatness of spirit. Indeed it was inevitable that they should act greatly. From the first they had to see the round globe as one problem; it was impossible any longer to deal with it piece by piece. They had to secure it universally from any fresh outbreak of atomic destruction, and they had to insure a permanent and universal pacification. On this capacity to grasp and wield the whole round globe their existence depended. There was no scope for any further performance.

So soon as the seizure of the existing supplies of atomic ammunition and the apparatus for synthesising Carolinum was assured, the disbanding or social utilisation of the various masses of troops still under arms had to be arranged, the salvation of the year's harvests, and the feeding, housing, and employment of the drifting millions of homeless people. In Canada, in South America and Asiatic Russia there were vast accumulations of provision that was immovable only because of the breakdown of the monetary and credit systems. These had to be brought into the famine districts very speedily if entire depopulation was to be avoided; and their transportation, and the revival of communications generally, absorbed a certain proportion of the soldiery and more able unemployed. The task of housing assumed gigantic dimensions, and from building camps the housing committee of the council speedily passed to constructions of a more permanent type.

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They found far less friction than might have been expected in turning the loose population on their hands to these things. People were extraordinarily tamed by that year of suffering and death; they were disillusioned of their traditions, bereft of once obstinate prejudices; they felt foreign in a strange world and ready to follow any confident leadership. The orders of the new government came with the best of all credentials, rations. The people everywhere were as easy to control, one of the old labour experts who had survived until the new time witnesses, "as gangs of emigrant workers in a new land."

And now it was that the social possibilities of the atomic energy began to appear. The new machinery that had come into existence before the last wars increased and multiplied, and the council found itself not only with millions of hands at its disposal but with power and apparatus that made its first conceptions of the work it had to do seem pitifully timid. The camps that were planned in iron and deal were built in stone and brass; the roads that were to have been mere iron tracks became spacious ways that insisted upon architecture; the cultivations of foodstuffs that were to have supplied emergency rations were presently, with synthesisers, fertilisers, actinic light and scientific direction, in excess of every human need.

The government had begun with the idea of temporarily reconstituting the social and economic system that had prevailed before the first coming of the atomic engine, because it was to this system that the ideas and habits of the great mass of the world's dispossessed population was adapted. Subsequent re-



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arrangement it had hoped to leave to its successors— whoever they might be. But this, it became more and more manifest, was absolutely impossible. As well might the council have proposed a revival of slavery. The capitalistic system had already been smashed beyond repair by the onset of limitless gold and energy; it fell to pieces at the first endeavour to stand it up again. Already before the war half of the industrial class had been out of work, the attempt to put them back into wages employment on the old lines was futile from the outset,—the absolute shattering of the currency system alone would have been sufficient to prevent that, and it was necessary therefore to take over the housing, feeding, and clothing of this world-wide multitude without exacting any return in labour whatever. In a little while the mere absence of occupation for so great a multitude of people everywhere became an evident social danger, and the government was obliged to resort to such devices as simple decorative work in wood and stone, the manufacture of hand-woven textiles, fruit-growing, flower-growing, and landscape-gardening on a grand scale to keep the less adaptable out of mischief, and of paying wages to the younger adults for attendance at schools that would equip them to use the new atomic machinery. . . . So quite insensibly the council drifted into a complete reorganisation of urban and industrial life, and indeed of the entire social system.

Ideas that are unhampered by political intrigue or financial considerations have a sweeping way with them, and before a year was out the records of the

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council show clearly that it was rising to its enormous opportunity, and partly through its own direct control and partly through a series of specific committees, it was planning a new common social order for the entire population of the earth. "There can be no real social stability or any general human happiness while large areas of the world and large classes of people are in a phase of civilisation different from the prevailing mass. It is impossible now to have great blocks of population misunderstanding the generally accepted social purpose or at an economic disadvantage to the rest." So the council expressed its conception of the problem it had to solve. The peasant, the field-worker, and all barbaric cultivators were at an "economic disadvantage" to the more mobile and educated classes, and the logic of the situation compelled the council to take up systematically the supersession of this stratum by a more efficient organisation of production. It developed a scheme for the progressive establishment throughout the world of the "modern system" in agriculture, a system that should give the full advantages of a civilised life to every agricultural worker, and this replacement has been going on right up to the present day. The central idea of the modern system is the substitution of cultivating guilds for the individual cultivator and for cottage and village life altogether. These guilds are associations of men and women who take over areas of arable or pasture land, and make themselves responsible for a certain average produce. They are bodies small enough as a rule to be run on a strictly democratic basis and large

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enough to supply all the labour, except for a certain assistance from townspeople during the harvest, needed upon the land farmed. They have watchers' bungalows or châteaux on the ground cultivated, but the ease and the costlessness of modern locomotion enables them to maintain a group of residences in the nearest town with a common dining-room and club-house, and usually also a guild-house in the national or provincial capital. Already this system has abolished a distinctively "rustic" population throughout vast areas of the old world where it has prevailed immemorially. That shy, unstimulated life of the lonely hovel, the narrow scandals and petty spites and persecutions of the small village, that hoarding, half-inanimate existence away from books, thought, or social participation and in constant contact with cattle, pigs, poultry, and their excrement is passing away out of human experience. In a little while it will be gone altogether. In the nineteenth century it had already ceased to be a necessary human state, and only the absence of any collective intelligence and an imagined need for tough and unintelligent soldiers and for a prolific class at a low level prevented its systematic replacement at that time. . . .

And while this settlement of the country was in progress, the urban camps of the first phase of the council's activities were rapidly developing, partly through the inherent forces of the situation and partly through the council's direction, into a modern type of town. . . .

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## § 7

It is characteristic of the manner in which large enterprises forced themselves upon the Brissago council that it was not until the end of the first year of their administration and then only with extreme reluctance that they would take up the manifest need for a lingua franca for the world. They seem to have given little attention to the various theoretical universal languages which were proposed to them. They wished to give as little trouble to hasty and simple people as possible, and the world-wide distribution of English gave them a bias for it from the beginning. The extreme simplicity of its grammar was also in its favour.

It was not without some sacrifices that the English-speaking peoples were permitted the satisfaction of hearing their speech used universally. The language was shorn of a number of grammatical peculiarities, the distinctive forms for the subjunctive mood for example and most of its irregular plurals were abolished; its spelling was systematised and adapted to the vowel sounds in use upon the continent of Europe, and a process of incorporating foreign nouns and verbs commenced that speedily reached enormous proportions. Within ten years from the establishment of the World Republic the New English Dictionary had swelled to include a vocabulary of 250,000 words, and a man of 1900 would have found considerable difficulty in reading an ordinary newspaper. On the other hand the men of the new time could still appreciate the older English literature. . . . Certain minor acts of uniformity accompanied

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this larger one. The idea of a common understanding and a general simplification of intercourse once it was accepted led very naturally to the universal establishment of the metric system of weights and measures, and to the disappearance of the various makeshift calendars that had hitherto confused chronology. The year was divided into thirteen months of four weeks each, and New Year's Day and Leap Year's Day were made holidays and did not count at all in the ordinary week. So the weeks and the months were brought into correspondence. And moreover, as the king put it to Firmin, it was decided to "nail down Easter." . . . In these matters as in so many matters the new civilisation came as a simplification of ancient complications; the history of the calendar throughout the world is a history of inadequate adjustments, of attempts to fix seed-time and midwinter that go back into the very beginning of human society; and this final rectification had a symbolic value quite beyond its practical convenience. But the council would have no rash nor harsh innovations, no strange names for the months and no alteration in the numbering of the years.

The world had already been put upon one universal monetary basis. For some months after the accession of the council the world's affairs had been carried on without any sound currency at all. Over *great regions* money was still in use, but with the most extravagant variations in price and the most disconcerting fluctuations of public confidence. The ancient rarity of gold upon which the entire system rested was gone. Gold was now a waste product in

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the release of atomic energy, and it was plain that no metal could be the basis of the monetary system again. Henceforth all coins must be token coins. Yet the whole world was accustomed to metallic money, and a vast proportion of existing human relationships had grown up upon a cash basis and were almost inconceivable without that convenient liquidating factor. It seemed absolutely necessary to the life of the social organisation to have some sort of currency, and the council had therefore to discover some real value upon which to rest it. Various such apparently stable values as land and hours of work were considered. Ultimately the government, which was now in possession of most of the supplies of energy-releasing material, fixed a certain number of units of energy as the value of a gold sovereign, declared a sovereign to be worth exactly twenty marks, twenty-five francs, five dollars and so forth with the other current units of the world, and undertook, under various qualifications and conditions, to deliver energy upon demand as payment for every sovereign presented. On the whole this worked satisfactorily. They saved the face of the pound sterling. Coin was rehabilitated, and after a phase of price fluctuations began to settle down to definite equivalents and uses again, with names and every-day values familiar to the common run of people. . . .

### § 8

As the Brissago council came to realise that what it had supposed to be temporary camps of refugees

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were rapidly developing into great towns of a new type and that it was remoulding the world in spite of itself, it decided to place this work of redistributing the non-agricultural population in the hands of a compacter and better qualified special committee. That committee is now, far more than the council or any other of its delegated committees, the active government of the world. Developed from an almost invisible germ of "town-planning" that came obscurely into existence in Europe or America (the question is still in dispute) somewhere in the closing decades of the nineteenth century, its work, the continual active planning and replanning of the world as a place of human habitation, is now so to speak the collective material activity of the race. The spontaneous, disorderly spreadings and recessions of populations, as aimless and mechanical as the trickling of spilled water, which was the substance of history for endless years, giving rise here to congestions, here to chronic devastating wars, and everywhere to a discomfort and disorderliness that was at its best only picturesque, is at an end. Men spread now, with the whole power of the race to aid them, into every available region of the earth. Their cities are no longer tethered to running water and the proximity of cultivation, their plans are no longer affected by strategic considerations or thoughts of social insecurity. The aeroplane and the nearly costless mobile car have abolished trade routes; a common language and a universal law have abolished a thousand restraining inconveniences, and so an astonishing dispersal of habitations has begun. One may live any-

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where. And so it is that our cities now are true social gatherings, each with a character of its own and distinctive interests of its own, and most of them with a common occupation. They lie out in the former deserts, these long wasted sunbaths of the race, they tower amidst eternal snows, they hide in remote islands and bask on broad lagoons. For a time the whole tendency of mankind was to desert the river-valleys in which the race had been cradled for half a million years, but now that the War against Flies has been waged so successfully that this pestilential branch of life is nearly extinct, they are returning thither with a renewed appetite for gardens laced by watercourses, for pleasant living amidst islands and houseboats and bridges, and for nocturnal lanterns reflected by the sea.

Man who is ceasing to be an agricultural animal becomes more and more a builder, a traveller, and a maker. How much he ceases to be a cultivator of the soil the returns of the Redistribution Committee showed. Every year the work of our scientific laboratories increases the productivity and simplifies the labour of those who work upon the soil, and the food now of the whole world is produced by less than one per cent of its population, a percentage which still tends to decrease. Far fewer people are needed upon the land than training and proclivity dispose towards it, and as a consequence of this excess of human attention, the garden side of life, the creation of groves and lawns and vast regions of beautiful flowers has expanded enormously and continues to expand. For as agricultural method intensifies and the quota is



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raised one farm association after another, availing itself of the 1975 regulations, elects to produce a public garden and pleasure in the place of its former fields, and the area of freedom and beauty is increased. And the chemists' triumphs of synthesis which could now give us an entirely artificial food remain largely in abeyance because it is so much more pleasant and interesting to eat natural produce and to grow such things upon the soil. Each year adds to the variety of our fruits and the delightfulness of our flowers.

### § 9

The early years of the World Republic witnessed a certain recrudescence of political adventure. There was, it is rather curious to note, no revival of separatism after the face of King Ferdinand Charles had vanished from the sight of men, but in a number of countries, as the first urgent physical needs were met, there appeared a variety of personalities having this in common, that they sought to revive political trouble and clamber by its aid to positions of importance and satisfaction. In no case did they speak in the name of kings, and it is clear that monarchy must have been far gone in obsolescence before the twentieth century began, but they made appeals to the large survivals of nationalist and racial feeling that were everywhere to be found, they alleged with considerable justice that the council was overriding racial and national customs and disregarding religious rules. The great plain of India was particularly pro-

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lific in such agitators. The revival of newspapers, which had largely ceased during the terrible year because of the dislocation of the coinage, gave a vehicle and a method of organisation to these complaints. At first the council disregarded this developing opposition, and then it recognised it with an entirely devastating frankness.

Never of course had there been so provisional a government. It was of an extravagant illegality. It was indeed hardly more than a club, a club of about a hundred persons. At the outset there were ninety-three, and these were increased afterwards by the issue of invitations which more than balanced its deaths, to as many at one time as one hundred and nineteen. Always its constitution has been miscellaneous. At no time were these invitations issued with an admission that they recognised a right. The old institution of monarchy had come out unexpectedly well in the light of the new régime. Nine of the original members of the first government were crowned heads who had resigned their separate sovereignty, and at no time afterwards did the number of its royal members sink below six. In their case there was perhaps a kind of attenuated claim to rule, but except for them and the still more infinitesimal pretensions of one or two ex-presidents of republics, no member of the council had even the shade of a right to his participation in its power. It was natural, therefore, that its opponents should find a common ground in a clamour for representative government, and build high hopes upon a return to parliamentary institutions.

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The council decided to give them everything they wanted, but in a form that suited ill with their aspirations. It became at one stroke a representative body. It became indeed magnificently representative. It became so representative that the politicians were drowned in a deluge of votes. Every adult of either sex from pole to pole was given a vote, and the world was divided into ten constituencies, which voted on the same day by means of a simple modification of the world post. Membership of the government it was decided must be for life, save in the exceptional case of a recall; but the elections, which were held quinquennially, were arranged to add fifty members on each occasion. The method of proportional representation with one transferable vote was adopted, and the voter might also write upon his voting paper in a specially marked space the name of any of his representatives that he wished to recall. A ruler was recallable by as many votes as the quota by which he had been elected, and the original members by as many votes in any constituency as the returning quotas in the first election.

Upon these conditions the council submitted itself very cheerfully to the suffrages of the world. None of its members were recalled, and its fifty new associates, which included twenty-seven which it had seen fit to recommend, were of an altogether too miscellaneous quality to disturb the broad trend of its policy. Its freedom from rules or formalities prevented any obstructive proceedings, and when one of the two newly arrived Home Rule members for India sought for information how to bring in a bill,

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they learned simply that bills were not brought in. They asked for the speaker, and were privileged to hear much ripe wisdom from the ex-king Egbert, who was now consciously among the seniors of the gathering. Thereafter they were baffled men. . . .

But already by that time the work of the council was drawing to an end. It was concerned not so much for the continuation of its construction as for the preservation of its accomplished work from the dramatic instincts of the politician.

The life of the race becomes indeed more and more independent of the formal government. The council in its opening phase was heroic in spirit; a dragon-slaying body, it slashed out of existence a vast knotted tangle of obsolete ideas and clumsy and jealous proprietorships; it secured by a noble system of institutional precautions, freedom of inquiry, freedom of criticism, free communications, a common basis of education and understanding and freedom from economic oppression. With that its creative task was accomplished. It became more and more an established security and less and less an active intervention. There is nothing in our time to correspond with the continual petty making and entangling of laws in an atmosphere of contention that is perhaps the most perplexing aspect of constitutional history in the nineteenth century. In that age they seem to have been perpetually making laws when we should alter regulations. The work of change which we delegate to these scientific committees of specific general direction having the special knowledge needed, and which are themselves dominated by the broad in-

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tellectual process of the community, was in those days inextricably mixed up with legislation. They fought over the details; we should as soon think of fighting over the arrangement of the parts of a machine. We know nowadays that such things go on best within laws, as life goes on between earth and sky. And so it is that government gathers now for a day or so in each year under the sunshine of Brissago when Saint Bruno's lilies are in flower, and does little more than bless the work of its committees. And even these committees are less originaive and more expressive of the general thought than they were at first. It becomes difficult to mark out the particular directive personalities of the world. Continually we are less personal. Every good thought contributes now, and every able brain falls within that informal and dispersed kingship which gathers together into one purpose the energies of the race.

### § 10

It is doubtful if we shall ever see again a phase of human existence in which "politics," that is to say a partisan interference with the ruling sanities of the world, will be the dominant interest among serious men. We seem to have entered upon an entirely new phase in history in which contention as distinguished from rivalry has almost abruptly ceased to be the usual occupation, and has become at most a subdued and hidden and discredited thing. Contentious professions cease to be an honourable employment for

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men. The peace between nations is also a peace between individuals. We live in a world that comes of age. Man the warrior, man the lawyer, and all the bickering aspects of life, pass into obscurity; the grave dreamers, man the curious learner and man the creative artist, come forward to replace these barbaric aspects of existence by a less ignoble adventure.

There is no natural life of man. He is and always has been a sheath of varied and even incompatible possibilities, a palimpsest of inherited dispositions. It was the habit of many writers in the early twentieth century to speak of competition and the narrow private life of trade and saving and suspicious isolation as though such things were in some exceptional way proper to the human constitution, and as though openness of mind and a preference for achievement over possession were abnormal and rather unsubstantial qualities. How wrong that was the history of the decades immediately following the establishment of the world republic witnesses. Once the world was released from the hardening insecurities of a needless struggle for life that was collectively planless and individually absorbing, it became apparent that there was in the vast mass of people a long smothered passion to make things. The world broke out into making, and at first mainly into æsthetic making. This phase of history, which has been not inaptly termed the "Efflorescence," is still to a large extent with us. The majority of our population consists of artists, and the bulk of activity in the world lies no longer with necessities but with their

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elaboration, decoration, and refinement. There has been an evident change in the quality of this making during recent years. It becomes more purposeful than it was, losing something of its first elegance and prettiness and gaining in intensity; but that is a change rather of hue than of nature. That comes with a deepening philosophy and a sounder education. For the first joyous exercises of fancy we perceive now the deliberation of a more constructive imagination. There is a natural order in these things, and art comes before science as the satisfaction of more elemental needs must come before art, and as play and pleasure come in a human life before the development of a settled purpose. . . .

For thousands of years this gathering impulse to creative work must have struggled in man against the limitations imposed upon him by his social ineptitude. It was a long smouldering fire that flamed out at last in all these things. The evidence of a pathetic, perpetually thwarted urgency to make something is one of the most touching aspects of the relics and records of our immediate ancestors. There exists still in the death area about the London bombs a region of deserted small homes that furnish the most illuminating comment on the old state of affairs. These homes are entirely horrible, uniform, square, squat, hideously proportioned, uncomfortable, dingy and in some respects quite filthy, only people in complete despair of anything better could have lived in them, but to each is attached a ridiculous little rectangle of land called "the garden," containing usually a prop for drying clothes and a loathsome box of

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offal, the dust-bin, full of egg-shells, cinders, and such-like refuse. Now that one may go about this region in comparative security—for the London radiations have dwindled to inconsiderable proportions—it is possible to trace in nearly every one of these gardens some effort to make. Here it is a poor little plank summer-house, here it is a “fountain” of bricks and oyster-shells, here a “rockery,” here a “workshop.” And in the houses everywhere there are pitiful little decorations, clumsy models, feeble drawings. These efforts are almost incredibly inept, like the drawings of blindfolded men, they are only one shade less harrowing to a sympathetic observer than the scratchings one finds upon the walls of the old prisons, but there they are, witnessing to the poor buried instincts that struggled up towards the light. That god of joyous expression our poor fathers ignorantly sought, our freedom has declared to us. . . .

In the old days the common ambition of every simple soul was to possess a little property, a patch of land, a house uncontrolled by others, an “independence” as the English used to put it. And what made this desire for freedom and prosperity so strong was very evidently the dream of self-expression, of doing something with it, of playing with it, of making a personal delightfulness, a distinctiveness. Property was never more than a means to an end, nor avarice more than a perversion. Men owned in order to do freely. Now that every one has his own apartments and his own privacy secure, this disposition to own has found its release in a new direction. Men study and save and strive that they may leave behind them



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a series of panels in some public arcade, a row of carven figures along a terrace, a grove, a pavilion. Or they give themselves to the penetration of some still opaque riddle in phenomena as once men gave themselves to the accumulation of riches. The work that was once the whole substance of social existence—for most men spent all their lives in earning a living—is now no more than was the burden upon one of those old climbers who carried knapsacks of provisions on their backs in order that they might ascend mountains. It matters little to the easy charities of our emancipated time that most people who have made their labour contribution produce neither new beauty nor new wisdom, but are simply busy about those pleasant activities and enjoyments that reassure them that they are alive. They help, it may be, by reception and reverberation, and they hinder nothing. . . .

### § 11

Now all this phase of gigantic change in the contours and appearances of human life which is going on about us, a change as rapid and as wonderful as the swift ripening of adolescence to manhood after the barbaric boyish years, is correlated with moral and mental changes at least as unprecedented. It is not as if old things were going out of life and new things coming in, it is rather that the altered circumstances of men are making an appeal to elements in his nature that have hitherto been suppressed, and checking tendencies that have hitherto been over-

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stimulated and overdeveloped. He has not so much grown and altered his essential being as turned new aspects to the light. Such turnings round into a new attitude the world has seen on a less extensive scale before. The Highlanders of the seventeenth century, for example, were cruel and bloodthirsty robbers, in the nineteenth their descendants were conspicuously trusty and honourable men. There was not a people in Western Europe in the early twentieth century that seemed capable of hideous massacres, and none that had not been guilty of them within the previous two centuries. The free frank kindly gentle life of the prosperous classes in any European country before the years of the last wars was in a different world of thought and feeling from that of the dingy, suspicious, secretive and uncharitable existence of the respectable poor, or the constant personal violence, the squalor and naïve passions of the lowest stratum. Yet there were no real differences of blood and inherent quality between these worlds; their differences were all in circumstances, suggestion, and habits of mind. And turning to more individual instances the constantly observed difference between one portion of a life and another consequent upon a religious conversion were a standing example of the versatile possibilities of human nature.

The catastrophe of the atomic bombs which shook men out of cities and businesses and economic relations shook them also out of their old established habits of thought, and out of the lightly held beliefs and prejudices that came down to them from the past. To borrow a word from the old-fashioned

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chemists, men were made nascent; they were released from old ties; for good or evil they were ready for new associations. The council carried them forward for good; perhaps if his bombs had reached their destination King Ferdinand Charles might have carried them back to an endless chain of evils. But his task would have been a harder one than the council's. The moral shock of the atomic bombs had been a profound one, and for a while the cunning side of the human animal was overpowered by its sincere realisation of the vital necessity for reconstruction. The litigious and trading spirits cowered together, scared at their own consequences; men thought twice before they sought mean advantages in the face of the unusual eagerness to realise new aspirations, and when at last the weeds revived again and "claims" began to sprout, they sprouted upon the stony soil of law-courts reformed, of laws that pointed to the future instead of the past, and under the blazing sunshine of a transforming world. A new literature, a new interpretation of history were springing into existence, a new teaching was already in the schools, a new faith in the young. The worthy man who forestalled the building of a research city for the English upon the Sussex downs by buying up a series of estates was dispossessed and laughed out of court when he made his demand for some preposterous compensation; the owner of the discredited Dass patents makes his last appearance upon the scroll of history as the insolvent proprietor of a paper called *The Cry for Justice*, in which he duns the world for a hundred million pounds. That was the ingenuous

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Dass' idea of justice, that he ought to be paid about five million pounds annually because he had annexed the selvage of one of Holsten's discoveries. Dass came at last to believe quite firmly in his right, and he died a victim to conspiracy mania in a private hospital at Nice. Both of these men would probably have ended their days enormously wealthy and of course ennobled in the England of the opening twentieth century, and it is just this novelty of their fates that marks the quality of the new age.

The new government early discovered the need of an universal education to fit men to the great conceptions of its universal rule. It made no wrangling attacks on the local, racial, and sectarian forms of religious profession that at that time divided the earth into a patchwork of hatreds and distrusts; it left these organisations to make their peace with God in their own fashion; but it proclaimed as if it were a mere secular truth that sacrifice was expected from all, that respect had to be shown to all; it revived schools or set them up afresh all around the world, and everywhere these schools taught the history of war and the consequences and moral of the Last War; everywhere it was taught not as a sentiment but as a matter of fact that the salvation of the world from waste and contention was the common duty and occupation of all men and women. These things which are now the elementary commonplaces of human intercourse seemed to the councillors of Brissago, when first they dared to proclaim them, marvellously daring discoveries, not untouched by doubt, that flushed the cheek and fired the eye.

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The council placed all this educational reconstruction in the hands of a committee of men and women, which did its work during the next few decades with remarkable breadth and effectiveness. This educational committee was and is the correlative upon the mental and spiritual side of the redistribution committee. And prominent upon it, and indeed for a time quite dominating it, was a Russian named Karenin who was singular in being a congenital cripple. His body was bent so that he walked with difficulty, suffered much pain as he grew older, and had at last to undergo two operations. The second killed him. Already malformation, which was to be seen in every crowd during the middle ages so that the crippled beggar was as it were an essential feature of the human spectacle, was becoming a strange thing in the world. It had a curious effect upon Karenin's colleagues; their feeling towards him was mingled with pity and a sense of inhumanity that it needed usage rather than reason to overcome. He had a strong face, with little bright brown eyes rather deeply sunken and a large resolute thin-lipped mouth. His skin was very yellow and wrinkled and his hair iron grey. He was at all times an impatient and sometimes an angry man, but this was forgiven him because of the hot wire of suffering that was manifestly thrust through his being. At the end of his life his personal prestige was very great. To him far more than to any contemporary is it due that self-abnegation, self-identification with the world spirit, was made the basis of universal education. That general memorandum to the teachers which is the key-note

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of the modern educational system was probably entirely his work.

“Whosoever would save his soul shall lose it,” he wrote. “That is the device upon the seal of this document and the starting-point of all we have to do. It is a mistake to regard it as anything but a plain statement of fact. It is the basis for your work. You have to teach self-forgetfulness, and everything else that you have to teach is contributory and subordinate to that end. Education is the release of man from self. You have to widen the horizons of your children, encourage and intensify their curiosity and their creative impulses, and cultivate and enlarge their sympathies. That is what you are for. Under your guidance and the suggestions you will bring to bear on them, they have to shed the old Adam of instinctive suspicions, hostilities, and passions, and to find themselves again in the great being of the universe. The little circles of their egotisms have to be opened out until they become arcs in the sweep of the racial purpose. And this that you teach to others you must learn also sedulously yourselves. Philosophy, discovery, art, every sort of skill, every sort of service, love: these are the means of salvation from that narrow loneliness of desire, that brooding preoccupation with self and egotistical relationships, which is hell for the individual, treason to the race, and exile from God. . . .”

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### § 12

As things round themselves off and accomplish themselves, one begins for the first time to see them clearly. From the perspectives of a new age one can look back upon the great and widening stream of literature with a complete understanding. Things link up that seemed disconnected, and things that were once condemned as harsh and aimless are seen to be but factors in the statement of a gigantic problem. An enormous bulk of the sincerer writing of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries falls together now into an unanticipated unanimity; one sees it as a huge tissue of variations upon one theme, the conflict of human egotism and personal passion and narrow imaginations on the one hand against the growing sense of wider necessities and a possible, more spacious life.

That conflict is in evidence in so early a work as Voltaire's "Candide," for example, in which the desire for justice as well as happiness beats against human contrariety and takes refuge at last in a forced and inconclusive contentment with little things. "Candide" was but one of the pioneers of a literature of uneasy complaint that was presently an innumerable multitude of books. The novels more particularly of the nineteenth century, if one excludes the mere story-tellers from our consideration, witness to this uneasy realisation of changes that call for effort and of the lack of that effort. In a thousand aspects, now tragically, now comically, now with a funny affectation of divine detachment, a

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countless host of witnesses tell their story of lives fretting between dreams and limitations. Now one laughs, now one weeps, now one reads with a blank astonishment at this huge and almost unpremeditated record of how the growing human spirit, now warily, now eagerly, now furiously and always as it seems unsuccessfully tried to adapt itself to the maddening misfit of its patched and ancient garments. And always in these books as one draws nearer to the heart of the matter there comes a disconcerting evasion. It was the fantastic convention of the time that a writer should not touch upon religion. To do so was to rouse the jealous fury of the great multitude of professional religious teachers. It was permitted to state the discord but it was forbidden to glance at any possible reconciliation. Religion was the privilege of the pulpit. . . .

It was not only from the novels that religion was omitted. It was ignored by the newspapers; it was pedantically disregarded in the discussion of business questions, it played a trivial and apologetic part in public affairs. And this was done not out of contempt but respect. The hold of the old religious organisations upon men's respect was still enormous, so enormous that there seemed to be a quality of irreverence in applying religion to the developments of every day. This strange suspension of religion lasted over into the beginnings of the new age. It was the clear vision of Marcus Karenin much more than any other contemporary influence which brought it back into the texture of human life. He saw religion without hallucinations, without superstitious



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reverence, as a common thing as necessary as food and air, as land and energy to the life of man and the well-being of the Republic. He saw that indeed it had already percolated away from the temples and hierarchies and symbols in which men had sought to imprison it, that it was already at work anonymously and obscurely in the universal acceptance of the greater state. He gave it clearer expression, re-phrased it to the lights and perspectives of the new dawn. . . .

But if we return to our novels for our evidence of the spirit of the times it becomes evident as one reads them in their chronological order, so far as that is now ascertainable, that as one comes to the latter nineteenth and the earlier twentieth century the writers are much more acutely aware of secular change than their predecessors were. The earlier novelists tried to show "life as it is," the latter showed life as it changes. More and more of their characters are engaged in adaptation to change or suffering from the effects of world changes. And as we come up to the time of the Last Wars, this newer conception of the every-day life as a reaction to an accelerated development is continually more manifest. Barnet's book, which has served us so well, is frankly a picture of the world coming about like a ship that sails into the wind. Our later novelists give a vast gallery of individual conflicts in which old habits and customs, limited ideas, ungenerous temperaments, and innate obsessions are pitted against this great opening out of life that has happened to us. They tell us of the feelings of old people who have been wrenched

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away from familiar surroundings, and how they have had to make peace with uncomfortable comforts and conveniences that are still strange to them. They give us the discord between the opening egotisms of youths and the ill-defined limitations of a changing social life. They tell of the universal struggle of jealousy to capture and cripple our souls, of romantic failures and tragical misconceptions of the trend of the world, of the spirit of adventure and the urgency of curiosity and how these serve the universal drift. And all their stories lead in the end either to happiness missed or happiness won, to disaster or salvation. The clearer their vision and the subtler their art, the more certainly do these novels tell of the possibility of salvation for all the world. For any road in life leads to religion for those upon it who will follow it far enough. . . .

It would have seemed a strange thing to the men of the former time that it should be an open question as it is to-day whether the world is wholly Christian or not Christian at all. But assuredly we have the spirit, and as surely have we left many temporary forms behind. Christianity was the first expression of world religion, the first complete repudiation of tribalism and war and disputation. That it fell presently into the ways of more ancient rituals cannot alter that. The common sense of mankind has toiled through two thousand years of chastening experience to find at last how sound a meaning attaches to the familiar phrases of the Christian faith. The scientific thinker as he widens out to the moral problems of the collective life comes inevitably upon the words

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of Christ, and as inevitably does the Christian, as his thought grows clearer, arrive at the world republic. As for the claims of the sects, as for the use of a name and successions, we live in a time that has shaken itself free from such claims and consistencies.

## CHAPTER THE FIFTH

### THE LAST DAYS OF MARCUS KARENIN

#### § 1

THE second operation upon Marcus Karenin was performed at the new station for surgical work at Paran, high in the Himalayas above the Sutlej gorge where it comes down out of Thibet.

It is a place of such wildness and beauty as no other scenery in the world affords. The granite terrace which runs round the four sides of the low block of laboratories looks out in every direction upon mountains. Far below in the hidden depths of a shadowy blue cleft, the river pours down in its tumultuous passage to the swarming plains of India. No sound of its roaring haste comes up to those serenities. Beyond that blue gulf, in which whole forests of giant deodars seem no more than small patches of moss, rise vast precipices of many-coloured rock, fretted above, lined by snowfalls and jagged into pinnacles. These are the northward wall of a towering wilderness of ice and snow which clambers southward higher and wilder and vaster to the culminating summits of our globe, to Dhaulagiri and Everest. Here are cliffs of which no other land can show the like and deep chasms in which Mt. Blanc might be plunged and hidden. Here are ice-fields as big as inland seas on which the tumbled boulders lie so thickly that strange little flowers can bloom among

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them under the untempered sunshine. To the northward, and blocking out any vision of the uplands of Thibet, rises that citadel of porcelain, that gothic pile, the Lio Porgyul, walls, towers, and peaks, a clear twelve thousand feet of veined and splintered rock above the river. And beyond it and eastward and westward rise peaks behind peaks, against the dark blue Himalayan sky. Far away below to the south the clouds of the Indian rains pile up abruptly and are stayed by an invisible hand.

Hither it was that with a dreamlike swiftness Karenin flew high over the irrigations of Rajputana and the towers and cupolas of the ultimate Delhi; and the little group of buildings, albeit the southward wall dropped nearly five hundred feet, seemed to him as he soared down to it like a toy lost among these mountain wildernesses. No road came up to this place; it was reached only by flight.

His pilot descended to the great courtyard, and Karenin assisted by his secretary clambered down through the wing fabric and made his way to the officials who came out to receive him.

In this place, beyond infections and noise and any distractions, surgery had made for itself a house of research and a healing fastness. The building itself would have seemed very wonderful to eyes accustomed to the flimsy architecture of an age when *power* was precious. It was made of granite, already a little roughened on the outside by frost, but polished within and of a tremendous solidity. And in a honeycomb of subtly lit apartments were the spotless research benches, the operating-tables, the instruments

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of brass and fine glass and platinum and gold. Men and women came from all parts of the world for study or experimental research. They wore a common uniform of white and ate at long tables together, but the patients lived in an upper part of the buildings and were cared for by nurses and skilled attendants. . . .

The first man to greet Karenin was Ciana, the scientific director of the institution. Beside him was Rachel Borken, the chief organiser. "You are tired?" she asked, and old Karenin shook his head. "Cramped," he said. "I have wanted to visit such a place as this."

He spoke as if he had no other business with them.

There was a little pause.

"How many scientific people have you got here now?" he asked.

"Just three hundred and ninety-two," said Rachel Borken.

"And the patients and attendants and so on?"

"Two thousand and thirty."

"I shall be a patient," said Karenin. "I shall have to be a patient. But I should like to see things first. Presently I will be a patient."

"You will come to my rooms?" suggested Ciana.

"And then I must talk to this doctor of yours," said Karenin. "But I would like to see a bit of this place and talk to some of your people before it comes to that."

He winced and moved forward.

"I have left most of my work in order," he said.

"You have been working hard up to now?" asked Rachel Borken.

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"Yes. And now I have nothing more to do—and it seems strange. . . . And it's a bother, this illness and having to come down to oneself. This doorway and that row of windows is well done; the grey granite and just the line of gold and then those mountains beyond through that arch. It's very well done. . . ."

### § 2

Karenin lay on the bed with a soft white rug about him, and Fowler, who was to be his surgeon, sat on the edge of the bed and talked to him. An assistant was seated quietly in the shadow behind the bed. The examination had been made and Karenin knew what was before him. He was tired but serene.

"So I shall die," he said, "unless you operate?"

Fowler assented.

"And then," said Karenin smiling, "probably I shall die."

"Not certainly."

"Even if I do not die shall I be able to work?"

"There is just a chance. . . ."

"So firstly I shall probably die, and if I do not, then perhaps I shall be a useless invalid?"

"I think if you live, you may be able to go on—as you do now."

"Well, then, I suppose I must take the risk of it. Yet couldn't you, Fowler, couldn't you drug me and patch me instead of all this—vivisection? A few days of drugged and active life—and then the end?"

Fowler thought. "We are not sure enough yet to do things like that," he said.

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"But a day is coming when you will be certain." Fowler nodded.

"You make me feel as though I was the last of deformity. Deformity is uncertainty—inaccuracy. My body works doubtfully, it is not even sure that it will die or live. I suppose the time is not far off when such bodies as mine will no longer be born into the world."

"You see," said Fowler after a little pause, "it is necessary that spirits such as yours should be born into the world."

"I suppose," said Karenin, "that my spirit has had its use. But if you think that is because my body is as it is I think you are mistaken. There is no peculiar virtue in defect. I have always chafed against—all this. If I could have moved more freely and lived a larger life in health I could have done more. But some day perhaps you will be able to put a body that is wrong altogether right again. Your science is only beginning. It's a subtler thing than physics and chemistry and it takes longer to produce its miracles. And meanwhile a few more of us must die in patience."

"Fine work is being done and much of it," said Fowler. "I can say as much because I have nothing to do with it. I can understand a lesson, appreciate the discoveries of abler men and use my hands, but those others, Pigou, Masterton, Lie, and the others, they are clearing the ground fast for the knowledge to come. Have you had time to follow their work?"

Karenin shook his head. "But I can imagine the scope of it," he said.



## LAST DAYS OF MARCUS KARENIN

"We have so many men working now," said Fowler. "I suppose at present there must be at least a thousand thinking hard, observing, experimenting, for one who did so in 1900."

"Not counting those who keep the records?"

"Not counting those. Of course the present indexing of research is in itself a very big work and it is only now that we are getting it properly done. But already we are feeling the benefit of that. Since it ceased to be a paid employment and became a devotion we have had only those people who obeyed the call of an aptitude at work upon these things. Here—I must show you it to-day because it will interest you—we have our copy of the encyclopædic index—every week sheets are taken out and replaced by fresh sheets with new results that are brought to us by the aeroplanes of the Research Department. It is an index of knowledge that grows continually, an index that becomes continually truer. There was never anything like it before."

"When I came into the education committee," said Karenin, "that index of human knowledge seemed an impossible thing. Research had produced a chaotic mountain of results, in a hundred languages and a thousand different types of publication. . . ." He smiled at his memories. "How we groaned at the job!"

"Already the ordering of that chaos is nearly done. You shall see."

"I have been so busy with my own work— Yes, I shall be glad to see."

The patient regarded the surgeon for a time with interested eyes.

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"You work here always?" he asked abruptly.

"No," said Fowler.

"But mostly you work here?"

"I have worked here about seven years out of the past ten. At times I go away—down there. One has to. At least I have to. There is a sort of greyness comes over all this, one feels hungry for life, real personal passionate life, love-making, eating and drinking for the fun of the thing, jostling crowds, having adventures, laughter—above all laughter——"

"Yes," said Karenin understandingly.

"And then one day, suddenly one thinks of these high mountains again. . . ."

"That is how I would have lived, if it had not been for my—defects," said Karenin. "Nobody knows but those who have borne it the exasperation of abnormality. It will be good when you have nobody alive whose body cannot live the wholesome every-day life, whose spirit cannot come up into these high places as it wills."

"We shall manage that soon," said Fowler.

"For endless generations man has struggled upward against the indignities of his body—and the indignities of his soul. Pains, incapacities, vile fears, black moods, despairs. How well I've known them. They've taken more time than all your holidays. It is true, is it not, that every man is something of a cripple and something of a beast? I've dipped a little deeper than most; that's all. It's only now when he has fully learned the truth of that, that he can take hold of himself to be neither beast nor cripple. Now that he overcomes his servitude to his

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body, he can for the first time think of living the full life of his body. . . . Before another generation dies you'll have the thing in hand. You'll do as you please with the old Adam and all the vestiges from the brutes and reptiles that lurk in his body and spirit. Isn't that so?"

"You put it boldly," said Fowler.

Karenin laughed cheerfully at his caution. . . .

"When," asked Karenin suddenly, "when will you operate?"

"The day after to-morrow," said Fowler. "For a day I want you to drink and eat as I shall prescribe. And you may think and talk as you please."

"I should like to see this place."

"You shall go through it this afternoon. I will have two men carry you in a litter. And to-morrow you shall lie out upon the terrace. Our mountains here are the most beautiful in the world. . . ."

### § 3

The next morning Karenin got up early and watched the sun rise over the mountains, and breakfasted lightly, and then young Gardener, his secretary, came to consult him upon the spending of his day. Would he care to see people? Or was this gnawing pain within him too much to permit him to do that?

"I'd like to talk," said Karenin. "There must be all sorts of lively-minded people here. Let them come and gossip with me. It will distract me—and I can't tell you how interesting it makes everything that

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is going on to have seen the dawn of one's own last day."

"Your last day!"

"Fowler will kill me."

"But he thinks not."

"Fowler will kill me. If he does not he will not leave very much of me. So that this is my last day anyhow, the days afterwards if they come at all to me, will be refuse. I know. . . ."

Gardener was about to speak when Karenin went on again.

"I hope he kills me, Gardener. Don't be—old-fashioned. The thing I am most afraid of is that last rag of life. I may just go on—a scarred salvage of suffering stuff. And then—all the things I have hidden and kept down or discounted or set right afterwards will get the better of me. I shall be peevish. I may lose my grip upon my own egotism. It's never been a very firm grip. No, no, Gardener, don't say that! You know better, you've had glimpses of it. Suppose I came through on the other side of this affair, belittled, vain and spiteful, using the prestige I have got among men by my good work in the past just to serve some small invalid purpose. . . ."

He was silent for a time, watching the mists among the distant precipices change to clouds of light, and drift and dissolve before the searching rays of the sunrise.

"Yes," he said at last, "I am afraid of these anæsthetics and these fag ends of life. It's life we are all afraid of. Death!—nobody minds just death. Fowler is clever—but some day surgery will know its duty

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better and not be so anxious just to save something . . . provided only that it quivers. I've tried to hold my end up properly and do my work. After Fowler has done with me I am certain I shall be unfit for work—and what else is there for me? . . . I know I shall not be fit for work. . . .

“I do not see why life should be judged by its last trailing thread of vitality. . . . I know it for the splendid thing it is,—I who have been a diseased creature from the beginning. I know it well enough not to confuse it with its husks. Remember that, Gardener, if presently my heart fails me and I despair, and if I go through a little phase of pain and ingratitude and dark forgetfulness before the end. . . . Don't believe what I may say at the last. . . . If the fabric is good enough the selvage doesn't matter. It can't matter. So long as you are alive you are just the moment, perhaps, but when you are dead then you are all your life from the first moment to the last. . . .”

### § 4

Presently, in accordance with his wish, people came to talk to him, and he could forget himself again. Rachel Borken sat for a long time with him and talked chiefly of women in the world, and with *her* was a girl named Edith Haydon, who was already very well known as a cytologist. And several of the younger men who were working in the place and a patient named Kahn, a poet, and Edwards, a designer of plays and shows, spent some time with him.

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The talk wandered from point to point and came back upon itself, and became now earnest and now trivial as the chance suggestions determined. But soon afterwards Gardener wrote down notes of things he remembered, and it is possible to put together again the outlook of Karenin upon the world and how he thought and felt about many of the principal things in life.

“Our age,” he said, “has been so far an age of scene-shifting. We have been preparing a stage, clearing away the setting of a drama that was played out and growing tiresome. . . . If I could but sit out the first few scenes of the new spectacle. . . .

“How encumbered the world had become! It was ailing as I am ailing with a growth of unmeaning things. It was entangled, feverish, confused. It was in sore need of release, and I suppose that nothing less than the violence of those bombs could have released it and made it a healthy world again. I suppose they were necessary. Just as everything turns to evil in a fevered body so everything seemed turning to evil in those last years of the old time. Everywhere there were obsolete organisations seizing upon all the new fine things that science was giving to the world, nationalities, all sorts of political bodies, the churches and sects, proprietorship, seizing upon those great powers and limitless possibilities and turning them to evil uses. And they would not suffer open speech, they would not permit of education, they would let no one be educated to the needs of the new time. . . . You who are younger cannot imagine the mixture of desperate hope and protesting despair

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in which we who could believe in the possibilities of science lived in those years before atomic energy came. . . .

“It was not only that the mass of people would not attend, would not understand, but that those who did understand lacked the power of real belief. They said the things, they saw the things, and the things meant nothing to them. . . .

“I have been reading some old papers lately. It is wonderful how our fathers bore themselves towards science. They hated it. They feared it. They permitted a few scientific men to exist and work—a pitiful handful. . . . ‘Don’t find out anything about us,’ they said to them; ‘don’t inflict vision upon us, spare our little ways of life from the fearful shaft of understanding. But do tricks for us, little limited tricks. Give us cheap lighting. And cure us of certain disagreeable things, cure us of cancer, cure us of consumption, cure our colds and relieve us after repletion. . . .’ We have changed all that, Gardener. Science is no longer our servant. We know it for something greater than our little individual selves. It is the awakening mind of the race, and in a little while— In a little while— I wish indeed I could watch for that little while, now that the curtain has risen. . . .

“While I lie here they are clearing up what is left of the bombs in London,” he said. “Then they are going to repair the ruins and make it all as like as possible to its former condition before the bombs fell. Perhaps they will dig out the old house in St. John’s Wood to which my father went after his expulsion

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from Russia. . . . That London of my memories seems to me like a place in another world. For you younger people it must seem like a place that could never have existed."

"Is there much left standing?" asked Edith Haydon.

"Square miles that are scarcely shaken in the south and north-west, they say; and most of the bridges and large areas of dock. Westminster, which held most of the government offices, suffered badly from the small bomb that destroyed the Parliament, there are very few traces of the old thoroughfare of Whitehall or the Government region thereabout, but there are plentiful drawings to scale of its buildings, and the great hole in the east of London scarcely matters. That was a poor district and very like the north and the south. . . . It will be possible to reconstruct most of it. . . . It is wanted. Already it becomes difficult to recall the old time—even for us who saw it."

"It seems very distant to me," said the girl. . . .

"It was an unwholesome world," reflected Karenin. "I seem to remember everybody about my childhood as if they were ill. They were ill. They were sick with confusion. Everybody was anxious about money and everybody was doing uncongenial things. They ate a queer mixture of foods, either too much or too little, and at odd hours. One sees how ill they were by their advertisements. All this new region of London they are opening up now is plastered with advertisements of pills. Everybody must have been taking pills. In one of the hotel rooms in the Strand they have found



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the luggage of a lady covered up by falling rubble and unburned, and she was equipped with nine different sorts of pill and tabloid. The pill-carrying age followed the weapon-carrying age. They are equally strange to us. People's skins must have been in a vile state. Very few people were properly washed; they carried the filth of months on their clothes. All the clothes they wore were old clothes; our way of pulping our clothes again after a week or so of wear would have seemed fantastic to them. Their clothing hardly bears thinking about. And the congestion of them! Everybody was jostling against everybody in those awful towns. In an uproar. People were run over and crushed by the hundred; every year in London the cars and omnibuses alone killed or disabled twenty thousand people; in Paris it was worse; people used to fall dead for want of air in the crowded ways. The irritation of London, internal and external, must have been maddening. It was a maddened world. It is like thinking of a sick child. One has the same effect of feverish urgencies and acute irrational disappointments.

"All history," he said, "is a record of a childhood. . . ."

"And yet not exactly a childhood. There is something clean and keen about even a sick child—and something touching. But so much of the old time makes one angry. So much they did seems grossly stupid, obstinately, outrageously stupid, which is the *very* opposite to being fresh and young.

"I was reading only the other day about Bismarck, that hero of nineteenth-century politics, that sequel

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to Napoleon, that god of blood and iron. And he was just a beery, obstinate, dull man. Indeed that is what he was, the commonest, coarsest man who ever became great. I looked at his portraits, a heavy, almost froggish face, with projecting eyes and a thick moustache to hide a poor mouth. He aimed at nothing but Germany, Germany emphasised, indurated, enlarged; Germany and his class in Germany; beyond that he had no ideas, he was inaccessible to ideas; his mind never rose for a recorded instant above a bumpkin's elaborate cunning. And he was the most influential man in the world, in the whole world, no man ever left so deep a mark on it, because everywhere there were gross men to resonate to the heavy notes he emitted. He trampled on ten thousand lovely things, and a kind of malice in these louts made it pleasant to them to see him trample. No—he was no child; the dull national aggressiveness he stood for, no childishness. Childhood is promise. He was survival.

“All Europe offered its children to him, it sacrificed education, art, happiness and all its hopes of future welfare to follow the clatter of his sabre. The monstrous worship of that old fool's ‘blood and iron’ passed all round the earth. Until the atomic bombs burned our way to freedom again. . . .”

“One thinks of him now as one thinks of the megatherium,” said one of the young men.

“From first to last mankind made three million big guns and a hundred thousand complicated great ships for no other purpose but war.”

“Were there no sane men in those days,” asked the young man, “to stand against that idolatry?”

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"In a state of despair," said Edith Haydon.

"He is so far off—and there are men alive still who were alive when Bismarck died!" . . . said the young man. . . .

### § 5

"And yet it may be I am unjust to Bismarck," said Karenin, following his own thoughts. "You see men belong to their own age; we stand upon a common stock of thought and we fancy we stand upon the ground. I met a pleasant man the other day, a Maori, whose great-grandfather was a cannibal. It chanced he had a Daguerreotype of the old sinner, and the two were marvellously alike. One felt that a little juggling with time and either might have been the other. People are cruel and stupid in a stupid age who might be gentle and splendid in a gracious one. The world also has its moods. Think of the mental food of Bismarck's childhood; the humiliations of Napoleon's victories, the crowded crowning victory of the Battle of the Nations. . . . Everybody in those days, wise or foolish, believed that the division of the world under a multitude of governments was inevitable, and that it was going on for thousands of years more. It *was* inevitable until it was impossible. Any one who had denied that inevitability publicly would have been counted—oh! a *silly* fellow. Old Bismarck was only just a little—forcible, on the lines of the accepted ideas. That is all. He thought that since there had to be national governments he would make one that was strong at home and invincible abroad. Because he had fed

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with a kind of rough appetite upon what we can see now were very stupid ideas, that does not make him a stupid man. We've had advantages; we've had unity and collectivism blasted into our brains. Where should we be now but for the grace of science? I should have been an embittered, spiteful, downtrodden member of the Russian Intelligentsia, a conspirator, a prisoner, or an assassin. You, my dear, would have been breaking dingy windows as a suffragette."

"*Never,*" said Edith stoutly. . . .

For a time the talk broke into humorous personalities, and the young people gibed at each other across the smiling old administrator, and then presently one of the young scientific men gave things a new turn. He spoke like one who was full to the brim.

"You know, sir, I've a fancy—it is hard to prove such things—that civilisation was very near disaster when the atomic bombs came banging into it, that if there had been no Holsten and no induced radioactivity, the world would have—smashed—much as it did. Only instead of its being a smash that opened a way to better things, it might have been a smash without a recovery. It is part of my business to understand economics, and from that point of view the century before Holsten was just a hundred years' crescendo of waste. Only the extreme individualism of that period, only its utter want of any collective understanding or purpose can explain that waste. Mankind used up material—insanely. They had got through three-quarters of all the coal in the planet, they had used up most of the oil, they had swept

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away their forests, and they were running short of tin and copper. Their wheat areas were getting weary and populous, and many of the big towns had so lowered the water level of their available hills that they suffered a drought every summer. The whole system was rushing towards bankruptcy. And they were spending every year vaster and vaster amounts of power and energy upon military preparations, and continually expanding the debt of industry to capital. The system was already staggering when Holsten began his researches. So far as the world in general went there was no sense of danger and no desire for inquiry. They had no belief that science could save them, nor any idea that there was a need to be saved. They could not, they would not, see the gulf beneath their feet. It was pure good luck for mankind at large that any research at all was in progress. And as I say, sir, if that line of escape hadn't opened, before now there might have been a crash, revolution, panic, social disintegration, famine, and—it is conceivable—complete disorder. . . . The rails might have rusted on the disused railways by now, the telephone-poles have rotted and fallen, the big liners dropped into sheet iron in the ports; the burned deserted cities become the ruinous hiding-places of gangs of robbers. We might have been brigands in a shattered and attenuated world. Ah, you may smile, but that had happened before in human history. The world is still studded with the ruins of broken-down civilisations. Barbaric bands made *their* fastness upon the Acropolis, and the tomb of Hadrian became a fortress that warred across the

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ruins of Rome against the Colosseum. . . . Had all that possibility of reaction ended so certainly in 1940? Is it all so very far away even now?"

"It seems far enough away now," said Edith Haydon.

"But forty years ago?"

"No," said Karenin with his eyes upon the mountains, "I think you underrate the available intelligence in those early decades of the twentieth century. Officially, I know, politically, that intelligence didn't tell,—but it was there. And I question your hypothesis. I doubt if that discovery could have been delayed. There is a kind of inevitable logic now in the progress of research. For a hundred years and more thought and science have been going their own way regardless of the common events of life. You see,—*they have got loose*. If there had been no Holsten there would have been some similar man. If atomic energy had not come in one year it would have come in another. In decadent Rome the march of science had scarcely begun. . . . Nineveh, Babylon, Athens, Syracuse, Alexandria, these were the first rough experiments in association that made a security, a breathing-space, in which inquiry was born. Man had to experiment before he found out the way to begin. But already two hundred years ago he had fairly begun. . . . The politics and dignities and wars of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were only the last phoenix blaze of the former civilisation flaring up about the beginnings of the new. Which we serve. . . .

"Man lives in the dawn for ever," said Karenin.

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"Life is beginning and nothing else but beginning. It begins everlastingly. Each step seems vaster than the last, and does but gather us together for the next. This Modern State of ours, which would have been a Utopian marvel a hundred years ago, is already the commonplace of life. But as I sit here and dream of the possibilities in the mind of man that now gather to a head beneath the shelter of its peace, these great mountains here seem but little things. . . ."

### § 6

About eleven Karenin had his midday meal, and afterwards he slept among his artificial furs and pillows for two hours. Then he awoke and some tea was brought to him, and he attended to a small difficulty in connection with the Moravian schools in the Labrador country and in Greenland that Gardener knew would interest him. He remained alone for a little while after that, and then the two women came to him again. Afterwards Edwards and Kahn joined the group, and the talk fell upon love and the place of women in the renascent world. The cloud-banks of India lay under a quivering haze, and the blaze of the sun fell full upon the eastward precipices. Ever and again as they talked some vast splinter of rock would crack and come away from these, or a wild *rush* of snow and ice and stone pour down in thunder, hang like a wet thread into the gulfs below, and cease. . . .

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### § 7

For a time Karenin said very little, and Kahn, the popular poet, talked of passionate love. He said that passionate personal love had been the abiding desire of humanity since ever humanity had begun, and now only was it becoming a possible experience. It had been a dream that generation after generation had pursued, that always men had lost on the verge of attainment. To most of those who had sought it obstinately it had brought tragedy. Now, lifted above sordid distresses, men and women might hope for realised and triumphant love. This age was the Dawn of Love. . . .

Karenin remained downcast and thoughtful while Kahn said these things. Against that continued silence Kahn's voice presently seemed to beat and fail. He had begun by addressing Karenin, but presently he was including Edith Haydon and Rachel Borken in his appeal. Rachel listened silently; Edith watched Karenin and very deliberately avoided Kahn's eyes.

"I know," said Karenin at last, "that many people are saying this sort of thing. I know that there is a vast release of love-making in the world. This great wave of decoration and elaboration that has gone about the world, this Efflorescence, has of course laid hold of that. I know that when you say that the world is set free, you interpret that to mean that the world is set free for love-making. Down there, —under the clouds, the lovers foregather. I know your songs, Kahn, your half-mystical songs, in which



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you represent this old hard world dissolving into a luminous haze of love—sexual love. . . . I don't think you are right or true in that. You are a young imaginative man, and you see life—ardently—with the eyes of youth. But the power that has brought man into these high places under this blue-veiled blackness of the sky and which beckons us on towards the immense and awful future of our race, is riper and deeper and greater than any such emotions. . . .

“All through my life—it has been a necessary part of my work—I have had to think of this release of sexual love and the riddles that perfect freedom and almost limitless power will put to the soul of our race. I can see now, all over the world, a beautiful ecstasy of waste; ‘Let us sing and rejoice and be lovely and wonderful.’ . . . The orgy is only beginning, Kahn. . . . It was inevitable—but it is not the end of mankind. . . .

“Think what we are. It is but a yesterday in the *endlessness* of time that life was a dreaming thing, dreaming so deeply that it forgot itself as it dreamt, its lives, its individual instincts, its moments, were born and wondered and played and desired and hungered and grew weary and died. Incalculable *successions* of vision, visions of sunlit jungle, river wilderness, wild forest, eager desire, beating hearts, soaring wings and creeping terror flamed hotly and then were as though they had never been. Life was an uneasiness across which lights played and vanished. And *then* we came, man came, and opened eyes that were a question and hands that were a demand and began a mind and memory that dies not when men die, but

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lives and increases for ever, an overmind, a dominating will, a question and an aspiration that reaches to the stars. . . . Hunger and fear and this that you make so much of, this sex, are but the elementals of life out of which we have arisen. All these elementals, I grant you, have to be provided for, dealt with, satisfied, but all these things have to be left behind."

"But Love," said Kahn.

"I speak of sexual love and the love of intimate persons. And that is what you mean, Kahn."

Karenin shook his head. "You cannot stay at the roots and climb the tree," he said. . . .

"No," he said after a pause, "this sexual excitement, this love story, is just a part of growing up and we grow out of it. So far literature and art and sentiment and all our emotional forms have been almost altogether adolescent, plays and stories, delights and hopes, they have all turned on that marvellous discovery of the love interest, but life lengthens out now and the mind of adult humanity detaches itself. Poets who used to die at thirty live now to eighty-five. You too, Kahn! There are endless years yet for you—and all full of learning. . . . We carry an excessive burthen of sex and sexual tradition still and we have to free ourselves from it. We do free ourselves from it. We have learned in a thousand different ways to hold back death, and this sex, which in the old barbaric days was just sufficient to balance our dying, is now like a hammer that has lost its anvil, it plunges through human life. You poets, you young people want to turn it to delight. Turn it to delight. That may be one way out. In a little while,

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if you have any brains worth thinking about, you will be satisfied and then you will come up here to the greater things. The old religions and their new offsets want still I see to suppress all these things. Let them suppress. If they can suppress. In their own people. Either road will bring you here at last to the eternal search for knowledge and the great adventure of power."

"But incidentally," said Rachel Borken, "incidentally you have half of humanity, you have woman-kind, very much specialised for—for this love and reproduction that is so much less needed than it was."

"Both sexes are specialised for love and reproduction," said Karenin.

"But the women carry the heavier burthen."

"Not in their imaginations," said Edwards.

"And surely," said Kahn, "when you speak of love as a phase—isn't it a necessary phase? Quite apart from reproduction the love of the sexes is necessary. Isn't it love, sexual love, which has released the imagination? Without that stir, without that *impulse* to go out from ourselves, to be reckless of ourselves and wonderful, would our lives be anything more than the contentment of the stalled ox?"

"The key that opens the door," said Karenin, "is not the goal of the journey."

"But women!" cried Rachel. "Here we are! What is our future—as women? Is it only that we have unlocked the doors of the imagination for you men? *Let us speak* of this question now. It is a thing constantly in my thoughts, Karenin. What do you

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think of us? You who must have thought so much of these perplexities.”

Karenin seemed to weigh his words. He spoke very deliberately. “I do not care a rap about your future—as women. I do not care a rap about the future of men—as males. I want to destroy these peculiar futures. I care for your future as intelligences, as parts of and contribution to the universal mind of the race. Humanity is not only naturally overspecialised in these matters, but all its institutions, its customs, everything, exaggerate, intensify this difference. I want to unspecialise women. No new idea. Plato wanted exactly that. I do not want to go on as we go now, emphasising this natural difference; I do not deny it, but I want to reduce it and overcome it.”

“And—we remain women,” said Rachel Borken.

“Need you remain thinking of yourselves as women?”

“It is forced upon us,” said Edith Haydon.

“I do not think a woman becomes less of a woman because she dresses and works like a man,” said Edwards. “You women here, I mean you scientific women, wear white clothing like the men, twist up your hair in the simplest fashion, go about your work as though there was only one sex in the world. You are just as much women, even if you are not so feminine, as the fine ladies down below there in the plains who dress for excitement and display, whose only thoughts are of lovers, who exaggerate every difference. . . . Indeed we love you more. . . .”

“But we go about our work,” said Edith Haydon.

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"So does it matter?" asked Rachel.

"If you go about your work and if the men go about their work, then for Heaven's sake be as much woman as you wish," said Karenin. "When I ask you to unspecialise, I am thinking not of the abolition of sex, but the abolition of the irksome, restricting, obstructive obsession with sex. It may be true that sex made society, that the first society was the sex-cemented family, the first state a confederacy of blood relations, the first laws sexual taboos. Until a few years ago morality meant proper sexual behaviour. Up to within a few years of us the chief interest and motive of an ordinary man was to keep and rule a woman and her children, and the chief concern of a woman was to get a man to do that. That was the drama, that was life. And the jealousy of these demands was the master motive in the world. You said, Kahn, a little while ago that sexual love was the key that let one out from the solitude of self, but I tell you that so far it has only done so in order to lock us all up again in a solitude of two. . . . All that may have been necessary but it is necessary no longer. All that has changed and changes still very swiftly. Your future, Rachel, *as women*, is a diminishing future."

"Karenin," asked Rachel, "do you mean that women are to become men?"

"Men and women have to become human beings."

"You would abolish women? But, Karenin, listen! There is more than sex in this. Apart from sex we are different from you. We take up life differently. Forget we are—females, Karenin, and still we are a

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different sort of human being with a different use. In some things we are amazingly secondary. Here am I in this place because of my trick of management, and Edith is here because of her patient, subtle hands. That does not alter the fact that nearly the whole body of science is man made; that does not alter the fact that men do so predominately make history, that you could nearly write a complete history of the world without mentioning a woman's name. And on the other hand we have a gift of devotion, of inspiration, a distinctive power for truly loving beautiful things, a care for life and a peculiar keen close eye for behaviour. You know men are blind beside us in these last matters. You know they are restless—and fitful. We have a steadfastness. We may never draw the broad outlines nor discover the new paths, but in the future isn't there a confirming and sustaining and supplying rôle for us? As important perhaps as yours? Equally important. We hold the world up, Karenin, though you may have raised it."

"You know very well, Rachel, that I believe as you believe. I am not thinking of the abolition of woman. But I do want to abolish—the heroine, the sexual heroine. I want to abolish the woman whose support is jealousy and whose gift possession. I want to abolish the woman who can be won as a prize or locked up as a delicious treasure. And away down there the heroine flares like a divinity."

"In America," said Edwards, "men are fighting duels over the praises of women and holding tournaments before Queens of Beauty."

"I saw a beautiful girl in Lahore," said Kahn; "she

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sat under a golden canopy like a goddess and three fine men armed and dressed as in the ancient paintings sat on steps below her to show their devotion. And they wanted only her permission to fight for her."

"That is the men's doing," said Edith Haydon.

"I *said*," cried Edwards, "that man's imagination was more specialised for sex than the whole being of woman. What woman would do a thing like that? Women do but submit to it or take advantage of it."

"There is no evil between men and women that is not a common evil," said Karenin. "It is you poets, Kahn, with your love-songs which turn the sweet fellowship of comrades into this woman-centred excitement. But there is something in women, in many women, which responds to these provocations; they succumb to a peculiarly self-cultivating egotism. They become the subjects of their own artistry. They develop and elaborate themselves as scarcely any man would ever do. They *look* for golden canopies. And even when they seem to react against that, they may do it still. I have been reading in the old papers of the movements to emancipate women that were going on before the discovery of atomic force. These things which began with a desire to escape from the limitations and servitude of sex, ended in an inflamed assertion of sex, and women more heroines than ever. Helen of Holloway was at *last* as big a nuisance in her way as Helen of Troy, and so long as you think of yourselves as women"—he held out a finger at Rachel and smiled gently—

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“instead of thinking of yourselves as intelligent beings, you will be in danger of—Hellenism. To think of yourselves as women is to think of yourselves in relation to men. You can't escape that consequence. You have to learn to think of yourselves—for our sakes and your own sakes—in relation to the sun and stars. You have to cease to be our adventure, Rachel, and come with us upon our adventures. . . .”

He waved his hand towards the dark sky above the mountain crests.

### § 8

“These questions are the next questions to which research will bring us answers,” said Karenin. “While we sit here and talk idly and inexactly of what is needed and what may be, there are hundreds of keen-witted men and women who are working these things out, dispassionately and certainly, for the love of knowledge. The next sciences to yield great harvests now will be psychology and neural physiology. These perplexities of the situation between man and woman and the trouble with the obstinacy of egotism, these are temporary troubles, the issue of our own times. Suddenly all these differences that seem so fixed will dissolve, all these incompatibles will run together, and we shall go on to mould our bodies and our bodily feelings and personal reactions as boldly as we begin now to carve mountains and set the seas in their places and change the currents of the wind.”

“It is the next wave,” said Fowler, who had come out upon the terrace and seated himself silently behind Karenin's chair.



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"Of course in the old days," said Edwards, "men were tied to their city or their country, tied to the homes they owned or the work they did. . . ."

"I do not see," said Karenin, "that there is any final limit to man's power of self-modification."

"There is none," said Fowler walking forward and sitting down upon the parapet in front of Karenin so that he could see his face. "There is no absolute limit to either knowledge or power. . . . I hope you do not tire yourself talking."

"I am interested," said Karenin. "I suppose in a little while men will cease to be tired. I suppose in a little time you will give us something that will hurry away the fatigue products and restore our jaded tissues almost at once. This old machine may be made to run without slacking or cessation."

"That is possible, Karenin. But there is much to learn."

"And all the hours we give to digestion and half living; don't you think there will be some way of saving these?"

Fowler nodded assent.

"And then sleep again. When man with his blazing lights made an end to night in his towns and houses—it is only a hundred years or so ago that that was done—then it followed he would presently resent his eight hours of uselessness. Shan't we presently take a tabloid or lie in some field of force that will enable us to do with an hour or so of slumber and rise refreshed again?"

"Frobisher and Ameer Ali have done work in that direction."

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“And then the inconveniences of age and those diseases of the system that come with years; steadily you drive them back and you lengthen and lengthen the years that stretch between the passionate tumults of youth and the contractions of senility. Man who used to weaken and die as his teeth decayed now looks forward to a continually lengthening, continually fuller term of years. And all those parts of him that once gathered evil against him, the vestigial structures and odd treacherous corners of his body, you know better and better how to deal with. You carve his body about and leave it remodelled and unscarred. The psychologists are learning how to mould minds, to reduce and remove bad complexes of thought and motive, to relieve pressures and broaden ideas. So that we are becoming more and more capable of transmitting what we have learned and preserving it for the race. The race, the racial wisdom, science, gather power continually to subdue the individual man to its own end. Is that not so?”

Fowler said that it was, and for a time he was telling Karenin of new work that was in progress in India and Russia. “And how is it with heredity?” asked Karenin.

Fowler told them of the mass of inquiry accumulated and arranged by the genius of Tchen, who was beginning to define clearly the laws of inheritance and how the sex of children and the complexions and many of the parental qualities could be determined.

“He can actually *do*——?”

“It is still so to speak a mere laboratory triumph,” said Fowler, “but to-morrow it will be practicable.”

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“You see,” cried Karenin, turning a laughing face to Rachel and Edith, “while we have been theorising about men and women, here is science getting the power for us to end that old dispute for ever. If woman is too much for us, we’ll reduce her to a minority, and if we do not like any type of men and women, we’ll have no more of it. These old bodies, these old animal limitations, all this earthy inheritance of gross inevitabilities falls from the spirit of man like the shrivelled cocoon from an imago. And for my own part when I hear of these things I feel like that—like a wet crawling new moth that still fears to spread its wings. Because where do these things take us?”

“Beyond humanity,” said Kahn.

“No,” said Karenin. “We can still keep our feet upon the earth that made us. But the air no longer imprisons us, this round planet is no longer chained to us like the ball of a galley-slave. . . .

“In a little while men who will know how to bear the different gravitations, the altered pressures, the attenuated unfamiliar gases and all the fearful strangenesses of space will be venturing out from this earth. This ball will be no longer enough for us; our spirit will reach out. . . . Cannot you see how that little argosy will go glittering up into the sky, twinkling and glittering smaller and smaller until the blue swallows it up? They may succeed out there; they may perish, but other men will follow them. . . .

“It is as if a great window opened,” said Karenin. . . .

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### § 9

As the evening drew on Karenin and those who were about him went up upon the roof of the buildings, so that they might the better watch the sunset and the flushing of the mountains and the coming of the afterglow. They were joined by two of the surgeons from the laboratories below, and presently by a nurse who brought Karenin refreshment in a thin glass cup. It was a cloudless windless evening under the deep-blue sky, and far away to the north glittered two biplanes on the way to the observatories on Everest, two hundred miles distant over the precipices to the east. The little group of people watched them pass over the mountains and vanish into the blue, and then for a time they talked of the work that the observatory was doing. From that they passed to the whole process of research about the world, and so Karenin's thoughts returned again to the mind of the world and the great future that was opening upon man's imagination. He asked the surgeons many questions upon the detailed possibilities of their science, and he was keenly interested and excited by the things they told him.

And as they talked the sun touched the mountains, and became very swiftly a blazing and indented hemisphere of liquid flame and sank.

Karenin looked blinking at the last quivering rim of incandescence, and shaded his eyes and became silent.

Presently he gave a little start.

"What?" asked Rachel Borken.

"I had forgotten," he said.

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“What had you forgotten?”

“I had forgotten about the operation to-morrow. I have been so interested as Man to-day that I have nearly forgotten Marcus Karenin. Marcus Karenin must go under your knife to-morrow, Fowler, and very probably Marcus Karenin will die.” He raised his slightly shrivelled hand. “It does not matter, Fowler. It scarcely matters even to me. For indeed is it Karenin who has been sitting here and talking; is it not rather a common mind, Fowler, that has played about between us? You and I and all of us have added thought to thought, but the thread is neither you nor me. What is true we all have; when the individual has altogether brought himself to the test and winnowing of expression, then the individual is done. I feel as though I had already been emptied out of that little vessel, that Marcus Karenin, which in my youth held me so tightly and completely. Your beauty, dear Edith, and your broad brow, dear Rachel, and you Fowler, with your firm and skilful hands, are now almost as much me as this hand that beats the arm of my chair. And as little me. And the spirit that desires to know, the spirit that resolves to do, that spirit that lives and has talked in us to-day, lived in Athens, lived in Florence, lives on, I know, for ever. . . .

“And you, old Sun, with your sword of flame searing these poor eyes of Marcus for the last time of all, beware of me! You think I die—and indeed I am only taking off one more coat to get at you. I have threatened you for ten thousand years, and soon I warn you I shall be coming. When I am altogether

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stripped and my disguises thrown away. Very soon now, old Sun, I shall launch myself at you, and I shall reach you and I shall put my foot on your spotted face and tug you about by your fiery locks. One step I shall take to the moon, and then I shall leap at you. I've talked to you before, I've talked to you a million times, and now I am beginning to remember. Yes,—long ago, long ago, before I had stripped off a few thousand generations, dust now and forgotten, I was a hairy savage and I pointed my hand at you and—clearly I remember it!—I saw you in a net. Have you forgotten that? . . .

“Old Sun, I gather myself together out of the pools of the individual that have held me dispersed so long. I gather my billion thoughts into science and my million wills into a common purpose. Well may you slink down behind the mountains from me, well may you cower. . . .”

### § 10

Karenin desired that he might dream alone for a little while before he returned to the cell in which he was to sleep. He was given relief for a pain that began to trouble him and wrapped warmly about with furs, for a great coldness was creeping over all things, and so they left him and he sat for a long time watching the afterglow give place to the darkness of night.

It seemed to those who had to watch over him unobtrusively lest he should be in want of any attention that he mused very deeply.

The white and purple peaks against the golden

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sky sank down into cold blue remoteness, glowed out again and faded again, and the burning cressets of the Indian stars, that even the moon-rise cannot altogether quench, began their vigil. The moon rose behind the towering screen of dark precipices to the east, and long before it emerged above these, its slanting beams had filled the deep gorges below with luminous mist and turned the towers and pinnacles of Lio Porgyul to a magic dream castle of radiance and wonder. . . .

Came a great uprush of ghostly light above the black rim of rocks, and then like a bubble that is blown and detaches itself the moon floated off clear into the unfathomable dark sky. . . .

And then Karenin stood up. He walked a few paces along the terrace and remained for a time gazing up at that great silver disc, that silvery shield that must needs be man's first conquest in outer space. . . .

Presently he turned about and stood with his hands folded behind him, looking at the northward stars. . . .

At length he went to his own cell. He lay down there and slept peacefully till the morning. And early in the morning they came to him and the anæsthetic was given him and the operation performed.

It was altogether successful, but Karenin was weak and he had to lie very still; and about seven days later a blood-clot detached itself from the healing scar and travelled to his heart, and he died in an instant in the night.





# **THE PEACE OF THE WORLD**



# THE PEACE OF THE WORLD

## AN ESSAY

### § 1

PROBABLY there has never been before in the whole past of mankind so many people convinced of the dreadfulness of war, nor so large a proportion anxious to end war, to rearrange the world's affairs so that this huge hideousness of hardship, suffering, destruction, and killing that still continues in Europe may never again be repeated. The present writer is one of *this great majority*. He wants as far as possible to end war altogether, and to contrive things so that when any unavoidable outbreak does occur, it may be as little cruel and mischievous as it can be. But it is one thing to desire a thing and another thing to get it. It does not follow because this aspiration for world peace is almost universal that it will be realised. There may be faults in ourselves, unsuspected influences within us and without, that may be working to defeat our superficial sentiments. There must be not only a desire for peace but a will for peace if peace is to be established for ever. If out of a hundred men ninety-nine desire peace and trouble no further, the one man over will arm himself and set up oppression and war again. Peace must be organised and maintained. This present monstrous catastrophe is the outcome of forty-three years of skilful, industrious, systematic world armament. Only by a

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disarmament as systematic, as skilful and as devoted may we hope to achieve centuries of peace.

No apology is needed therefore for a discussion of the way in which peace may be organised and established out of the settlement of this war. I am going to set out and estimate as carefully as I can the forces that make for a peace organisation and the forces that make for war. I am going to do my best to diagnose the war disorder. I want to find out first for my own guidance, and then with a view to my co-operation with other people, what has to be done to prevent the continuation and recrudescence of warfare. Such an inquiry is manifestly the necessary first stage in any world pacification. So manifestly so that of course countless others are also setting to work upon it. It is a research. It is a research exactly like a scientific exploration. Each of us will probably get out a lot of truth and a considerable amount of error, the truth will be the same and the errors will confute and disperse each other. But it is clear that there is no simple panacea in this matter, and that only by intentness and persistence shall we disentangle a general conception of the road the peace-desiring multitude must follow.

Now first be it noted that there is in every one a certain discord with regard to war. Every man is divided against himself. On the whole, most of us want peace. But hardly any one is without a lurking belligerence, a lurking admiration for the vivid impacts, the imaginative appeals of war. I am sitting down to write for the peace of the world, but immediately before I sat down to write I was reading the

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morning's paper, and particularly of the fight between the *Sydney* and the *Emden* at Cocos Island. I confess to the utmost satisfaction in the account of the smashing blows delivered by the guns of the Australian. There is a sensation of greatness, a beautiful tremendousness, in many of the crude facts of war; they excite in one a kind of vigorous exaltation; we have this destructive streak in us, and it is no good pretending that we have not; the first thing we must do for the peace of the world is to control that. And to control it one can do nothing more effectual than to keep in mind the other side of the realities of war. As my own corrective I have at hand certain letters from a very able woman doctor who returned recently from Calais. Lockjaw, gangrene, men tied with filthy rags and lying bitterly cold in coaly sheds; men unwounded, but so broken by the chill horrors of the Yser trenches as to be near demented, such things make the substance of her picture. One young officer talked to her rather drily of the operations, of the ruined towns and villages, of the stench of dead men and horses, of the losses and wounds and mutilations among his men, of the list of pals he had lost. "Suddenly he began to cry. He broke down just like an overtaxed child. And he could not stop crying. He cried and cried and I could do nothing to help him." He was a strong man and a brave man, and to that, three months of war had brought him.

And then this again:

"There was a fair number of Belgian doctors, but no nurses except the usual untrained French girls, almost no equipment and no place for clean surgery.

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We heard of a house containing sixty-one men with no doctor or nurses—several died without receiving any medical aid at all. Mrs. ——— and I even on the following Wednesday found four men lying on straw in a shop with leg and foot wounds, who had not been dressed since the Friday, and had never been seen by a doctor. In addition there were hundreds and hundreds of wounded who could walk trying to find shelter in some corner, besides the many unwounded French and Belgian soldiers quartered in the town.

“As if this inferno of misery were not enough there were added the refugees! These were not Belgians, as I had imagined, but French. It appears that both English and French armies have to clear the civil population out of the whole fighting area—partly to prevent spying and treachery (which has been a curse to both armies) and partly because they would starve. They are sent to Calais and then by boat to Havre. That first Sunday evening an endless procession flowed from the station to the quays in the drenching rain. Each family had a perambulator (a surprisingly handsome one too), piled with stacks of bread, a few bundles of goods, and, when one peered inside, a couple of crying babies. There were few young people, mostly it was whimpering, frightened-looking children and wretched bent old men and women. It seemed too bad to be true; even when they brushed past us in the rain we could not believe that their sodden figures were real. They were dematerialised by misery in some odd way. Some of them slept in skating-rinks, trucks, some in the

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*Amiral Gauteaume*\* (one's senses could not realise that to the horrors of exile these people had added those of shipwreck next day), some certainly stood in the booking hall outside our hotel all night through. This sort of thing went on all the week, and was going on when we left."

Nevertheless I was stirred agreeably by the imagination of the shells smashing the *Emden* and the men inside the *Emden*, and when I read the other day that the naval guns had destroyed over four thousand men in the German trenches about Middelerche, I remarked that we were "doing well." It is only *on the whole* that we who want to end war hate and condemn war, we are constantly lapsing into fierceness, and if we forget this lurking bellicosity and admiration for hard blows in our own nature, then we shall set about the task of making an end to it under hopelessly disabling misconceptions. We shall underrate and misunderstand altogether the very powerful forces that are against pacifist effort.

Let us then consider first the forces that are directly opposed to the pacification of the world, the forces that will work openly and definitely for the preservation of war as a human condition. And it has to be remembered that the forces that are *for* a thing are almost always more unified, more concentrated and effective than the forces that are against it. We who are against war and want to stop it are against it for a great multitude of reasons. There are other things in life that we prefer, and war stops these other things. Some of us want to pursue art, some want to live

\*The *Amiral Gauteaume* was destroyed by a German submarine.

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industrious lives in town or country, some would pursue scientific developments, some want pleasures of this sort or that, some would live lives of religion and kindness, or religion and austerity. But we all agree in fixing our minds upon something else than war. And since we fix our minds on other things, war becomes possible and probable through our general inattention. We do not observe it, and meanwhile the people who really care for war and soldiering fix their minds upon it. They scheme how it shall be done, they scheme to bring it about. Then we discover suddenly, as the art and social development, the industry and pleasant living, the cultivation, the civil enterprise of England, France, Germany, and Russia have discovered, that everything must be pushed aside when the war-thinkers have decided upon their game. And until we of the pacific majority contrive some satisfactory organisation to watch the war-makers we shall never end war, any more than a country can end crime and robbery without a police. Specialist must watch specialist in either case. Mere expressions of a virtuous abhorrence of war will never end war until the crack of doom.

The people who actually want war are perhaps never at any time very numerous. Most people sometimes want war, and a few people always want war. It is these last who are, so to speak, the living nucleus of the war creature that we want to destroy. That liking for an effective smash which gleamed out in me for a moment when I heard of the naval guns is with them a dominating motive. It is not outweighed and overcome in them as it is in me by the sense of waste,



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and by pity and horror, and by love for men who can do brave deeds and yet weep bitterly for the misery and the deaths of good friends. These war-lovers are creatures of a simpler constitution. And they seem capable of an ampler hate. You will discover, if you talk to them skilfully, that they hold that war "ennobles," and that when they say ennobles they mean that it is destructive to the ten thousand things in life that they do not enjoy or understand or tolerate, things that fill them therefore with envy and perplexity—such things as pleasure, beauty, delicacy, leisure. In the cant of modern talk you will find them call everything that is not crude and forcible in life "degenerate." And going back to the very earliest writings, in the most bloodthirsty outpourings of the Hebrew prophets, for example, you will find that at the base of the warrior spirit is hate for more complicated, for more refined, for more beautiful and happier living. The military peoples of the world have almost always been harsh and rather stupid peoples, full of a virtuous indignation against all they did not understand. The modern Prussian goes to war to-day with as supreme a sense of moral superiority as the Arabs when they swept down upon Egypt and North Africa. The burning of the library of Alexandria remains for ever the symbol of the triumph of a militarist "culture" over civilisation. This easy belief of the dull and violent that war "braces" comes out of a real instinct of self-preservation, against the subtler tests of peace. This type of person will keep on with war if it can. It is to politics what the criminal type is to social order; it will be resentful and

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hostile to every attempt to fix up a pacific order in the world.

This heavy envy which is the dominant characteristic of the pro-military type is by no means confined to it. More or less it is in all of us. In England one finds it far less frequently in professional soldiers than among sedentary learned men. In Germany, too, the more uncompromising and ferocious pro-militarism is to be found in the frock coats of the professors. Just at present England is full of virtuous reprehension of German military professors, but there is really no monopoly of such in Germany, and before Germany, England produced some of the most perfect specimens of aggressive militarist conceivable. To read Froude upon Ireland or Carlyle upon the Franco-German war is to savour this hate-dripping temperament in its perfection. Much of this literary bellicosity is pathological. Men overmuch in studies and universities get ill in their livers and sluggish in their circulations, they suffer from shyness, from a persuasion of excessive and neglected merit, old maid's melancholy, and a detestation of all the levities of life. And their suffering finds this vent in savage thoughts. A vigorous daily bath, mixed society, a complete stoppage of beer, spirits, and tobacco, and two hours of hockey in the afternoon would probably make decently tolerant men of all these fermenting professorial militarists. Such a regimen would certainly have been the salvation of both Froude and Carlyle. It would probably have saved the world from the vituperation of the Hebrew prophets—those models for infinite mischief. . . .

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The extremist cases pass to the average case through insensible degrees. We are all, probably, as a species, a little too prone to intolerance, and if we do in all sincerity mean to end war in the world, we must prepare ourselves for considerable exercises in restraint when strange people look, behave, believe and live in a manner different from our own. This minority of permanently bitter souls who want to see objectionable cities burning and men fleeing and dying, form the real strength behind our occasional complicity. The world has had its latest object-lesson in the German abuse of English and French as "degenerates," of the Russians as "Mongol hordes," of the Japanese as "yellow savages," but it is not only Germans who let themselves slip into national vanity and these ugly hostilities to unfamiliar life. The first line of attack against war must be an attack upon self-righteousness and intolerance. These things are the germs of uncompromising and incurable militarism everywhere.

Now the attack upon self-righteousness and intolerance and the stern self-satisfied militarism that arises naturally out of these things is to be made in a number of ways. The first is a sedulous propaganda of the truth about war, a steadfast resolve to keep the pain of warfare alive in the nerves of the careless, to keep the stench of war under the else indifferent nose. It is only in the study of the gloomily megalomaniac historian that aggressive war becomes a large and glorious thing. In reality it is a filthy outrage upon life, an idiot's smashing of the furniture of homes, a mangling, a malignant mischief, a scalding

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of stokers, a disembowelling of gunners, a raping of caught women by drunken soldiers. By book and pamphlet, by picture and cinematograph film, the pacifist must organise wisdom in these matters. And not only indignation and distress must come to this task. The stern uncompromising militarist will not be moved from his determinations by our horror and hostility. These things will but "brace" him. He has a more vulnerable side. The ultimate lethal weapon for every form of stupidity is ridicule, and against the high silliness of the militarist it is particularly effective. It is the laughter of wholesome men that will finally end war. The stern, strong, silent man will only cease to trouble us when we have stripped him of his last rag of pretension and touched through to the quick of his vanity with the realisation of his apprehended foolishness. Literature will have failed humanity if it is so blinded by the monstrous agony in Flanders as to miss the essential triviality at the head of the present war. Not the slaughter of ten million men can make the quality of the German Kaiser other than theatrical and silly. We shall lose the meaning of the war altogether if we do not picture for ourselves and posterity the fluctuating absurdity of German monarchy, the foolish figure of the Crown Prince filching snuff-boxes and ikons from French châteaux, when all Germany was bleeding to death to make him the Cæsar of a new World Empire. The greater part of the world is in an agony, a fever, but that does not make the cause of that fever noble or great. A man may die of yellow fever through the bite of a mosquito; that

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does not make a mosquito anything more than a dirty insect, or an aggressive imperialist better than a pot-house fool.

Henceforth we must recognise no heroic war but defensive war, and as the only honourable warriors such men as those peasants of Visé who went out with shotguns against the multitudinous overwhelming nuisance of invasion that trampled down their fields. . . .

Or war to aid such defensive war. . . .

### § 2

But the people who positively admire and advocate and want war for its own sake are only a small feverish minority of mankind. The greater obstacle to the pacification of the world is not the war-seeker, but the vast masses of people who for the most various motives support and maintain all kinds of institutions and separations that make for war. They do not want war, they do not like war, but they will not make sacrifices, they will not exert themselves in any way to make war difficult or impossible. It is they who give the war maniac his opportunity. They will not lock the gun away from him, they will not put a reasonable limit to the disputes into which he can ultimately thrust his violent substitute for a solution. They are like the people who dread and detest yellow fever, but oppose that putting of petrol on the ponds which is necessary to prevent it because of the injury to the water flowers.

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Now it is necessary, if we are to have an intelligently directed antiwar campaign, that we should make a clear, sound classification of these half-hearted people, these people who do not want war but who permit it. Their indecisions, their vagueness, these are the really effective fog barriers to our desire to end war for ever.

And first, there is one thing very obvious, and that is the necessity for some controlling world authority if treaties are to be respected and war abolished. While there are numerous sovereign States in the world each absolutely free to do what it chooses, to arm its people or repudiate engagements, there can be no sure peace. But great multitudes of those who sincerely desire peace for ever cannot realise this. There are, for example, many old-fashioned English Liberals who denounce militarism and "treaty entanglements" with equal ardour, they want Britain to stand alone unaggressive but free, not realising that such an isolation is the surest encouragement to any war-enamoured Power. Exactly the same type is to be found in the United States, and is probably even more influential there. But only by so spinning a web of treaties that all countries are linked by general obligations to mutual protection can a real world pacification be achieved. The present Alliance against the insufferable militarism of Germany may very probably be the precursor of a much wider Alliance against any aggression whatever in the future. Only through some such arrangement is there any reasonable hope of a control and cessation of that constant international bickering and pressure,

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that rivalry in finance, that competition for influence in weak neutral countries, which has initiated all the struggles of the last century, and which is bound to accumulate tensions for fresh wars so long as it goes on.

Already several States, and particularly the Government of the United States of America, have signed treaties of arbitration, and the Hague Tribunal spins a first web of obligations, exemplary if gossamer, between the countries of the world. But these are but the faint initial suggestions of much greater possibilities, and it is these greater possibilities that have now to be realised if all the talk we have had about a war to end war is to bear any fruit. What is now, with each week of the present struggle, becoming more practicable is the setting up of a new assembly that will take the place of the various embassies and diplomatic organisations of a mediæval pattern and tradition, which have hitherto conducted international affairs. This war must end in a public settlement, to which all the belligerents will set their hands; it will not be a bundle of treaties but one treaty binding eight or nine or more Powers. This settlement will almost certainly be attained at a Conference of Representatives of the various Foreign Offices involved. Quite possibly interested neutral Powers will also send representatives. There is no reason whatever why this Conference should dissolve; why it should not become a permanent Conference upon the interrelations of the participating Powers and the maintenance of the peace of the world. It could have a seat, and officials, a staff, and a revenue of its own;

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it could sit and debate openly, publish the generally binding treaties between its constituent Powers, and claim for the support of its decisions their military and naval resources. The predominance of the greater Powers could be secured either by the representatives having multiple votes according to the population represented, or by some sort of proportional representation. Each Power could appoint its representatives through its Foreign Office, or by whatever other means it thought fit. They could as conveniently be elected by a legislature as by a nation. And such a body would not only be of enormous authority in the statement, interpretation, and enforcement of treaties, but it could also discharge a hundred useful functions in relation to world hygiene, international trade and travel, the control of the ocean, the exploration and conservation of the world's supplies of raw material and food-supply. It would be, in fact, a World Council. To-day this is an entirely practicable and hopeful proposal if only we can overcome the opposition of those who cling to the belief that it is possible for a country to be at the same time entirely pacific and entirely irresponsible to and detached from the rest of mankind.

Given such a body, such a great alliance of world Powers, much else in the direction of world pacification becomes possible. Without it, we may perhaps expect a certain benefit from the improved good feeling of mankind and the salutary overthrow of the German military culture, but we cannot hope for any real organised establishment of peace. . . .

. I believe that a powerful support for the assembly



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and continuance of such a World Congress as this could be easily and rapidly developed in North and South America, in Britain and the British Empire generally, in France and Italy, in all the smaller States of northern, central, and western Europe; it would probably have the personal support of the Tzar unless he has profoundly changed the opinions with which he opened his reign, it would have the warm accordance of educated China and Japan, and the good-will of a renascent Germany. It would open a new era for mankind.

### § 3

Now this idea of a Congress of the belligerents to arrange the peace settlement after this war, expanding by the accession of neutral Powers into a permanent World Congress for the enforcement of international law and the maintenance of the peace of mankind, is so reasonable and attractive and desirable that if it were properly explained it would probably receive the support of nineteen out of every twenty intelligent persons. Nevertheless, its realization is on the whole improbable. A mere universal disgust with war is no more likely to end war than the universal dislike for dying has ended death. And though war, unlike dying, seems to be an avoidable fate, it does not follow that its present extreme unpopularity will end it, unless people not only desire but see to the accomplishment of their desire.

And here again one is likely to meet an active and influential opposition. Though the general will and

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welfare may point to the future management of international relations through a World Congress, the whole mass of those whose business has been the direction of international relations is likely to be either sceptical or actively hostile to such an experiment. All the Foreign Offices and Foreign Ministers, the diplomatists universally, the politicians who have specialised in national assertion, and the courts that have symbolised and embodied it, all the people in fact who will be in control of the settlement are likely to be against so revolutionary a change. For it would be an entirely revolutionary change. It would put an end to secrecy. It would end all that is usually understood by diplomacy. It would clear the world altogether of those private understandings and provisional secret agreements, those intrigues, wire-pullings, and quasi-financial operations, that have been the very substance of international relations hitherto. To these able and interested people, for the most part highly seasoned by the present conditions, finished and elaborated players at the old game, this is to propose a new, crude, difficult, and unsympathetic game. They may all of them or most of them hate war, but they will cling to the belief that their method of operating may now after a new settlement be able to prevent or palliate war. All men get set in a way of living, and it is as little in human nature to give up cheerfully in the middle of life a familiar method of dealing with things in favour of a new and untried one as it is to change one's language or emigrate to an entirely different land. I realise what this proposal means to diplomatists when

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I try to suppose myself invited to assist in the abolition of written books and journalism in favour of the gramophone and the cinematograph. Or invited to adopt German as my means of expression. It is only by an enormous pressure of opinion in the world behind these monarchs, ministers, and representatives that they will be induced even to consider the possibility of adapting themselves to this novel style of international dealing through a permanent congress. It is only the consideration of its enormous hopefulness for the rest of the world that gives one the courage to advocate it.

In the question of the possible abolition of the present diplomatic system just as in the case of the possible abolition of war, while on the side for abolition there must be a hugely preponderating interest and a hugely preponderating majority, it is nevertheless a dispersed interest and an unorganised, miscellaneous majority. The minority is, on the other hand, compact, more intensely and more immediately interested and able to resist such great changes with a maximum of efficiency. There is a tremendous need therefore for a World Congress organisation and propaganda, if this advantageously posted minority is to be overcome. And from such countries as the American States in particular and from the small liberal neutrals in Europe, whose diplomacy is least developed and least influential, liberal-minded people through the world are most disposed to expect and do expect a lead in this particular matter. The liberal forces in Britain, France, and Russia are extraordinarily embarrassed and enslaved by the vast

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belligerent necessities into which their lives have been caught. But they would take up such a lead with the utmost vigour and enthusiasm.

No one who has followed the diplomatic history of the negotiations that led to this war can doubt that if there had been no secret treaties but instead open proclamations of intention and an open discussion of international ambitions, the world might have been saved this catastrophe. It is no condemnation of any person or country to say this. The reserves and hesitations and misconceptions that led Germany to suppose that England would wait patiently while France and Belgium were destroyed, before she herself received attention, were unavoidable under the existing diplomatic conditions. What reasonable people have to do now is not to recriminate over the details in the working of a system that we can now all of us perceive to be hopelessly bad, but to do our utmost in this season of opportunity to destroy the obscurities in which fresh mischief may fester for our children.

Let me restate this section in slightly different words. At the end of this war there must be a congress of adjustment. The suggestion in this section is to make this congress permanent, to use it as a clearing-house of international relationships and to *abolish embassies*. Instead of there being a British ambassador, for example, at every sufficiently important capital, and an ambassador from every important State in London, and a complex tangle of relationships, misstatements and misconceptions arising from the ill-co-ordinated activities of this double

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system of agents, it is proposed to send one or several ambassadors to some central point such as The Hague, to meet there all the ambassadors of all the significant States in the world, and to deal with international questions with a novel frankness in a collective meeting.

This has now become a possible way of doing the world's business because of the development of the means of communication and information. The embassy as a foreign country, as a watching, remonstrating, proposing extension of its country of origin, a sort of eye and finger at the heart of the host country, is now clumsy, unnecessary, inefficient, and dangerous. For most routine work, for reports of all sorts, for legal action and so forth on behalf of traveling nationals, the consular service is adequate or can easily be made adequate. What remains of the ambassadorial apparatus might very well merge with the consular system, and the embassy become an international court civility, a ceremonial vestige without any diplomatic value at all.

### § 4

Given a permanent World Congress developed out of the congress of settlement between the belligerents, a world alliance, with as a last resort a call upon the forces of the associated Powers, for dealing with recalcitrants, then a great number of possibilities open out to humanity that must otherwise remain inaccessible. But before we go on to consider these, it may be wise to point out how much more likely a

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World Congress is to effect a satisfactory settlement at the end of this war than a congress confined to the belligerents.

The war has progressed sufficiently to convince every one that there is now no possibility of an overwhelming victory for Germany. It must end in a more or less complete defeat of the German and Turkish alliance, and in a considerable readjustment of Austrian and Turkish boundaries. Assisted by the generosity of the doomed Austrians and Turks, the Germans are fighting now to secure as large a voice as possible in the final settlement, and it is conceivable that in the end that settlement may be made quite an attractive one for Germany proper by the crowning sacrifice of suicide on the part of her two subordinated allies. There can be little doubt that Russia will gain the enormous advantage of a free opening into the Mediterranean, and that the battle of the Marne turned the fortunes of France from disaster to expansion. But the rest of the settlement is still vague and uncertain, and German imperialism at least is already working hard and intelligently for a favourable situation at the climax, a situation that will enable this militarist empire to emerge still strong, still capable of recuperation and of a renewal at no very remote date of the struggle for European predominance. This is a thing as little for the good of the saner German people as it is for the rest of the world, but it is the only way in which militant imperialism can survive at all. The alternative of an imperialism shorn of the glamour of aggression, becoming constitutional and democratic, the alternative

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that is to say of a great liberal Germany, is one that will be as distasteful almost to the people who control the destinies of Germany to-day, and who will speak and act for Germany in the final settlement, as a complete submission to a Serbian conqueror would be. At the final conference of settlement Germany will not be really represented at all. The Prussian militarist empire will still be in existence, and it will sit at the council, working primarily for its own survival. Unless the Allies insist upon the presence of representatives of Saxony, Bavaria and so forth, and demand the evidence of popular sanctions—a thing they are very unlikely to demand—that is what “Germany” will signify at the conference. And what is true of Germany will be true more or less of several other of the allied Powers. . . .

A conference confined purely to the belligerents will be in fact a conference not even representative of the belligerents. And it will be tainted with all the traditional policies, aggressions, suspicions, and subterfuges that led up to the war. It will not be the end of the old game but the readjustment of the old game, the old game which is such an abominable nuisance to the development of modern civilisation. The idealism of the great alliance will certainly be subjected to enormous strains, and the whole energy of the central European diplomatists will be directed to developing and utilising these stresses. This, I think, must be manifest even to the Foreign Offices most concerned. They must see already ahead of them a terrible puzzle of arrangement, a puzzle their own bad traditions will certainly never permit them

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to solve. "God save us," they may very well pray, "from our own cleverness and sharp dealing," and they may even welcome the promise of an enlarged outlook that the entry of the neutral Powers would bring with it. Every Foreign Office has its ugly evil elements, and probably every Foreign Office dreads those elements. There are certainly Russian fools who dream about India, German fools who dream about Canada and South America, British fools who dream about Africa and the East; aggressionists in the blood, people who can no more let nations live in peace than kleptomaniacs can keep their hands in their own pockets. But quite conceivably there are honest monarchs and sane Foreign Ministers very ready to snatch at the chance of swamping the evil in their own chancelleries.

It is just here that the value of neutral participation will come in. Whatever ambitions the neutral Powers may have of their own, it may be said generally that they are keenly interested in preventing the settlement from degenerating into a deal in points of vantage for any further aggressions in any direction. Both the United States of America and China are traditionally and incurably pacific powers, professing and practising an unaggressive policy; and the chief outstanding minor States are equally concerned in securing a settlement that shall settle. And moreover, so wide-reaching now are all international agreements, that they have not only a claim to intervene juridically, but they have the much more pressing claim to participate on the ground that no sort of readjustment of Europe, Western Asia, and Africa,



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can leave their own futures unaffected. They are wanted not only in the interests of the belligerent peoples, but for their own sakes and the welfare of the world altogether.

### § 5

Now a World Conference, once it is assembled, can take up certain questions that no partial treatment can ever hope to meet. The first of the questions is disarmament. No one who has watched the politics of the last forty years can doubt the very great share the business and finance of armament manufacture has played in bringing about the present horrible killing, and no one who has read accounts of the fighting can doubt how much this industry has enhanced the torment, cruelty, and monstrosity of war. In the old warfare a man was either stabbed, shot or thrust through after an hour or so of excitement, and all the wounded on the field were either comfortably murdered or attended to before the dawn of the next day. One was killed by human hands, with understandable and tolerable injuries. But in this war the bulk of the dead—of the Western Allies at any rate—have been killed by machinery, the wounds have been often of an inconceivable horribleness, and the fate of the wounded has been more frightful than was ever the plight of wounded in the hands of victorious savages. For days multitudes of men have been left mangled, half buried in mud and filth, or soaked with water, or frozen, crying, raving, between the contending trenches. The number of men that the war,

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without actual physical wounds, has shattered mentally and driven insane because of its noise, its stresses, its strange unnaturalness, is enormous. Horror in this war has overcome more men than did all the arrows of Crécy.

Almost all this enhanced terribleness of war is due to the novel machinery of destruction that science has rendered possible. The wholesale mangling and destroying of men by implements they have never seen, without any chance of retaliation, has been its most constant feature. You cannot open a paper of any date since the war began without reading of men burned, scalded and drowned by the bursting of torpedoes from submarines, of men falling out of the sky from shattered aeroplanes, of women and children in Antwerp or Paris mutilated frightfully or torn to ribbons by aerial bombs, of men smashed and buried alive by shells. An indiscriminate diabolical violence of explosives resulting in cruelties for the most part ineffective from the military point of view is the incessant refrain of this history.

The increased dreadfulness of war due to modern weapons is, however, only one consequence of their development. The practicability of aggressive war in settled countries now is entirely dependent on the use of elaborate artillery on land and war-ships at sea. Were there only rifles in the world, were an ordinary rifle the largest kind of gun permitted, and were ships specifically made for war not so made, then it would be impossible to invade any country defended by a patriotic and spirited population with any hopes of success, because of the enormous defensive capacity

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of intrenched riflemen not subjected to an unhampered artillery attack. Modern war is entirely dependent upon equipment of the most costly and elaborate sort. A general agreement to reduce that equipment would not only greatly minimise the evil of any war that did break out, but it would go a long way towards the abolition of war. A community of men might be unwilling to renounce their right of fighting one another if occasion arose, but they might still be willing to agree not to carry arms, or to carry arms of a not too lethal sort: to carry pistols instead of rifles or sticks instead of swords. That indeed has been the history of social amelioration in a number of communities, and it has led straight to a reduction in the number of encounters. So in the same way the powers of the world might be willing for such a limitation of armaments, while still retaining the sovereign right of declaring war in certain eventualities. Under the assurances of a world council, threatening a general intervention, such a partial disarmament would be greatly facilitated.

And another aspect of disarmament which needs to be taken up and which only a World Congress can take up must be the arming of barbaric or industrially backward powers by the industrially efficient powers, the creation of navies and artillery forces in such countries as Turkey, Serbia, Peru, and the like. In Belgium countless Germans were blown to pieces by German-made guns, Europe arms Mexico against the United States; China, Africa, Arabia are full of European and American made weapons. It is only the mutual jealousies of the highly organised states that

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permit this leakage of power. The tremendous warnings of our war should serve to temper their foolish hostilities, and now, if ever, is the time to restrain this insane arming of the less advanced communities.

But before that can be done it is necessary that the manufacture of war material should cease to be a private industry and a source of profit to private individuals, that all the invention and enterprise that blossoms about business should be directed no longer to the steady improvement of man-killing. It is a preposterous and unanticipated thing that respectable British gentlemen should be directing magnificently organised masses of artisans upon the Tyneside in the business of making weapons that may ultimately smash some of those very artisans to smithereens. At the risk of being called "Utopian" I would submit that the world is not so idiotic as to allow that sort of thing to go on indefinitely. It is indeed quite a recent human development. All the great business of armament upon commercial lines is the growth of half a century. But it has grown with the vigour of an evil weed, it has thrown out a dark jungle of indirect advertisement, and it has compromised and corrupted great numbers of investors and financial people. It is perhaps the most powerful single interest of all those that will fight against the systematic minimisation and abolition of war, and rather than lose his end, it may be necessary for the pacifist to buy out all these concerns, to insist upon the various states that have sheltered them taking them over, lock, stock, and barrel, as going businesses. From what we know of officialism everywhere, the mere

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transfer will involve almost at once a decline in their vigour and innovating energy. It is perhaps fortunate that the very crown of the private armaments business is the Krupp organisation, and that its capture and suppression is a matter of supreme importance to all the allied powers. Russia with her huge population has not as yet developed armament works upon a very large scale and would probably welcome proposals that minimised the value of machinery and so enhanced that of men. Beyond Krupps and certain American plants for the making of rifles and machine-guns only British and French capital is very deeply involved in the armaments trade. The problem is surely not too difficult for human art and honesty.

It is not being suggested that the making of arms should cease in the world, but only that in every country it should become a state monopoly and so completely under government control. If the state can monopolise the manufacture and sale of spirits as Russia has done, if it can after the manner of Great Britain control the making and sale of such a small elusive substance as saccharin, it is ridiculous to suppose that it cannot keep itself fully informed of the existence of such elaborated machinery as is needed to make a modern rifle barrel. And it demands a very minimum of alertness, good faith, and good intentions for the various manufacturing countries to keep each other and the world generally informed upon the question of their respective military equipments. From this state of affairs to a definition of a permissible maximum of strength on land and sea for

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all the high contracting powers is an altogether practicable step. Disarmament is not a dream; it is a thing more practicable than a general hygienic convention and more easily enforced than customs and excise.

Now none of this really involves the abandonment of armies, or uniforms, or national service. Indeed to a certain extent it restores the importance of the soldier at the expense of machinery. A world conference for the preservation of the peace and the suppression of armaments would neither interfere with such incorrigible squabbles as that of the Orange and Green factions in Ireland (though it might deprive them of their more deadly weapons) nor absolutely prohibit war between adjacent states. It would however be a very powerful delaying force against the outbreak of war, and it would be able to insist with a quite novel strength upon the observation of the rules of war. It is no good pretending that mere pacifism will end war; what will end war, what indeed may be ending war at the present time, is war—against militarism. Force respects itself and no other power. The hope for a world of peace in the future lies in that, in the possibility of a great alliance, so powerful that it will compel adhesions, an alliance prepared to make war upon and destroy and replace the Government of any state that became aggressive in its militarism. This alliance will be in effect a World Congress perpetually restraining aggressive secession, and obviously it must regard all the No-Man's Lands—and particularly that wild waste the ocean—as its highway. The fleets and marines of the allied world

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Powers must become the police of the wastes and waters of the earth.

### § 6

Now such a collective control of belligerence and international relations is the obvious common-sense settlement of the present world conflict; it is so manifest, so straightforward, that were it put plainly to them it would probably receive the assent of nineteen sane men out of twenty in the world. This, or some such thing as this, they would agree, is far better than isolations and the perpetual threat of fresh warfare. But against it there work forces, within these people and without, that render the attainment of this generally acceptable solution far less probable than a kind of no-solution that will only be a reopening of all our hostilities and conflicts upon a fresh footing. Some of these forces are vague and general, and can only be combated by a various and abundant liberal literature, in a widely dispersed battle in which each right-thinking man must do as his conscience directs him. There are the vague national antagonisms, the reservations in favour of one's own country's righteousnesses, harsh religious and social and moral cant of the Carlyle type, greed, resentment, and suspicion. The greatest of the vague oppositions is that want of faith which makes men say war has always been and must always be, which makes them prophesy that whatever we do will become corrupted and evil, even in the face of intolerable present evils and corruptions.

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When at the outbreak of the war I published an article headed "The War that will End War," at once an able contemporary hastened to reprove my dreaming impracticability. "War there has always been." Great is the magic of a word! He was quite oblivious to the fact that war has changed completely in its character half-a-dozen times in half-a-dozen centuries; that the war we fought in South Africa and the present war and the wars of mediæval Italy and the wars of the Red Indians have about as much in common as a cat and a man and a pair of scissors and a motor-car, namely that they may all be the means of death. If war can change its character as much as it has done, it can change it altogether: if peace can be kept indefinitely in India or North America, it can be kept throughout the world. It is not I who dream, it is my critic and his like who are not yet fully awake, and it is their somnolence that I dread more than anything else when I think of the great task of settlement before the world.

It is this rather hopeless, inert, pseudosage mass of unbelievers who render possible the continuation of war dangers. They give scope for the activities of the evil minority which hates, which lives by pride and grim satisfactions, and which is therefore anxious to have more war and more. And it is they who will obstruct the disentanglement of the settlement from diplomatic hands. "What do we know about the nuances of such things?" they will ask, with that laziness that apes modesty. It is they who will complain when we seek to buy out the armaments people. Probably all the private armament firms in the world



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could be bought up for seventy million pounds, but the unbelievers will shake their heads and say: "Then there will only be something else instead."

Yet there are many ungauged forces on the side of the greater settlement. Cynicism is never more than a half-truth, and because man is imperfect it does not follow that he must be futile. Russia is a land of strange silences, but it is manifest that whatever the innermost quality of the Tzar may be, he is no clap-trap vulgar Conqueror of the Wilhelm-Napoleon pattern. He began his reign, and he may yet crown his reign, with an attempt to establish peace on a newer, broader foundation. His religion, it would seem, is his master and not his servant. There has been no Russian Bernhardt. And there has been much in America, much said and much done, since the war broke out that has surprised the world. I may confess for myself, and I believe that I shall speak for many other Europeans in this matter, that what we feared most in the United States was levity. We expected mere excitement, violent fluctuations of opinion, a confused irresponsibility, and possibly mischievous and disastrous interventions. It is no good hiding an open secret. We judged America by the peace head-line. It is time we began to offer our apologies to America and democracy. The result of reading endless various American newspapers and articles, of following the actions of the American Government, of talking to representative Americans, is to realise the existence of a very clear, strong national mentality, a firm, self-controlled, collective will, far more considerable in its totality than the world has ever

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seen before. We thought the United States would be sentimentally patriotic and irresponsible, that they would behave as though the "New World" was indeed a separate planet, and as though they had neither duties nor brotherhood in Europe. It is quite clear, on the contrary, that the people of the United States consider this war as their affair also, and that they have the keenest sense of their responsibility for the general welfare of mankind.

So that as a second chance, after the possibility of a broad handling of the settlement by the Tzar, and as a very much bigger probability, is the insistence by America upon her right to a voice in the ultimate settlement and an initiative from the Western Hemisphere that will lead to a World Congress. These are the two most hopeful sources of that great proposal. It is the tradition of British national conduct to be commonplace to the pitch of dulness, and all the stifled intelligence of Great Britain will beat in vain against the national passion for the ordinary. Britain, in the guise of Sir Edward Grey, will come to the congress like a family solicitor among the gods. But Britain would follow a lead; the family solicitor is honest and well-meaning. France and Belgium and Italy are too deeply in the affair, or without sufficient standing or without sufficient moral prestige for a revolutionary initiative in international relationship. . . .

There is however a possible third source from which the proposal for a World Congress might come, with the support of both neutrals and belligerents, and that is The Hague. Were there a man

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of force and genius at The Hague now, a man speaking with authority and not as the scribes, he might thrust enormous benefits upon the world. . . .

It is from these three sources that I most hope for leading now. Of the new Pope and his influence I know nothing. I would follow the Pope gladly, I would heal all my quarrel with Christianity if it could give the world leading at the present time, if it could be anything but feeble. But in the present situation of the world's affairs, it behoves us ill to wait idle until leaders clear the way for us. Every man who realises the broad conditions of the situation, every one who can talk or write or echo, can do his utmost to spread his realisation of the possibilities of a World Congress and the establishment of world law and world peace that lie behind the monstrous agonies and cruelties and confusions of this catastrophic time. Given an immense body of opinion initiatives may break out effectively anywhere; failing it they will be fruitless everywhere.



# **THE LEAGUE OF FREE NATIONS**



# THE LEAGUE OF FREE NATIONS

## § 1

### THE WAY TO CONCRETE REALISATION

**MORE** and more frequently does one hear this phrase, **The League of Nations**, used to express the outline idea of the new world that will come out of the war. There can be no doubt that the phrase has taken hold of the imaginations of great multitudes of people: it is one of those creative phrases that may alter the whole destiny of mankind. But as yet it is still a very vague phrase, a cloudy promise of peace. I make no apology, therefore, for casting my discussion of it in the most general terms. The idea is the idea of united human effort to put an end to wars; the first practical question, that must precede all others, is how far can we hope to get to a concrete realisation of that?

But first let me note the fourth word in the title of this essay. The common talk is of a "League of Nations" merely. I follow the man who is, more than any other man, the leader of English political thought throughout the world to-day, President Wilson, in inserting that significant adjective "Free." We western allies know to-day what is involved in making bargains with governments that do not stand for their peoples; we have had all our Russian deal, for example, repudiated and thrust back upon our hands; and it is clearly in his mind, as it must be in

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the minds of all reasonable men, that no mere "scrap of paper," with just a monarch's or a chancellor's indorsement, is a good enough earnest of fellowship in the league. It cannot be a diplomatist's league. The League of Nations, if it is to have any such effect as people seem to hope from it, must be, in the first place, "understood of the people." It must be supported by sustained, deliberate explanation, and by teaching in school and church and press of the whole mass of all the peoples concerned. I underline the adjective "Free" here to set aside, once for all, any possible misconception that this modern idea of a League of Nations has any affinity to that Holy Alliance of the diplomatists, which set out to keep the peace of Europe so disastrously a century ago.

Later I will discuss the powers of the League. But before I come to that I would like to say a little about the more general question of its nature and authority. What sort of gathering will embody it? The suggestions made range from a mere advisory body, rather like The Hague Convention, which will merely pronounce on the rights and wrongs of any international conflict, to the idea of a sort of Super-State, a Parliament of Mankind, a "Super-National" Authority, practically taking over the sovereignty of the existing states and empires of the world. Most people's ideas of the League fall between these extremes. They want the League to be something more than an ethical court, they want a League that will act, but on the other hand they shrink from any loss of "our independence." There seems to be a conflict here. There is a real need for many people to tidy



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up their ideas at this point. We cannot have our cake and eat it. If association is worth while, there must be some sacrifice of freedom to association. As a very distinguished colonial representative said to me the other day: "Here we are talking of the freedom of small nations and the 'self-determination' of peoples, and at the same time of the Council of the League of Nations and all sorts of international controls. Which do we want?"

The answer, I think, is "Both." It is a matter of more or less, of getting the best thing at the cost of the second-best. We may want to relax an old association in order to make a newer and wider one. It is quite understandable that peoples aware of a distinctive national character and involved in some big existing political complex, should wish to disentangle themselves from one group of associations in order to enter more effectively into another, a greater, and more satisfactory one. The Finn or the Pole, who has hitherto been a rather reluctant member of the synthesis of the Russian Empire, may well wish to end that attachment in order to become a free member of a world-wide brotherhood. The desire for free arrangement is not a desire for chaos. There is such a thing as untying your parcels in order to pack them better, and I do not see myself how we can possibly contemplate a great league of freedom and reason in the world without a considerable amount of such preliminary dissolution.

It happens, fortunately for the world, that a century and a quarter ago thirteen various and very jealous states worked out the problem of a Union,

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and became—after an enormous, exhausting wrangle—the United States of America. Now the way they solved their riddle was by delegating and giving over jealously specified sovereign powers and doing all that was possible to retain the residuum. They remained essentially sovereign states. New York, Virginia, Massachusetts, for example, remained legally independent. The practical fusion of these peoples into one people outran the legal bargain. It was only after long years of discussion that the point was conceded; it was indeed only after the Civil War that the implications were fully established, that there resided a sovereignty in the American people as a whole, as distinguished from the peoples of the several states. This is a precedent that every one who talks about the League of Nations should bear in mind. These states set up a congress and president in Washington with strictly delegated powers. That congress and president they delegated to look after certain common interests, to deal with interstate trade, to deal with foreign powers, to maintain a supreme court of law. Everything else—education, militia, powers of life and death—the states retained for themselves. To this day, for instance, the federal courts and the federal officials have no power to interfere to protect the lives or property of aliens in any part of the union outside the District of Columbia. The state governments still see to that. The federal government has the legal right perhaps to intervene, but it is still chary of such intervention. And these states of the American Union were at the outset so independent-spirited that they would not even adopt a common name. To this day they have no common name. We

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have to call them Americans, which is a ridiculous name when we consider that Canada, Mexico, Peru, Brazil are all of them also in America. Or else we have to call them Virginians, Californians, New Englanders, and so forth. Their legal and nominal separateness weighs nothing against the real fusion that their great league has now made possible.

Now that clearly is a precedent of the utmost value in our schemes for this council of the League of Nations. We must begin by delegating, as the States began by delegating. It is a far cry to the time when we shall talk and think of the Sovereign People of the Earth. That council of the League of Nations will be a tie as strong, we hope, but certainly not so close and multiplex as the early tie of the States at Washington. It will begin by having certain delegated powers and no others. It will be an "*ad hoc*" body. Later its powers may grow as mankind becomes accustomed to it. But at first it will have, directly or mediately, all the powers that seem necessary to restrain the world from war—and unless I know nothing of patriotic jealousies it will have not a scrap of power more. The danger is much more that its powers will be insufficient than that they will be excessive. Of that later. What I want to discuss here now is the constitution of this delegated body. I want to discuss that first in order to set aside out of the discussion certain fantastic notions that will otherwise get very seriously in our way. Fantastic as they are, they have played a large part in reducing the Hague Tribunal to an ineffective squeak amidst the thunders of this war.

A number of gentlemen scheming out world unity

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in studies have begun their proposals with the simple suggestion that each sovereign power should send one member to the projected parliament of mankind. This has a pleasant democratic air; one sovereign state, one vote. Now let us run over a list of sovereign states and see to what this leads us. We find our list includes the British Empire, with a population of four hundred millions, of which probably half can read and write some language or other; Bogota with a population of a million, mostly poets; Hayti with a population of a million and a third, almost entirely illiterate and liable at any time to further political disruption; Andorra with a population of four or five thousand souls. The mere suggestion of equal representation between such "powers" is enough to make the British Empire burst into a thousand (voting) fragments. A certain concession to population, one must admit, was made by the theorists; a state of over three millions got, if I remember rightly, two delegates, and if over twenty, three, and some of the small states were given a kind of intermittent appearance, they only came every other time or something of that sort; but at The Hague things still remained in such a posture that three or four minute and backward states could outvote the British Empire or the United States. Therein lies the clew to the insignificance of The Hague. Such projects as these are idle projects and we must put them out of our heads; they are against nature; the great nations will not suffer them for a moment.

But when we dismiss this idea of representation by states, we are left with the problem of the proportion

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of representation and of relative weight in the Council of the League on our hands. It is the sort of problem that appeals terribly to the ingenious. We cannot solve it by making population a basis, because that will give a monstrous importance to the illiterate millions of India and China. Ingenious statistical schemes have been framed in which the number of university graduates and the steel output come in as multipliers, but for my own part I am not greatly impressed by statistical schemes. At the risk of seeming something of a Prussian, I would like to insist upon certain brute facts. The business of the League of Nations is to keep the peace of the world and nothing else. No power will ever dare to break the peace of the world if the powers that are capable of making war under modern conditions say "No." And there are only four powers certainly capable at the present time of producing the men and materials needed for a modern war in sufficient abundance to go on fighting: Britain, France, Germany, and the United States. There are three others which are very doubtfully capable: Italy, Japan, and Austria. Russia I will mark—it is all that one can do with Russia just now—with a note of interrogation. Some day China may be war capable—I hope never, but it is a possibility. Personally I don't think that any other power on earth would have a ghost of a chance to resist the will—if it could be an honestly united will—of the first-named four. All the rest fight by the sanction of and by association with these leaders. They can only fight because of the split will of the war-complete powers. Some are forced to fight by that very division.

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No one can vie with me in my appreciation of the civilisation of Switzerland, Sweden, or Holland, but the plain fact of the case is that such powers are absolutely incapable of uttering an effective protest against war. Far less so are your Haytis and Liberias. The preservation of the world peace rests with the great powers and with the great powers alone. If they have the will for peace, it is peace. If they have not, it is conflict. The four powers I have named can now, if they see fit, dictate the peace of the world for ever.

Let us keep our grip on that. Peace is the business of the great powers primarily. Steel output, university graduates, and so forth may be convenient secondary criteria, may be useful ways of measuring war efficiency, but the meat and substance of the Council of the League of Nations must embody the wills of those leading peoples. They can give an enduring peace to the little nations and the whole of mankind. It can arrive in no other way. So I take it that the Council of an ideal League of Nations must consist chiefly of the representatives of the great belligerent powers, and that the representatives of the minor allies and of the neutrals—essential though their presence will be—must not be allowed to swamp the voices of these larger masses of mankind.

And this state of affairs may come about more easily than logical, statistical-minded people may be disposed to think. Our first impulse, when we discuss the League of Nations idea, is to think of some very elaborate and definite scheme of members on the model of existing legislative bodies, called together

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one hardly knows how, and sitting in a specially built League of Nations Congress House. All schemes are more methodical than reality. We think of somebody, learned and "expert," in spectacles, with a thin clear voice, reading over the "Projected Constitution of a League of Nations" to an attentive and respectful Peace Congress. But there is a more natural way to a league than that. Instead of being made like a machine, the League of Nations may come about like a marriage. The Peace Congress that must sooner or later meet may itself become, after a time, the Council of a League of Nations. The League of Nations may come upon us by degrees, almost imperceptibly. I am strongly obsessed by the idea that that Peace Congress will necessarily become—and that it is highly desirable that it should become—a most prolonged and persistent gathering. Why should it not become at length a permanent gathering, inviting representatives to aid its deliberations from the neutral states, and gradually adjusting itself to conditions of permanency?

I can conceive no such Peace Congress as those that have settled up after other wars, settling up after this war. Not only has the war been enormously bigger than any other war, but it has struck deeper at the foundations of social and economic life. I doubt if we begin to realise how much of the old system is dead to-day, how much has to be remade. Since the beginnings of history there has been a credible promise of gold payments underneath our financial arrangements. It is now an incredible promise. The value of a pound note waves about while

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you look at it. What will happen to it when peace comes no man can tell. Nor what will happen to the mark. The rouble has gone into the Abyss. Our giddy money specialists clutch their handfuls of paper and watch it flying down the steep. Much as we may hate the Germans, some of us will have to sit down with some of the enemy to arrange a common scheme for the preservation of credit in money. And I presume that it is not proposed to end this war in a wild scramble of buyers for such food as remains in the world. There is a shortage now, a greater shortage ahead of the world, and there will be shortages of supply at the source and transport in food and all raw materials for some years to come. The Peace Congress will have to sit and organise a share-out and distribution and reorganisation of these shattered supplies. It will have to Rhondda the nations. Probably, too, we shall have to deal collectively with a pestilence before we are out of the mess. Then there are such little jobs as the reconstruction of Belgium and Serbia. There are considerable rectifications of boundaries to be made. There are fresh states to be created, in Poland and Armenia for example. About all these smaller states, new and old, that the peace must call into being, there must be a system of guarantees of the most difficult and complicated sort.

I do not see the Peace Congress getting through such matters as these in a session of weeks or months. The idea the Germans betrayed at Brest, that things were going to be done in the Versailles fashion by great moustached heroes frowning and drawing lines



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with a large black soldierly thumb-nail across maps, is—old-fashioned. They have made their eastern treaties, it is true, in this mode, but they are still looking for some really responsible government to keep them now that they are made. From first to last clearly the main peace negotiations are going to follow unprecedented courses. This preliminary discussion of war aims by means of great public speeches, that has been getting more and more explicit now for many months, is quite unprecedented. Apparently all the broad preliminaries are to be stated and accepted in the sight of all mankind before even an armistice occurs on the main, the western front. The German diplomatists hate this process. So do a lot of ours. So do some of the diplomatic Frenchmen. The German junkers are dodging and lying, they are fighting desperately to keep back everything they possibly can for the bargaining and bullying and table-banging of the council-chamber, but that way there is no peace. And when at last Germany says snip sufficiently to the Allies' snap, and the Peace Congress begins, it will almost certainly be as unprecedented as its prelude. Before it meets, the broad lines of the settlement will have been drawn plainly with the approval of the mass of mankind.

### § 2

#### THE LEAGUE MUST BE REPRESENTATIVE

A Peace Congress, growing permanent, then, may prove to be the most practical and convenient embodiment of this idea of a League of Nations that

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has taken possession of the imagination of the world. A most necessary preliminary to a Peace Congress, with such possibilities inherent in it, must obviously be the meeting and organisation of a preliminary League of the Allied Nations. That point I would now enlarge.

Half a world peace is better than none. There seems no reason whatever why the world should wait for the Central Powers before it begins this necessary work. Mr. McCurdy has been asking lately, "Why not the League of Nations *now*?" That is a question a great number of people would like to echo very heartily. The nearer the Allies can come to a League of Free Nations before the Peace Congress the more prospect there is that that body will approximate in nature to a League of Nations for the whole world.

In one most unexpected quarter the same idea has been indorsed. The King's Speech on the prorogation of Parliament this February was one of the most remarkable royal utterances that have ever been made from the British throne. There was less of the old-fashioned King and more of the modern President about it than the most republican-minded of us could have anticipated. For the first time in a King's Speech we heard of the "democracies" of the world, and there was a clear claim that the Allies at present fighting the Central Powers did themselves constitute a League of Nations.

But we must admit that at present they do so only in a very rhetorical sense. There is no real council of empowered representatives, and nothing in the nature of a united front has been prepared. Unless

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we provide beforehand for something more effective, Italy, France, the United States, Japan, and this country will send separate groups of representatives, with separate instructions, unequal status, and very probably conflicting views upon many subjects, to the ultimate peace discussions. It is quite conceivable—it is a very serious danger—that at this discussion skilful diplomacy on the part of the Central Powers may open a cleft among the Allies that has never appeared during the actual war. Have the British settled, for example, with Italy and France for the supply of metallurgical coal after the war? Those countries must have it somehow. Across the board Germany can make some tempting bids in that respect. Or take another question: Have the British arrived at common views with France, Belgium, Portugal, and South Africa about the administration of central Africa? Suppose Germany makes sudden proposals affecting native labour that win over the Portuguese and the Boers? There are a score of such points upon which we shall find the Allied representatives haggling with each other in the presence of the enemy if they have not been settled beforehand.

It is the plainest common sense that we should be fixing up all such matters with our Allies now, and knitting together a common front for the final deal with German Imperialism. And these things are not to be done effectively and bindingly nowadays by official gentlemen in discreet undertones. They need to be done with the full knowledge and authority of the participating peoples.

The Russian example has taught the world the

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instability of diplomatic bargains in a time of such fundamental issues as the present. There is little hope and little strength in hole-and-corner bargainings between the officials or politicians who happen to be at the head of this or that nation for the time being. Our Labour people will not stand this sort of thing and they will not be bound by it. There will be the plain danger of repudiation for all arrangements made in that fashion. A gathering of somebody or other approved by the British Foreign Office and of somebody or other approved by the French Foreign Office, of somebody with vague powers from America, and so on and so on, will be an entirely ineffective gathering. But that is the sort of gathering of the Allies we have been having hitherto, and that is the sort of gathering that is likely to continue unless there is a considerable expression of opinion in favour of something more representative and responsible.

Even our Foreign Office must be aware that in every country in the world there is now bitter suspicion of and keen hostility towards merely diplomatic representatives. One of the most significant features of the time is the evident desire of the Labour movement in every European country to take part in a collateral conference of Labour that shall meet when and where the Peace Congress does and deliberate and comment on its proceedings. For a year now the demand of the masses for such a Labour conference has been growing. It marks a distrust of officialdom whose intensity officialdom would do well to ponder. But it is the natural consequence of, it is the popular attempt at a corrective to, the aloofness and obscurity

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that have hitherto been so evil a characteristic of international negotiations. I do not think Labour and intelligent people anywhere are going to be fobbed off with an old-fashioned diplomatic gathering as being that League of Free Nations they demand.

On the other hand, I do not contemplate this bicameral conference with the diplomatists trying to best and humbug the Labour people as well as each other and the Labour people getting more and more irritated, suspicious, and extremist, with anything but dread. The Allied countries must go into the conference *solid*, and they can only hope to do that by heeding and incorporating Labour ideas before they come to the conference. The only alternative that I can see to this unsatisfactory prospect of a Peace Congress sitting side by side with a dissentient and probably revolutionary Labour and Socialist convention—both gatherings with unsatisfactory credentials contradicting one another and drifting to opposite extremes—is that the delegates the Allied Powers send to the Peace Conference (the same delegates which, if they are wise, they will have previously sent to a preliminary League of Allied Nations to discuss their common action at the Peace Congress) should be elected *ad hoc* upon democratic lines.

I know that this will be a very shocking proposal to all our able specialists in foreign policy. They will talk at once about the “ignorance” of people like the Labour leaders and myself about such matters, and so on. What do we know of the treaty of so-and-so that was signed in the year seventeen something?—and so on. To which the answer is that we ought not

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to have been kept ignorant of these things. A day will come when the Foreign Offices of all countries will have to recognise that what the people do not know of international agreements "ain't facts." A secret treaty is only binding upon the persons in the secret. But what I, as a sample common person, am not ignorant of is this: that the business that goes on at the Peace Congress will either make or mar the lives of every one I care for in the world, and that somehow, by representative or what not, *I have to be there*. The Peace Congress deals with the blood and happiness of my children and the future of my world. Speaking as one of the hundreds of millions of "rank outsiders" in public affairs, I do not mean to respect any peace treaty that may end this war unless I am honestly represented at its making. I think everywhere there is a tendency in people to follow the Russian example to this extent and to repudiate bargains in which they have had no voice.

I do not see that any genuine realisation of the hopes with which all this talk about the League of Nations is charged can be possible, unless the two bodies which should naturally lead up to the League of Nations—that is to say, firstly, the Conference of the Allies, and then the Peace Congress—are elected bodies, speaking confidently for the whole mass of the peoples behind them. It may be a troublesome thing to elect them, but it will involve much more troublesome consequences if they are not elected. This, I think, is one of the considerations for which many people's minds are still unprepared. But unless we are to have over again after all this bloodshed and

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effort some such "Peace with Honour" foolery as we had performed by "Dizzy" and Salisbury at that fatal Berlin Conference in which this present war was begotten, we must sit up to this novel proposal of electoral representation in the peace negotiations. Something more than common sense binds our statesmen to this idea. They are morally pledged to it. President Wilson and our British and French spokesmen alike have said over and over again that they want to deal not with the Hohenzollerns but with the German people. In other words, we have demanded elected representatives from the German people with whom we may deal, and how can we make a demand of that sort unless we on our part are already prepared to send our own elected representatives to meet them? It is up to us to indicate by our own practice how we on our side, professing as we do to act for democracies, to make democracy safe on the earth, and so on, intend to meet this new occasion.

Yet it has to be remarked that, so far, not one of the League of Nations projects I have seen have included any practicable proposals for the appointment of delegates either to that ultimate body or to its two necessary predecessors, the Council of the Allies and the Peace Congress. It is evident that here too we are neglecting to get on with something of very urgent importance. I will venture, therefore, to say a word or two here about the possible way in which a modern community may appoint its international representatives.

And here again I turn from any European precedents to that political outcome of the British mind,

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the Constitution of the United States. (Because we must always remember that while our political institutions in Britain are a patch-up of feudalism, Tudor, Stuart, and Hanoverian monarchist traditions and urgent merely European necessities, a patch-up that has been made quasi-democratic in a series of after-thoughts, the American Constitution is a real, deliberate creation of the English-speaking intelligence.) The President of the United States, then, we have to note, is elected in a most extraordinary way, and in a way that has now the justification of very great successes indeed. On several occasions the United States has achieved indisputable greatness in its Presidents, and rarely has it failed to set up leaderly and distinguished men. It is worth while, therefore, to inquire how this President is elected. He is neither elected directly by the people nor appointed by any legislative body. He is chosen by a special college elected by the people. This college exists to elect him; it meets, elects him, and disperses. (I will not here go into the preliminary complications that make the election of a President follow upon a preliminary election of two Presidential Candidates. The point I am making here is that he is a specially selected man chosen *ad hoc*.) Is there any reason why we should not adopt this method in this new necessity we are under of sending representatives, first, to the long overdue and necessary Allied Council, then to the Peace Congress, and then to the hoped-for Council of the League of Nations?

I am anxious here only to start for discussion the idea of an electoral representation of the nation upon



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these three bodies that must in succession set themselves to define, organise, and maintain the peace of the world. I do not wish to complicate the question by any too explicit advocacy of methods of election or the like. In the United States this college which elects the President is elected on the same register of voters as that which elects the Senate and Congress, and at the same time. But I suppose if we are to give a popular mandate to the three or five or twelve or twenty (or whatever number it is) men to whom we are going to intrust our Empire's share in this great task of the peace negotiations, it would be more decisive of the will of the whole nation if the college that has to appoint them were elected at a special election. I suppose that the great British commonweals overseas, at present not represented in Parliament, would also and separately at the same time elect colleges to appoint their representatives. I suppose there would be at least one Indian representative elected, perhaps by some special electoral conference of Indian princes and leading men. The chief defect of the American presidential election is that as the old single-vote method of election is employed it has to be fought on purely party lines. He is the select man of the Democratic half, or of the Republican half of the nation. He is not the select man of the whole nation. It would give a far more representative character to the electoral college if it could be elected by fair modern methods, if for this particular purpose parliamentary constituencies could be grouped and the clean scientific method of proportional representation could be used. But I suppose the party politician in

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this, as in most of our affairs, must still have his pound of our flesh—and we must reckon with him later for the bloodshed.

These, however, are all secondary considerations. The above paragraph is, so to speak, in the nature of a foot-note. The fundamental necessity, if we are to get towards any realisation of this ideal of a world peace sustained by a League of Nations, is to get straight away to the conception of direct special electoral mandates in this matter. At present all the political luncheon and dinner parties in London are busy with smirking discussions of "Who is to go?" The titled ladies are particularly busy. They are talking about it as if we poor, ignorant, tax-paying, blood-paying common people did not exist. "L. G.," they say, will of course "*insist* on going," but there is much talk of the "Old Man." People are getting quite nice again about "the Old Man's feelings." It would be such a pretty thing to send him. But if "L. G." goes we want him to go with something more than a backing of intrigues and snatched authority. And I do not think the mass of people have any enthusiasm for the Old Man. It is difficult again—by the dinner-party standards—to know how Lord Curzon can be restrained. But we common people do not care if he is restrained to the point of extinction. Probably there will be nobody who talks or understands Russian among the British representatives. But, of course, the British governing class has washed its hands of the Russians. They were always very difficult, and now they are "impossible, my dear, perfectly impossible."

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No! That sort of thing will not do now. This Peace Congress is too big a job for party politicians and society and county families. The bulk of British opinion cannot go on being represented for ever by President Wilson. We cannot always look to the Americans to express our ideas and do our work for democracy. The foolery of the Berlin Treaty must not be repeated. We cannot have another popular Prime Minister come triumphing back to England with a gross of pink spectacles—through which we may survey the prospect of the next great war. The League of Free Nations means something very big and solid; it is not a rhetorical phrase to be used to pacify a restless, distressed, and anxious public, and to be sneered out of existence when that use is past. When the popular mind now demands a League of Free Nations it demands a reality. The only way to that reality is through the direct participation of the nation as a whole in the settlement, and that is possible only through the direct election for this particular issue of representative and responsible men.

### § 3

#### THE NECESSARY POWERS OF THE LEAGUE

If this phrase, “the League of Free Nations,” is to signify anything more than a rhetorical flourish, then certain consequences follow that have to be faced now. No man can join a partnership and remain an absolutely free man. You cannot bind yourself to do this and not to do that and to consult and

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act with your associates in certain eventualities without a loss of your sovereign freedom. People in this country and in France do not seem to be sitting up manfully to these necessary propositions.

If this League of Free Nations is really to be an effectual thing for the preservation of the peace of the world it must possess power and exercise power, powers must be delegated to it. Otherwise it will only help, with all other half-hearted good resolutions, to pave the road of mankind to hell. Nothing in all the world so strengthens evil as the half-hearted attempts of good to make good.

It scarcely needs repeating here—it has been so generally said—that no League of Free Nations can hope to keep the peace unless every member of it is indeed a free member, represented by duly elected persons. Nobody, of course, asks to “dictate the internal government” of any country to that country. If Germans, for instance, like to wallow in absolutism after the war they can do so. But if they or any other peoples wish to take part in a permanent League of Free Nations it is only reasonable to insist that so far as their representatives on the council go they must be duly elected under conditions that are by the standards of the general league satisfactorily democratic. That seems to be only the common sense of the matter. Every court is a potential conspiracy against freedom, and the League cannot tolerate merely court appointments. If courts are to exist anywhere in the new world of the future, they will be wise to stand aloof from international meddling. Of course if a people, after due provision for electoral

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representation, choose to elect dynastic candidates, that is an altogether different matter.

And now let us consider what are the powers that must be delegated to this proposed council of a League of Free Nations, if that is really effectually to prevent war and to organise and establish and make peace permanent in the world.

Firstly, then, it must be able to adjudicate upon all international disputes whatever. Its foremost function must clearly be that. Before a war can break out there must be the possibility of a world decision upon its rights and wrongs. The League, therefore, will have as its primary function to maintain a Supreme Court, whose decisions will be final, before which every sovereign power may appear as plaintiff against any other sovereign power or group of powers. The plea, I take it, will always be in the form that the defendant power or powers is engaged in proceedings "calculated to lead to a breach of the peace," and calling upon the League for an injunction against such proceedings. I suppose the proceedings that can be brought into court in this way fall under such headings as these that follow; restraint of trade by injurious tariffs or suchlike differentiations or by interference with through traffic, improper treatment of the subjects *or their property* (here I put a query) of the plaintiff nation in the defendant state, aggressive military or naval preparation, disorder spreading over the frontier, trespass (as, for instance, by airships), propaganda of disorder, espionage, permitting the organisation of injurious activities, such as raids or piracy. Clearly all such

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actions must come within the purview of any world-supreme court organised to prevent war. But in addition there is a more doubtful and delicate class of case, arising out of the discontent of patches of one race or religion in the dominions of another. How far may the supreme court of the world attend to grievances between subject and sovereign?

Such cases are highly probable, and no large, vague propositions about the "self-determination" of peoples can meet all the cases. In Macedonia, for instance, there is a jumble of Albanian, Serbian, Bulgarian, Greek, and Roumanian villages always jostling one another and maintaining an intense irritation between the kindred nations close at hand. And quite a large number of areas and cities in the world, it has to be remembered, are not homogeneous at all. Will the great nations of the world have the self-abnegation to permit a scattered subject population to appeal against the treatment of its ruling power to the Supreme Court? This is a much more serious interference with sovereignty than intervention in an external quarrel. Could a Greek village in Bulgarian Macedonia plead in the Supreme Court? Could the Armenians in Constantinople, or the Jews in Roumania, or the Poles in West Prussia, or the negroes in Georgia, or the Indians in the Transvaal make such an appeal? Could any Indian population in India appeal? Personally I should like to see the power of the Supreme Court extend as far as this. I do not see how we can possibly prevent a kindred nation pleading for the scattered people of its own race and culture, or any nation presenting a case on

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behalf of some otherwise unrepresented people—the United States, for example, presenting a case on behalf of the Armenians. But I doubt if many people have made up their minds yet to see the powers of the Supreme Court of the League of Nations go so far as this. I doubt if, to begin with, it will be possible to provide for these cases. I would like to see it done, but I doubt if the majority of the sovereign peoples concerned will reconcile their national pride with the idea, at least so far as it affects their own subject populations.

Here, you see, I do no more than ask a question. It is a difficult one, and it has to be answered before we can clear the way to the League of Free Nations.

But the Supreme Court, whether it is to have the wider or the narrower scope here suggested, would be merely the central function of the League of Free Nations. Behind the decisions of the Supreme Court must lie power. And here come fresh difficulties for patriotic digestions. The armies and navies of the world must be at the disposal of the League of Free Nations, and that opens up a new large area of delegated authority. The first impulse of any power disposed to challenge the decisions of the Supreme Court will be, of course, to arm; and it is difficult to imagine how the League of Free Nations can exercise any practical authority unless it has power to restrain such armament. The League of Free Nations must, in fact, if it is to be a working reality, have power to define and limit the military and naval and aerial equipment of every country in the world. This means something more than a restriction of state forces. It

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must have power and freedom to investigate the military and naval and aerial establishments of all its constituent powers. It must also have effective control over every armament industry. And armament industries are not always easy to define. Are aeroplanes, for example, armament? Its powers, I suggest, must extend even to a restraint upon the belligerent propaganda which is the natural advertisement campaign of every armament industry. It must have the right, for example, to raise the question of the proprietorship of newspapers by armament interests. Disarmament is, in fact, a necessary factor of any League of Free Nations, and you cannot have disarmament unless you are prepared to see the powers of the council of the League extend thus far. The very existence of the League presupposes that it and it alone is to have and to exercise military force. Any other belligerency or preparation or incitement to belligerency becomes rebellion, and any other arming a threat of rebellion, in a world League of Free Nations.

But here, again, has the general mind yet thought out all that is involved in this proposition? In all the great belligerent countries the armament industries are now huge interests with enormous powers. Krupp's business alone is as powerful a thing in Germany as the Crown. In every country a heavily subsidised "patriotic" press will fight desperately against giving powers so extensive and thorough as those here suggested to an international body. So long, of course, as the League of Free Nations remains a project in the air, without body or parts, such a press



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will sneer gently at it as "Utopian," and even patronise it kindly. But so soon as the League takes on the shape its general proposition makes logically necessary, the armament interest will take fright. Then it is we shall hear the drum patriotic loud in defence of the human blood trade. Are we to hand over these most intimate affairs of ours to "a lot of foreigners"? Among these "foreigners" who will be appealed to to terrify the patriotic souls of the British will be the "Americans." Are we men of English blood and tradition to see our affairs controlled by such "foreigners" as Wilson, Lincoln, Webster, and Washington? Perish the thought! When they might be controlled by Disraelis, Wettins, Mount-Battens, and what not! And so on and so on. Krupp's agents and the agents of the kindred firms in Great Britain and France will also be very busy with the national pride of France. In Germany they have already created a colossal suspicion of England.

Here is a giant in the path. . . .

But let us remember that it is only necessary to defeat the propaganda of this vile and dangerous industry in four great countries. And for the common citizen, touched on the tenderest part of his patriotic susceptibilities, there are certain irrefutable arguments. Whether the ways of the world in the years to come are to be the paths of peace or the paths of war is not going to alter this essential fact, that the great educated world communities, with a social and industrial organisation on a war-capable scale, are going to dominate human affairs. Whether they spend their power in killing or in educating and creating,

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France, Germany, however much we may resent it, the two great English-speaking communities, Italy, Japan, China, and presently perhaps a renascent Russia, are jointly going to control the destinies of mankind. Whether that joint control comes through arms or through the law is a secondary consideration. To refuse to bring our affairs into a common council does not make us independent of foreigners. It makes us more dependent upon them, as a very little reflection will show.

I am suggesting here that the League of Free Nations shall practically control the army, navy, air forces, and armament industry of every nation in the world. What is the alternative to that? To do as we please? No, the alternative is that any malignant country will be free to force upon all the rest just the maximum amount of armament it chooses to adopt. Since 1871 France, we say, has been free in military matters. What has been the value of that freedom? The truth is, she has been the bond-slave of Germany, bound to watch Germany as a slave watches a master, bound to launch submarine for submarine and cast gun for gun, to sweep all her youth into her army, to subdue her trade, her literature, her education, her whole life to the necessity of preparations imposed upon her by her drill-master over the Rhine. And Michael, too, has been a slave to his imperial master for the self-same reason, for the reason that Germany and France were both so proudly sovereign and independent. Both countries have been slaves to Kruppism and Zabernism—*because they were sovereign and free!* So it will always be. So long as patriotic cant

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can keep the common man jealous of international controls over his belligerent possibilities, so long will he be the helpless slave of the foreign threat, and "Peace" remain a mere name for the resting phase between wars.

But power over the military resources of the world is by no means the limit of the necessary powers of an effective League of Free Nations. There are still more indigestible implications in the idea, and, since they have got to be digested sooner or later if civilisation is not to collapse, there is no reason why we should not begin to bite upon them now. I was much interested to read the British press upon the alleged proposal of the German Chancellor that we should give up (presumably to Germany) Gibraltar, Malta, Egypt, and suchlike key possessions. It seemed to excite several of our politicians extremely. I read over the German Chancellor's speech very carefully, so far as it was available, and it is clear that he did not propose anything of the sort. Wilfully or blindly our press and our demagogues screamed over a false issue. The Chancellor was defending the idea of the Germans remaining in Belgium and Lorraine because of the strategic and economic importance of those regions to Germany, and he was arguing that before we English got into such a feverish state of indignation about that, we should first ask ourselves what we were doing in Gibraltar, etc., etc. That is a different thing altogether. And it is an argument that is not to be disposed of by misrepresentation. The British have to think hard over this quite legitimate German *tu quoque*. It is no good getting into a patriotic

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bad temper and refusing to answer that question. We British people are so persuaded of the purity and unselfishness with which we discharge our imperial responsibilities, we have been so trained in imperial self-satisfaction, we know so certainly that all our subject nations call us blessed, that it is a little difficult for us to see just how the fact that we are, for example, so deeply rooted in Egypt looks to an outside intelligence. Of course the German imperialist idea is a wicked and aggressive idea, as Lord Robert Cecil has explained; they want to set up all over the earth coaling stations and strategic points, *on the pattern of ours*. Well, they argue, we are only trying to do what you British have done. If we are not to do so—because it is aggression and so on and so on—is not the time ripe for you to make some concessions to the public opinion of the world? That is the German argument. Either, they say, tolerate this idea of a Germany with advantageous posts and possessions round and about the earth, or reconsider your own position.

Well, at the risk of rousing much patriotic wrath, I must admit that I think we *have* to reconsider our position. Our argument is that in India, Egypt, Africa, and elsewhere, we stand for order and civilisation, we are the trustees of freedom, the agents of knowledge and efficiency. On the whole the record of British rule is a pretty respectable one; I am not ashamed of our record. Nevertheless *the case is altering*.

It is quite justifiable for us British, no doubt, if we do really play the part of honest trustees, to remain

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in Egypt and in India under existing conditions; it is even possible for us to glance at the present plight of Arabia, Palestine, and Mesopotamia, as yet incapable of self-government, helpless as new-born infants. But our case, our only justifiable case, is that we are trustees because there is no better trustee possible. And the creation of a council of a League of Free Nations would be like the creation of a Public Trustee for the world. The creation of a League of Free Nations must necessarily be the creation of an authority that may legitimately call existing empires to give an account of their stewardship. For an unchecked fragmentary control of tropical and chaotic regions, it substitutes the possibility of a general authority. And this must necessarily alter the problems not only of the politically immature nations and the control of the tropics, but also of the regulation of the sea ways, the regulation of the coming air routes, and the distribution of staple products in the world. I will not go in detail over the items of this list, because the reader can fill in the essentials of the argument from what has gone before. I want simply to suggest how widely this project of a League of Free Nations swings when once you have let it swing freely in your mind! And if you do not let it swing freely in your mind, it remains nothing—a sentimental gesture.

The plain truth is that the League of Free Nations, if it is to be a reality, if it is to effect a real pacification of the world, must do no less than supersede Empire; it must end not only this new German imperialism, which is struggling so savagely and powerfully to possess the earth, but it must also wind up

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British imperialism and French imperialism, which do now so largely and inaggressively possess it. And, moreover, this idea queries the adjective of Belgian, Portuguese, French, and British Central Africa alike, just as emphatically as it queries "German." Still more effectually does the League forbid those creations of the futurist imagination, the imperialism of Italy and Greece, which make such threatening gestures at the world of our children. Are these incompatibilities understood? Until people have faced the clear antagonism that exists between imperialism and internationalism, they have not begun to suspect the real significance of this project of the League of Free Nations. They have not begun to realise that peace also has its price.

### § 4

#### THE LABOUR VIEW OF MIDDLE AFRICA

I was recently privileged to hear the views of one of those titled and influential ladies—with a general education at about the fifth standard level, plus a little French, German, Italian, and music—who do so much to make our England what it is at the present time, upon the Labour idea of an international control of "tropical" Africa. She was loud and derisive about the "ignorance" of Labour. "What can *they* know about foreign politics?" she said, with gestures to indicate her conception of *them*.

I was moved to ask her what she would do about Africa. "Leave it to Lord Robert!" she said, leaning

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forward impressively. "*Leave it to the people who know.*"

Unhappily I share the evident opinion of Labour that we are not blessed with any profoundly wise class of people who have definite knowledge and clear intentions about Africa, that these "*people who know*" are mostly a pretentious bluff, and so, in spite of a very earnest desire to take refuge in my "ignorance" from the burthen of thinking about African problems, I find myself obliged, like most other people, to do so. In the interests of our country, our children, and the world, we common persons *have* to have opinions about these matters. A muddle-up in Africa this year may kill your son and mine in the course of the next decade. I know this is not a claim to be interested in things African, such as the promoter of a tropical railway or an oil speculator has; still it is a claim. And for the life of me I cannot see what is wrong about the Labour proposals, or what alternative exists that can give even a hope of peace in and about Africa.

The gist of the Labour proposal is an international control of Africa between the Zambesi and the Sahara. This has been received with loud protests by men whose work one is obliged to respect, by Sir Harry Johnston, for example, and Sir Alfred Sharpe, and with something approaching a shriek of hostility by Mr. Cunninghame Graham. But I think these gentlemen have not perhaps given the Labour proposal quite as much attention as they have spent upon the details of African conditions. I think they have jumped to conclusions at the mere sound of the

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word "international." There have been some gross failures in the past to set up international administrations in Africa and the Near East. And these gentlemen think at once of some new Congo administration and of nondescript police forces commanded by cosmopolitan adventurers. (See Joseph Conrad's "Outpost of Civilisation.") They think of internationalism with greedy Great Powers in the background outside the internationalised area, intriguing to create disorder and mischief with ideas of an ultimate annexation. But I doubt if such nightmares do any sort of justice to the Labour intention.

And the essential thing I would like to point out to these authorities upon African questions is that not one of them even hints at any other formula which covers the broad essentials of the African riddle.

What are these broad essentials? What are the ends that *must* be achieved if Africa is not to continue a festering sore in the body of mankind?

The first most obvious danger of Africa is the militarisation of the black. General Smuts has pointed this out plainly. The negro makes a good soldier; he is hardy, he stands the sea, and he stands cold. (There was a negro in the little party which reached the North Pole.) It is absolutely essential to the peace of the world that there should be no arming of the negroes beyond the minimum necessary for the policing of Africa. But how is this to be watched and prevented if there is no overriding body representing civilisation to say "Stop" to the beginnings of any such militarisation? I do not see how Sir Harry Johnston, Sir Alfred Sharpe, and the other



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authorities can object to at least an international African "Disarmament Commission" to watch, warn, and protest. At least they must concede that.

But in practice this involves something else. A practical consequence of this disarmament idea must be an effective control of the importation of arms into the "tutelage" areas of Africa. That rat at the dikes of civilisation, that ultimate expression of political scoundrelism, the Gun-Runner, has to be kept under and stamped out in Africa as everywhere. A Disarmament Commission that has no forces available to prevent the arms trade will be just another Hague Convention, just another vague, well-intentioned, futile gesture.

And closely connected with this function of controlling the arms trade is another great necessity of Africa under "tutelage," and that is the necessity of a common collective agreement not to demoralise the native population. That demoralisation, physical and moral, has already gone far. The whole negro population of Africa is now rotten with diseases introduced by Arabs and Europeans during the last century, and such African statesmen as Sir Harry Johnston are eloquent upon the necessity of saving the blacks—and the baser whites—from the effects of trade gin and similar alluring articles of commerce. Moreover, from Africa there is always something new in the way of tropical diseases, and presently Africa, if we let it continue to fester as it festers now, may produce an epidemic that will stand exportation to a temperate climate. A bacterium that may kill you or me in some novel and disgusting way may even now

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be developing in some Congo muck-heap. So here is the need for another Commission to look after the Health of Africa. That, too, should be of authority over all the area of "tutelage" Africa. It is no good stamping out infectious disease in Nyasaland while it is being bred in Portuguese East Africa. And if there is a Disarmament Commission already controlling the importation of arms, why should not that body also control at the same time the importation of trade gin and similar delicacies, and direct quarantine and suchlike health regulations?

But there is another question in Africa upon which our "ignorant" Labour class is far better informed than our dear old eighteenth-century upper class which still squats so firmly in our Foreign and Colonial Offices, and that is the question of forced labour. We cannot tolerate any possibilities of the enslavement of black Africa. Long ago the United States found out the impossibility of having slave labour working in the same system with white. To cure that anomaly cost the United States a long and bloody war. The slave-owner, the exploiter of the black, becomes a threat and a nuisance to any white democracy. He brings back his loot to corrupt Press and life at home. What happened in America in the midst of the last century between Federals and Confederates must not happen again on a larger scale between white Europe and middle Africa. Slavery in Africa, open or disguised, whether enforced by the lash or brought about by iniquitous land-stealing, strikes at the home and freedom of every European worker—and *Labour knows this.*

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But how are we to prevent the enslavement and economic exploitation of the blacks if we have no general watcher of African conditions? We want a common law for Africa, a general Declaration of Rights, of certain elementary rights, and we want a common authority to which the black man and the native tribe may appeal for justice. What is the good of trying to elevate the population of Uganda and to give it a free and hopeful life if some other population close at hand is competing against the Baganda worker under lash and tax? So here is a third aspect of our international Commission, as a native protectorate and court of appeal!

There is still a fourth aspect of the African question in which every mother's son in Europe is closely interested, and that is the trade question. Africa is the great source of many necessary raw materials upon which our modern comforts and conveniences depend; more particularly is it the source of cheap fat in the form of palm-oil. One of the most powerful levers in the hands of the Allied democracies at the present time in their struggle against the imperial brigands of Potsdam is the complete control we have now obtained over these essential supplies. We can, if we choose, cut off Germany altogether from these vital economic necessities, if she does not consent to abandon militant imperialism for some more civilised form of government. We hope that this war will end in that renunciation, and that Germany will re-enter the community of nations. But whether that is so or not, whether Germany is or is not to be one of the interested parties in the African solution, the

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fact remains that it is impossible to contemplate a continuing struggle for the African raw material supply between the interested Powers. Sooner or later that means a renewal of war. International trade rivalry is, indeed, only war—*smouldering*. We need, and Labour demands, a fair, frank treatment of African trade, and that can only be done by some overriding regulative power, a Commission which, so far as I can see, might also be the same Commission as that we have already hypothesised as being necessary to control the Customs in order to prevent gun-running and the gin trade. That Commission might very conveniently have a voice in the administration of the great waterways of Africa (which often run through the possessions of several Powers) and in the regulation of the big railway-lines and air routes that will speedily follow the conclusion of peace.

Now this I take it is the gist of the Labour proposal. This—and no more than this—is what is intended by the “international control of tropical Africa.” *I do not read that phrase as abrogating existing sovereignties in Africa.* What is contemplated is a delegation of authority. Every one should know, though unhappily the badness of our history teaching makes it doubtful if every one does know, that the Federal Government of the United States of America did not begin as a sovereign Government, and has now only a very questionable sovereignty. Each State was sovereign, and each State delegated certain powers to Washington. That was the initial idea of the union. Only later did the idea of a people of the States as a whole emerge. In the same way I understand the Labour

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proposal as meaning that we should delegate to an African Commission the middle African Customs, the regulation of interstate trade, interstate railways and waterways, quarantine and health generally, and the establishment of a Supreme Court for middle African affairs. One or two minor matters, such as the preservation of rare animals, might very well fall under the same authority.

Upon that Commission the interested nations, that is to say—putting them in alphabetical order—the Africander, the Briton, the Belgian, the Egyptian, the Frenchman, the Italian, the Indian, the Portuguese—might all be represented in proportion to their interest. Whether the German would come in is really a question for the German to consider; he can come in as a good European, he cannot come in as an imperialist brigand. Whether, too, any other nations can claim to have an interest in African affairs, whether the Commission would not be better appointed by a League of Free Nations than directly by the interested Governments, and a number of other such questions, need not be considered here. Here we are discussing only the main idea of the Labour proposal.

Now beneath the supervision and restraint of such a delegated Commission I do not see why the existing administrations of tutelage Africa should not continue. I do not believe that the Labour proposal contemplates any humiliating cession of European sovereignty. Under that international Commission the French flag may still wave in Senegal and the British over the protected State of Uganda. Given a new

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spirit in Germany I do not see why the German flag should not presently be restored in German East Africa. But over all, standing for righteousness, patience, fair play for the black, and the common welfare of mankind would wave a new flag, the Sun of Africa representing the Central African Commission of the League of Free Nations.

That is my vision of the Labour project. It is something very different, I know, from the nightmare of an international police of cosmopolitan scoundrels in nondescript uniforms, hastening to loot and ravish his dear Uganda and his beloved Nigeria, which distresses the crumpled pillow of Sir Harry Johnston. But if it is not the solution, then it is up to him and his fellow authorities to tell us what is the solution of the African riddle.

### § 5

#### GETTING THE LEAGUE IDEA CLEAR IN RELATION TO IMPERIALISM

It is idle to pretend that even at the present time the idea of the League of Free Nations has secure possession of the British mind. There is quite naturally a sustained opposition to it in all the fastnesses of aggressive imperialism. Such papers as *The Times* and *The Morning Post* remain hostile and obstructive to the expression of international ideas. Most of our elder statesmen seem to have learned nothing and forgotten nothing during the years of wildest change the world has ever known. But in the general mind of the British peoples the movement of

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opinion from a narrow imperialism towards internationalism has been wide and swift. And it continues steadily. One can trace week by week and almost day by day the Americanisation of the British conception of the Allied War Aims. It may be interesting to reproduce here three communications upon this question made at different times by the present writer to the press. The circumstances of their publication are significant. The first is in substance identical with a letter which was sent to *The Times* late in May, 1917, and rejected as being altogether too revolutionary. For nowadays the correspondence in *The Times* has ceased to be an impartial expression of public opinion. The correspondence of *The Times* is now apparently selected and edited in accordance with the views upon public policy held by the acting editor for the day. More and more has that paper become the organ of a sort of Oxford Imperialism, three or four years behind the times and very ripe and "expert." The letter is here given as it was finally printed in the issue of *The Daily Chronicle* for June 4, 1917, under the heading "Wanted a Statement of Imperial Policy."

Sir,—The time seems to have come for much clearer statements of outlook and intention from this country than it has hitherto been possible to make. The entry of America into the war and the banishment of autocracy and aggressive diplomacy from Russia have enormously cleared the air, and the recent great speech of General Smuts at the Savoy Hotel is probably only the first of a series of experiments in state-

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ment. It is desirable alike to clear our own heads, to unify our efforts, and to give the nations of the world some assurance and standard for our national conduct in the future, that we should now define the Idea of our Empire and its relation to the world outlook much more clearly than has ever hitherto been done. Never before in the history of mankind has opinion counted for so much and persons and organisations for so little as in this war. Never before has the need for clear ideas, widely understood and consistently sustained, been so commandingly vital.

What do we mean by our Empire, and what is its relation to that universal desire of mankind, the permanent rule of peace and justice in the world? The whole world will be the better for a very plain answer to that question.

Is it not time for us British not merely to admit to ourselves, but to assure the world that our Empire as it exists to-day is a provisional thing, that in scarcely any part of the world do we regard it as more than an emergency arrangement, as a necessary association that must give place ultimately to the higher synthesis of a world league, that here we hold as trustees and there on account of strategic considerations that may presently disappear, and that though we will not contemplate the replacement of our flag anywhere by the flag of any other competing nation, though we do hope to hold together with our kin and with those who increasingly share our tradition and our language, nevertheless we are prepared to welcome great renunciations of our present ascendancy and privileges in the interests of mankind as a whole. We



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need to make the world understand that we do not put our nation nor our Empire before the commonwealth of man. Unless presently we are to follow Germany along the tragic path her national vanity and her world ambitions have made for her, that is what we have to make clear now. It is not only our duty to mankind, it is also the sane course for our own preservation.

Is it not the plain lesson of this stupendous and disastrous war that there is no way to secure civilisation from destruction except by an impartial control and protection in the interests of the whole human race, a control representing the best intelligence of mankind, of these main causes of war.

- (1) The politically undeveloped tropics;
- (2) Shipping and international trade; and
- (3) Small nationalities and all regions in a state of political impotence or confusion?

It is our case against the Germans that in all these three cases they have subordinated every consideration of justice and the general human welfare to a monstrous national egotism. That argument has a double edge. At present there is a vigorous campaign in America, Russia, the neutral countries generally, to represent British patriotism as equally egotistic, and our purpose in this war as a mere parallel to the German purpose. In the same manner, though perhaps with less persistency, France and Italy are also caricatured. We are supposed to be grabbing at Mesopotamia and Palestine, France at Syria; Italy is represented as pursuing a Machiavellian policy towards the unfortunate Greek republicans, with her

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eyes on the Greek islands and Greece in Asia. Is it not time that these base imputations were repudiated clearly and conclusively by our Alliance? And is it not time that we began to discuss in much more frank and definite terms than has hitherto been done, the nature of the international arrangement that will be needed to secure the safety of such liberated populations as those of Palestine, of the Arab regions of the old Turkish Empire, of Armenia, of reunited Poland, and the like?

I do not mean here mere diplomatic discussions and "understandings," I mean such full and plain statements as will be spread through the whole world and grasped and assimilated by ordinary people everywhere, statements by which we, as a people, will be prepared to stand or fall.

Almost as urgent is the need for some definite statement about Africa. General Smuts has warned not only the Empire, but the whole world of the gigantic threat to civilisation that lies in the present division of Africa between various keenly competitive European Powers, any one of which will be free to misuse the great natural resources at its disposal and to arm millions of black soldiers for aggression. A mere elimination of Germany from Africa will not solve that difficulty. What we have to eliminate is not this nation or that, but the system of national shoving and elbowing, the treatment of Africa as the board for a game of beggar-my-neighbour-and-damn-the-niggers, in which a few syndicates, masquerading as national interests, snatch a profit to the infinite loss of all mankind. We want a lowering of barriers and

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a unification of interests, we want an international control of these disputed regions, to override nationalist exploitation. The whole world wants it. It is a chastened and reasonable world we live in to-day, and the time for white reason and the wide treatment of these problems is now.

Finally, the time is drawing near when the Egyptian and the nations of India will ask us, "Are things going on for ever here as they go on now, or are we to look for the time when we, too, like the Africander, the Canadian and the Australian, will be your confessed and equal partners?" Would it not be wise to answer that question in the affirmative before the voice in which it is asked grows thick with anger? In Egypt, for example, we are either robbers very like—except for a certain difference in touch—the Germans in Belgium, or we are honourable trustees. It is our claim and pride to be honourable trustees. Nothing so becomes a trustee as a cheerful openness of disposition. Great Britain has to table her world policy. It is a thing overdue. No doubt we have already a literature of liberal imperialism and a considerable accumulation of declarations by this statesman or that. But what is needed is a formulation much more representative, official and permanent than that, something that can be put beside President Wilson's clear rendering of the American idea. We want all our peoples to understand, and we want all mankind to understand that our Empire is not a net about the world in which the progress of mankind is entangled, but a self-conscious political system working side by side with the other democracies of

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the earth, preparing the way for, and prepared at last to sacrifice and merge itself in, the world confederation of free and equal peoples.

This letter was presently followed up by an article in *The Daily News*, entitled "A Reasonable Man's Peace." This article provoked a considerable controversy in the imperialist press, and it was reprinted as a pamphlet by a Free Trade organisation, which distributed over 200,000 copies. It is particularly interesting to note, in view of what follows it, that it was attacked with great virulence in *The Evening News*, the little fierce mud-throwing brother of *The Daily Mail*.

The international situation at the present time is beyond question the most wonderful that the world has ever seen. There is not a country in the world in which the great majority of sensible people are not passionately desirous of peace, of an enduring peace, and—the war goes on. The conditions of peace can now be stated in general terms that are as acceptable to a reasonable man in Berlin as they are to a reasonable man in Paris or London or Petrograd or Constantinople. There are to be no conquests, no domination of recalcitrant populations, no bitter insistence upon vindictive penalties, and there must be something in the nature of a world-wide League of Nations to keep the peace securely in future, to "make the world safe for democracy," and maintain international justice. To that the general mind of the world has come to-day.

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Why, then, does the waste and killing go on? Why is not the Peace Conference sitting now?

Manifestly because a small minority of people in positions of peculiar advantage, in positions of trust and authority, and particularly the German reactionaries, prevent or delay its assembling.

The answer which seems to suffice in all the Allied countries is that the German Imperial Government—that the German Imperial Government alone—stands in the way, that its tradition is incurably a tradition of conquest and aggression, that until German militarism is overthrown, etc. Few people in the Allied countries will dispute that that is broadly true. But is it the whole and complete truth? Is there nothing more to be done on our side? Let us put a question that goes to the very heart of the problem. Why does the great mass of the German people still cling to its incurably belligerent Government?

The answer to that question is not overwhelmingly difficult. The German people sticks to its militarist imperialism as Mazeppa stuck to his horse; because it is bound to it, and the wolves pursue. The attentive student of the home and foreign propaganda literature of the German Government will realise that the case made by German imperialism, the main argument by which it sticks to power, is this, that the Allied Governments are also imperialist, that they also aim at conquest and aggression, that for Germany the choice is world empire or downfall and utter ruin. This is the argument that holds the German people stiffly united. For most men in most countries it would be a convincing argument, strong

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enough to override considerations of right and wrong. I find that I myself am of this way of thinking, that whether England has done right or wrong in the past—and I have sometimes criticised my country very bitterly—I will not endure the prospect of seeing her at the foot of some victorious foreign nation. Neither will any German who matters. Very few people would respect a German who did.

But the case for the Allies is that this great argument by which, and by which alone, the German Imperial Government keeps its grip upon the German people at the present time, and keeps them facing their enemies, is untrue. The Allies declare that they do not want to destroy the German people, they do not want to cripple the German people; they want merely to see certain gaping wounds inflicted by Germany repaired, and beyond that reasonable requirement they want nothing but to be assured, completely assured, absolutely assured, against any further aggressions on the part of Germany.

Is that true? Our leaders say so, and we believe them. We would not support them if we did not. And if it is true, have the statesmen of the Allies made it as transparently and convincingly clear to the German people as possible? That is one of the supreme questions of the present time. We cannot too earnestly examine it. Because in the answer to it lies the reason why so many men were killed yesterday on the eastern and western front, so many ships sunk, so much property destroyed, so much human energy wasted for ever upon mere destruction, and why tomorrow and the next day and the day after—through

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many months yet, perhaps—the same killing and destroying must still go on.

In many respects this war has been an amazing display of human inadaptability. The military history of the war has still to be written, the grim story of machinery misunderstood, improvements resisted, antiquated methods persisted in; but the broad facts are already before the public mind. After three years of war the air offensive, the only possible decisive blow, is still merely talked of. Not once nor twice only have the Western Allies had victory within their grasp—and failed to grip it. The British cavalry generals wasted the great invention of the tanks as a careless child breaks a toy. At least equally remarkable is the dragging inadaptability of European statecraft. Everywhere the failure of ministers and statesmen to rise to the urgent definite necessities of the present time is glaringly conspicuous. They seem to be incapable even of thinking how the war may be brought to an end. They seem incapable of that plain speaking to the world audience which alone can bring about a peace. They keep on with the tricks and feints of a departed age. Both on the side of the Allies and on the side of the Germans the declarations of public policy remain childishly vague and disingenuous, childishly “diplomatic.” They chaffer like happy imbeciles while civilisation bleeds to death. It was perhaps to be expected. Few, if any, men of over five-and-forty completely readjust themselves to changed conditions, however novel and challenging the changes may be, and nearly all the leading figures in these affairs are elderly men trained in a

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tradition of diplomatic ineffectiveness, and now overworked and overstrained to a pitch of complete inelasticity. They go on as if it were still 1913. Could anything be more palpably shifty and unsatisfactory, more senile, more feebly artful, than the recent utterances of the German Chancellor? And, on our own side——

Let us examine the three leading points about this peace business in which this jaded statecraft is most apparent.

Let the reader ask himself the following questions:—

Does he know what the Allies mean to do with the problem of central Africa? It is the clear common sense of the African situation that while these precious regions of raw material remain divided up between a number of competitive European imperialisms, each resolutely set upon the exploitation of its "possessions" to its own advantage and the disadvantage of the others, there can be no permanent peace in the world. There can be permanent peace in the world only when tropical and subtropical Africa constitute a field free to the commercial enterprise of every one irrespective of nationality, when this is no longer an area of competition between nations. This is possible only under some supreme international control. It requires no special knowledge nor wisdom to see that. A schoolboy can see it. Any one but a statesman absolutely flaccid with overstrain can see that. However difficult it may prove to work out in detail, such an international control *must* therefore be worked out. The manifest solution of the



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problem of the German colonies in Africa is neither to return them to her nor deprive her of them, but to give her a share in the pooled general control of mid-Africa. In that way she can be deprived of all power for political mischief in Africa without humiliation or economic injury. In that way, too, we can head off—and in no other way can we head off—the power for evil, the power of developing quarrels inherent in “imperialisms” other than German.

But has the reader any assurance that this sane solution of the African problem has the support of the Allied Governments? At best he has only a vague persuasion. And consider how the matter looks “over there.” The German Government assures the German people that the Allies intend to cut off Germany from the African supply of raw material. That would mean the practical destruction of German economic life. It is something far more vital to the mass of Germans than any question of Belgium or Alsace-Lorraine. It is, therefore, one of the ideas most potent in nerving the overstrained German people to continue their fight. Why are we, and why are the German people, not given some definite assurance in this matter? Given reparation in Europe, is Germany to be allowed a fair share in the control and trade of a pooled and neutralised central Africa? Sooner or later we must come to some such arrangement. Why not state it plainly now?

A second question is equally essential to any really permanent settlement, and it is one upon which these eloquent but unsatisfactory mouthpieces of ours turn their backs with an equal resolution, and that is the

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fate of the Ottoman Empire. What in plain English are we up to there? Whatever happens, that Humpty Dumpty cannot be put back as it was before the war. The idea of the German imperialist, the idea of our own little band of noisy but influential imperialist vulgarians, is evidently a game of grab, a perilous cutting up of these areas into jostling protectorates and spheres of influence, from which either the Germans or the Allies (according to the side you are on) are to be viciously shut out. On such a basis this war is a war to the death. Neither Germany, France, Britain, Italy, nor Russia can live prosperously if its trade and enterprise is shut out from this cardinally important area. There is, therefore, no alternative, if we are to have a satisfactory permanent pacification of the world, but local self-development in these regions under honestly conceived international control of police and transit and trade. Let it be granted that that will be a difficult control to organise. None the less it has to be attempted. It has to be attempted because *there is no other way of peace*. But once that conception has been clearly formulated, a second great motive why Germany should continue fighting will have gone.

The third great issue about which there is nothing but fog and uncertainty is the so-called "War After the War," the idea of a permanent economic alliance to prevent the economic recuperation of Germany. Upon that idea German imperialism, in its frantic effort to keep its tormented people fighting, naturally puts the utmost stress. The threat of War after the War robs the reasonable German of his last induce-

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ment to turn on his Government and insist upon peace. Shut out from all trade, unable to buy food, deprived of raw material, peace would be as bad for Germany as war. He will argue naturally enough and reasonably enough that he may as well die fighting as starve. This is a far more vital issue to him than the Belgian issue or Poland or Alsace-Lorraine. Our statesmen waste their breath and slight our intelligence when these foreground questions are thrust in front of the really fundamental matters. But as the mass of sensible people in every country concerned, in Germany just as much as in France or Great Britain, know perfectly well, unimpeded trade is good for every one except a few rich adventurers, and restricted trade destroys limitless wealth and welfare for mankind to make a few private fortunes or secure an advantage for some imperialist clique. We want an end to this economic strategy, we want an end to this plotting of Governmental cliques against the general welfare. In such offences Germany has been the chief of sinners, but which among the belligerent nations can throw the first stone? Here again the way to the world's peace, the only way to enduring peace, lies through internationalism, through an international survey of commercial treaties, through an international control of interstate shipping and transport rates. Unless the Allied statesmen fail to understand the implications of their own general professions, they mean that. But why do they not say it plainly? Why do they not shout it so compactly and loudly that all Germany will hear and understand? Why do they justify imperialism to Germany? Why

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do they maintain a threatening ambiguity towards Germany on all these matters?

By doing so they leave Germany no choice but a war of desperation. They underline and indorse the claim of German imperialism that this is a war for bare existence. They unify the German people. They prolong the war.

Some weeks later I was able, at the invitation of the editor, to carry the controversy against imperialism into *The Daily Mail*, which has hitherto counted as a strictly imperialist paper. The article that follows was published in *The Daily Mail* under the heading "Are We Sticking to the Point? A Discussion of War Aims."

Has this War-Aims controversy really got down to essentials? Is the purpose of this world conflict from first to last too complicated for brevity, or can we boil it down into a statement compact enough for a newspaper article?

And if we can, why is there all this voluminous, uneasy, unquenchable disputation about War Aims?

As to the first question, I would say that the gist of the dispute between the Central Powers and the world can be written easily without undue cramping in an ordinary handwriting upon a post-card. It is the second question that needs answering. And the reason why the second question has to be asked and answered is this, that several of the Allies, and particularly we British, are not being perfectly plain and simple-minded in our answer to the first, that there

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is a division among us and in our minds, and that our division is making us ambiguous in our behaviour, that it is weakening and dividing our action and strengthening and consolidating the enemy, and that unless we can drag this slurred-over division of aim and spirit into the light of day and *settle it now*, we are likely to remain double-minded to the end of the war, to split our strength while the war continues and to come out of the settlement at the end with nothing nearly worth the strain and sacrifice it has cost us.

And first, let us deal with that post-card and say what is the essential aim of the war, the aim to which all other aims are subsidiary. It is, we have heard repeated again and again by every statesman of importance in every Allied country, to defeat and destroy military imperialism, to make the world safe for ever against any such deliberate aggression as Germany prepared for forty years and brought to a climax when she crossed the Belgian frontier in 1914. We want to make anything of that kind on the part of Germany or of any other Power henceforth impossible in this world. That is our great aim. Whatever other objects may be sought in this war no responsible statesman dare claim them as anything but subsidiary to that; one can say, in fact, this is our sole aim, our other aims being but parts of it. Better that millions should die now, we declare, than that hundreds of millions still unborn should go on living, generation after generation, under the black tyranny of this imperialist threat.

There is our common agreement. So far, at any rate, we are united. The question I would put to the

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reader is this: Are we all logically, sincerely, and fully carrying out the plain implications of this War Aim? Or are we to any extent muddling about with it in such a way as to confuse and disorganise our Allies, weaken our internal will, and strengthen the enemy?

Now the plain meaning of this supreme declared War Aim is that we are asking Germany to alter her ways. We are asking Germany to become a different Germany. Either Germany has to be utterly smashed up and destroyed or else Germany has to cease to be an aggressive military imperialism. The former alternative is dismissed by most responsible statesmen. They declare that they do not wish to destroy the German people or the German nationality or the civilised life of Germany. I will not enlarge here upon the tedium and difficulties such an undertaking would present. I will dismiss it as being not only impossible, but also as an insanelly wicked project. The second alternative, therefore, remains as our War Aim. I do not see how the sloppiest reasoner can evade that. As we do not want to kill Germany we must want to change Germany. If we do not want to wipe Germany off the face of the earth, then we want Germany to become the prospective and trustworthy friend of her fellow nations. And if words have any meaning at all, that is saying that we are fighting to bring about a Revolution in Germany. We want Germany to become a democratically controlled State, such as is the United States to-day, with open methods and pacific intentions, instead of remaining a clinched fist. If we can bring that about we

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have achieved our War Aim; if we cannot, then this struggle has been for us only such loss and failure as humanity has never known before.

But do we, as a nation, stick closely to this clear and necessary, this only possible, meaning of our declared War Aim? That great, clear-minded leader among the Allies, that Englishman who more than any other single man speaks for the whole English-speaking and Western-thinking community, President Wilson, has said definitely that this is his meaning. America, with him as her spokesman, is under no delusion; she is fighting consciously for a German Revolution as the essential War Aim. We in Europe do not seem to be so lucid. I think myself we have been, and are still, fatally and disastrously not lucid. It is high time, and over, that we cleared our minds and got down to the essentials of the war. We have muddled about in blood and dirt and secondary issues long enough.

We in Britain are not clear-minded, I would point out, because we are double-minded. No good end is served by trying to ignore in the fancied interests of "unity" a division of spirit and intention that trips us up at every step. We are, we declare, fighting for a complete change in international methods, and we are bound to stick to the logical consequences of that. We have placed ourselves on the side of democratic revolution against autocratic monarchy, and we cannot afford to go on shilly-shallying with that choice. We cannot in these days of black or white play the part of lukewarm friends to freedom. I will not remind the reader here of the horrible vacillations and

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inconsistencies of policy in Greece that have prolonged the war and cost us wealth and lives beyond measure, but President Wilson himself has reminded us pungently enough and sufficiently enough of the follies and disingenuousness of our early treatment of the Russian Revolution. What I want to point out here is the supreme importance of a clear lead in this matter *now* in order that we should state our War Aims effectively.

In every war there must be two sets of War Aims kept in mind; we ought to know what we mean to do in the event of victory so complete that we can dictate what terms we choose, and we ought to know what, in the event of a not altogether conclusive tussle, are the minimum terms that we should consider justified us in a discontinuance of the tussle. Now, unless our leading statesmen are humbugs and unless we are prepared to quarrel with America in the interests of the monarchist institutions of Europe, we should, in the event of an overwhelming victory, destroy both the Hohenzollern and Hapsburg Imperialisms, and that means, if it means anything at all and is not mere lying rhetoric, that we should insist upon Germany becoming free and democratic, that is to say, in effect if not in form republican, and upon a series of national republics, Polish, Hungarian, Serbo-Croatian, Bulgarian, and the like, in eastern Europe, grouped together if possible into congenial groups—crowned republics it might be in some cases, in the case of the Serb for example, but in no case too much crowned—that we should join with this renascent Germany and with these thus liberalised Powers and



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with our Allies and with the neutrals in one great League of Free Nations, trading freely with one another, guaranteeing each other freedom, and maintaining a world-wide peace and disarmament and a new reign of law for mankind.

If that is not what we are out for, then I do not understand what we are out for; there is dishonesty and trickery and diplomacy and foolery in the struggle, and I am no longer whole-hearted for such a half-hearted war. If after a complete victory we are to bolster up the Hohenzollerns, Hapsburgs, and their relations, set up a constellation of more cheating little subordinate kings, and reinstate that system of diplomacies and secret treaties and secret understandings, that endless drama of international threatening and plotting, that never-ending arming, that has led us after a hundred years of waste and muddle to the supreme tragedy of this war, then the world is not good enough for me and I shall be glad to close my eyes upon it. I am not alone in these sentiments. I believe that in writing thus I am writing the opinion of the great mass of reasonable British, French, Italian, Russian, and American men. I believe, too, that this is the desire also of great numbers of Germans, and that they would, if they could believe us, gladly set aside their present rulers to achieve this plain common good for mankind.

But, the reader will say, what evidence is there of any republican feeling in Germany? That is always the objection made to any reasonable discussion of the war—and as most of us are denied access to German papers, it is difficult to produce quotations; and

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even when one does, there are plenty of fools to suggest and believe that the entire German Press is an elaborate camouflage. Yet in the German Press there is far more criticism of militant imperialism than those who have no access to it can imagine. There is far franker criticism of militarism in Germany than there is of reactionary Toryism in this country, and it is more free to speak its mind.

That, however, is a question by the way. It is not the main thing that I have to say here. What I have to say here is that in Great Britain—I will not discuss the affairs of any of our Allies—there are groups and classes of people, not numerous, not representative, but placed in high and influential positions and capable of free and public utterance, who are secretly and bitterly hostile to this great War Aim, which inspires all the Allied peoples. These people are permitted to deny—our peculiar censorship does not hamper them—loudly and publicly that we are fighting for democracy and world freedom; “Tosh,” they say to our dead in the trenches, “you died for a mistake”; they jeer at this idea of a League of Nations making an end to war, an idea that has inspired countless brave lads to face death and such pains and hardships as outdo even death itself; they perplex and irritate our Allies by propounding schemes for some precious economic league of the British Empire—that is to treat all “foreigners” with a common base selfishness and stupid hatred—and they intrigue with the most reactionary forces in Russia.

These British reactionaries openly, and with perfect impunity, represent our war as a thing as mean

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and shameful as Germany's attack on Belgium, and they do it because generosity and justice in the world is as terrible to them as dawn is to the creatures of the night. Our Tories blundered into this great war, not seeing whither it would take them. In particular it is manifest now by a hundred signs that they dread the fall of monarchy in Germany and Austria. Far rather would they make the most abject surrenders to the Kaiser than deal with a renascent republican Germany. The recent letter of Lord Lansdowne, urging a peace with German imperialism, was but a feeler from the pacifist side of this most un-English, and unhappily most influential, section of our public life. Lord Lansdowne's letter was the letter of a Peer who fears revolution more than national dishonour.

But it is the truculent wing of this same anti-democratic movement that is far more active. While our sons suffer and die for their comforts and conceit, these people scheme to prevent any communication between the Republican and Socialist classes in Germany and the Allied population. At any cost this class of pampered and privileged traitors intend to have peace while the Kaiser is still on his throne. If not they face a new world—in which their part will be small indeed. And with the utmost ingenuity they maintain a dangerous vagueness about the Allied peace terms, *with the sole object of preventing a revolutionary movement in Germany.*

Let me put it to the reader exactly why our failure to say plainly and exactly and conclusively what we mean to do about a score of points, and particularly

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about German economic life after the war, paralyses the penitents and friends and helpers that we could now find in Germany. Let me ask the reader to suppose himself a German in Germany at the present time. Of course if he was, he is sure that he would hate the Kaiser as the source of this atrocious war, he would be bitterly ashamed of the Belgian iniquity, of the submarine murders, and a score of such stains upon his national honour; and he would want to alter his national system and make peace. Hundreds of thousands of Germans are in that mood now. But as most of us have had to learn, a man may be bitterly ashamed of this or that incident in his country's history—what Englishman, for instance, can be proud of Glencoe?—he may disbelieve in half its institutions and still love his country far too much to suffer the thought of its destruction. I prefer to see my country right, but if it comes to the pinch and my country sins I will fight to save her from the destruction her sins may have brought upon her. That is the natural way of a man.

But suppose a German wished to try to start a revolutionary movement in Germany at the present time, have we given him any reason at all for supposing that a Germany liberated and democratised, but, of course, divided and weakened as she would be bound to be in the process, would get better terms from the Allies than a Germany still facing them, militant, imperialist, and wicked? He would have no reason for believing anything of the sort. If we Allies are honest, then if a revolution started in Germany to-day we should if anything lower the price

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of peace to Germany. But these people who pretend to lead us will state nothing of the sort. For them a revolution in Germany would be the signal for putting up the price of peace. At any risk they are resolved that that German revolution shall not happen. Your sane, good German, let me assert, is up against that as hard as if he was a wicked one. And so, poor devil, he has to put his revolutionary ideas away, they are hopeless ideas for him because of the power of the British reactionary, they are hopeless because of the line we as a nation take in this matter, and he has to go on fighting for his masters.

A plain statement of our War Aims that did no more than set out honestly and convincingly the terms the Allies would make with a democratic republican Germany—republican I say, because where a scrap of Hohenzollern is left to-day there will be a fresh militarism to-morrow—would absolutely revolutionise the internal psychology of Germany. We should no longer face a solid people. We should have replaced the false issue of Germany and Britain fighting for the hegemony of Europe, the lie upon which the German Government has always traded, and in which our extreme Tory Press has always supported the German Government, by the true issue, which is freedom versus imperialism, the League of Nations versus that net of diplomatic roguery and of aristocratic, plutocratic, and autocratic greed and conceit which dragged us all into this vast welter of bloodshed and loss.

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## § 6

### THE WAR AIMS OF THE WESTERN ALLIES

Here, quite compactly, is the plain statement of the essential cause and process of the war to which I would like to see the Allied Foreign Offices subscribe, and which I would like to have placed plainly before the German mind. It embodies much that has been learned and thought out since this war began, and I think it is much truer and more fundamental than that mere raging against German "militarism," upon which our politicians and press still so largely subsist.

The enormous development of war methods and war material within the last fifty years has made war so horrible and destructive that it is impossible to contemplate a future for mankind from which it has not been eliminated; the increased facilities of railway, steamship, automobile travel, and air navigation have brought mankind so close together that ordinary human life is no longer safe anywhere in the boundaries of the little states in which it was once secure. In some fashion it is now necessary to achieve sufficient human unity to establish a world peace and save the future of mankind.

In one or other of two ways only is that unification possible. Either men may set up a common league to keep the peace of the earth, or one state must ultimately become so great and powerful as to repeat for all the world what Rome did for Europe two thousand years ago. Either we must have human unity by a

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league of existing states or by an Imperial Conquest. The former is now the declared Aim of our country and its Allies; the latter is manifestly the ambition of the present rulers of Germany. Whatever the complications may have been in the earlier stages of the war, due to treaties that are now dead letters and agreements that are extinct, the essential issue now before every man in the world is this: Is the unity of mankind to be the unity of a common freedom, in which every race and nationality may participate with complete self-respect, playing its part, according to its character, in one great world community; or is it to be reached—and it can only so be reached through many more generations of bloodshed and struggle, if indeed it can be ever reached in this way at all—through conquest and a German hegemony?

While the rulers of Germany to-day are more openly aggressive and imperialist than they were in August, 1914, the Allies arrayed against them have made great progress in clearing up and realising the instincts and ideals which brought them originally into the struggle. The German Government offers the world to-day a warring future in which Germany alone is to be secure and powerful and proud. *Mankind will not endure that.* The Allies offer the world more and more definitely the scheme of an organised League of Free Nations, a rule of law and justice about the earth. To fight for that and for no other conceivable end, the United States of America, with the full sympathy and co-operation of every state in the western hemisphere, has entered the war.

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The British Empire, in the midst of the stress of the great war, has set up in Dublin a Convention of Irishmen of all opinions with the fullest powers of deciding upon the future of their country. If Ireland were not divided against herself she could be free and equal with England to-morrow. It is the open intention of Great Britain to develop representative government, where it has not hitherto existed, in India and Egypt, to go on steadfastly increasing the share of the natives of these countries in the government of their own lands, until they too become free and equal members of the world league. Neither France nor Italy nor Britain nor America has ever tampered with the shipping of other countries except in time of war, and the trade of the British Empire has been impartially open to all the world. The extra-national "possessions," the so-called "subject nations" in the empires of Britain, France, Italy, and Japan, are, in fact, possessions held in trust against the day when the League of Free Nations will inherit for mankind.

Is it to be union by conquest or is it to be union by league? For any sort of man except the German the question is, Will you be a free citizen or will you be an underling to the German imperialism? For the German now the question is a far graver and more tragic one. For him it is this: "You belong to a people not now increasing very rapidly, a numerous people, but not so numerous as some of the great peoples of the world, a people very highly trained, very well drilled and well armed, perhaps as well trained and drilled and equipped as ever it will be. The collapse



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of Russian imperialism has made you safe if now you can get peace, and you *can* get a peace now that will neither destroy you nor humiliate you nor open up the prospect of fresh wars. The Allies offer you such a peace. To accept it, we must warn you plainly, means refusing to go on with the manifest intentions of your present rulers, which are to launch you and your children and your children's children upon a career of struggle for war predominance, which may no doubt inflict untold deprivations and miseries upon the rest of mankind, but whose end in the long run, for Germany and things German, can be only Judgment and Death."

In such terms as these the Oceanic Allies could now state their war-will and carry the world straightway into a new phase of human history. They could, but they do not. For alas! not one of them is free from the entanglements of past things; when we look for the wisdom of statesmen we find the cunning of politicians; when open speech and plain reason might save the world, courts, bureaucrats, financiers and profiteers conspire.

### § 7

#### THE FUTURE OF MONARCHY

From the very outset of this war it was manifest to the clear-headed observer that only the complete victory of German imperialism could save the dynastic system in Europe from the fate that it had challenged. That curious system had been the natural and un-

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planned development of the political complications of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Two systems of monarchies, the Bourbon system and the German, then ruled Europe between them. With the latter was associated the tradition of the European unity under the Roman Empire; all the Germanic monarchs had an itch to be called Cæsar. The Kaiser of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Tzar had, so to speak, the prior claim to the title. The Prussian king set up as a Cæsar in 1871; Queen Victoria became the Cæsar of India (Kaisir-i-Hind) under the auspices of Lord Beaconsfield, and last and least, that most detestable of all Coburgers, Ferdinand of Bulgaria, gave Kaiserism a touch of quaint absurdity by setting up as Tzar of Bulgaria. The weakening of the Bourbon system by the French Revolution and the Napoleonic adventure cleared the way for the complete ascendancy of the Germanic monarchies in spite of the breaking away of the United States from that system.

After 1871, a constellation of quasi-divine Teutonic monarchs, of which the German Emperor, the German Queen Victoria, the German Tzar were the greatest stars, formed a caste apart, intermarried only among themselves, dominated the world and was regarded with a mystical awe by the ignorant and foolish in most European countries. The marriages, the funerals, the coronations, the obstetrics of this amazing breed of idols were matters of almost universal worship. The Tzar and Queen Victoria professed also to be the heads of religion upon earth. The court-centred diplomacies of the more firmly rooted mon-

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archies steered all the great liberating movements of the nineteenth century into monarchical channels. Italy was made a monarchy; Greece, the motherland of republics, was handed over to a needy scion of the Danish royal family; the sturdy peasants of Bulgaria suffered from a kindred imposition. Even Norway was saddled with as much of a king as it would stand, as a condition of its independence. At the dawn of the twentieth century republican freedom seemed a remote dream beyond the confines of Switzerland and France—and it had no very secure air in France. Reactionary scheming has been an intermittent fever in the French republic for six-and-forty years. The French Foreign Office is still undemocratic in tradition and temper. But for the restless disloyalty of the Hohenzollerns this German kingly caste might be dominating the world to this day.

Of course the stability of this Teutonic dynastic system in Europe—which will presently seem to the student of history so curious a halting-place upon the way to human unity—rested very largely upon the maintenance of peace. It was the failure to understand this on the part of the German and Bulgarian rulers in particular that has now brought all monarchy to the question. The implicit theory that supported the intermarrying German royal families in Europe was that their interrelationship and their aloofness from their subjects was a mitigation of national and racial animosities. In the days when Queen Victoria was the grandmother of Europe this was a plausible argument. King, Tzar, and Emperor, or Emperor and Emperor would meet, and it was under-

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stood that these meetings were the lubrication of European affairs. The monarchs married largely, conspicuously, and very expensively for our good. Royal funerals, marriages, christenings, coronations, and jubilees interrupted traffic and stimulated trade everywhere. They seemed to give a *raison d'être* for mankind. It is the Emperor William and the Tzar Ferdinand who have betrayed not only humanity but their own strange caste by shattering all these pleasant illusions. The wisdom of Kant is justified, and we know now that kings cause wars. It needed the shock of the great war to bring home the wisdom of that old Scotchman of Königsberg to the mind of the ordinary man. Moreover in support of the dynastic system was the fact that it did exist as the system in possession, and all prosperous and intelligent people are chary of disturbing existing things. Life is full of vestigial structures, and it is a long way to logical perfection. Let us keep on, they would argue, with what we have. And another idea which, rightly or wrongly, made men patient with the emperors and kings was an exaggerated idea of the insecurity of republican institutions.

You may still hear very old dull men say gravely that "kings are better than pronunciamientos"; there was an article upon Greece to this effect quite recently in that uncertain paper *The New Statesman*. Then a kind of illustrative gesture would be made to the South American republics, although the internal disturbances of the South American republics have diminished to very small dimensions in the last three decades and although pronunciamientos rarely dis-

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turb the traffic in Switzerland, the United States, or France. But there can be no doubt that the influence of the Germanic monarchy up to the death of Queen Victoria upon British thought was in the direction of estrangement from the two great modern republics and in the direction of assistance and propitiation to Germany. We surrendered Heligoland, we made great concessions to German colonial ambitions, we allowed ourselves to be jockeyed into a phase of dangerous hostility to France. A practice of sneering at things American has died only very recently out of English journalism and literature, as any one who cares to consult the bound magazines of the seventies and eighties may soon see for himself. It is well too in these days not to forget Colonel Marchand, if only to remember that such a clash must never recur. But in justice to our monarchy we must remember that after the death of Queen Victoria, the spirit, if not the forms, of British kingship was greatly modified by the exceptional character and ability of King Edward VII. He was curiously anti-German in spirit; he had essentially democratic instincts; in a few precious years he restored good-will between France and Great Britain. It is no slight upon his successor to doubt whether any one could have handled the present opportunities and risks of monarchy in Great Britain as Edward could have handled them.

Because no doubt if monarchy is to survive in the British Empire it must speedily undergo the profoundest modification. The old state of affairs cannot continue. The European dynastic system, based upon the intermarriage of a group of mainly German

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royal families, is dead to-day; it is freshly dead, but it is as dead as the rule of the Incas. It is idle to close our eyes to this fact. The revolution in Russia, the setting up of a republic in China, demonstrating the ripeness of the East for free institutions, the entry of the American republics into world politics—these things slam the door on any idea of working back to the old nineteenth-century system. People calls to people. “No peace with the Hohenzollerns” is a cry that carries with it the final repudiation of emperors and kings. The man in the street will assure you he wants no diplomatic peace. Beyond the unstable shapes of the present the political forms of the future rise now so clearly that they are the common talk of men. Kant’s lucid thought told us long ago that the peace of the world demanded a world union of republics. That is a commonplace remark now in every civilised community.

The stars in their courses, the logic of circumstances, the every-day needs and every-day intelligence of men, all these things march irresistibly towards a permanent world peace based on democratic republicanism. The question of the future of monarchy is not whether it will be able to resist and overcome that trend; it has as little chance of doing that as the Lama of Thibet has of becoming Emperor of the Earth. It is whether it will resist openly, become the centre and symbol of a reactionary resistance, and have to be abolished and swept away altogether everywhere, as the Romanoffs have already been swept away in Russia, or whether it will be able in this country and that to adapt itself to the necessities

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of the great age that dawns upon mankind, to take a generous and helpful attitude towards its own modification, and so survive, for a time at any rate, in that larger air.

It is the fashion for the apologists of monarchy in the British Empire to speak of the British system as a crowned republic. That is an attractive phrase to people of republican sentiments. It is quite conceivable that the British Empire may be able to make that phrase a reality and that the royal line may continue, a line of hereditary presidents, with some of the ancient trappings and something of the picturesque prestige that, as the oldest monarchy in Europe, it has to-day. Two kings in Europe have already gone far towards realising this conception of a life president; both the King of Italy and the King of Norway live as simply as if they were in the White House and are far more accessible. Along that line the British monarchy must go if it is not to go altogether. Will it go along those lines?

There are many reasons for hoping that it will do so. *The Times* has styled the crown the "golden link" of the empire. Australians and Canadians, it was argued, had little love for the motherland but the greatest devotion to the sovereign, and still truer was this of Indians, Egyptians, and the like. It might be easy to press this theory of devotion too far, but there can be little doubt that the British crown does at present stand as a symbol of unity over diversity such as no other crown, unless it be that of Austria-Hungary, can be said to do. The British crown is not like other crowns; it may conceivably take a line

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of its own and emerge—possibly a little more like a hat and a little less like a crown—from trials that may destroy every other monarchical system in the world.

Now many things are going on behind the scenes, many little indications peep out upon the speculative watcher and vanish again; but there is very little that is definite to go upon at the present time in determining how far the monarchy will rise to the needs of this great occasion. Certain actions and changes, the initiative to which would come most gracefully from royalty itself, could be made at this present time. They may be done quite soon. Upon the doing of them wait great masses of public opinion. The first of these things is for the British monarchy to sever itself definitely from the German dynastic system with which it is so fatally entangled by marriage and descent, and to make its intention of becoming henceforth more and more British in blood as well as spirit, unmistakably plain. This idea has been put forth quite prominently in *The Times*. The king has been asked to give his countenance to the sweeping away of all those restrictions first set up by George the Third, upon the marriage of the Royal Princes with British, French, and American subjects. The British Empire is very near the limit of its endurance of a kingly caste of Germans. The choice of British royalty between its peoples and its cousins cannot be indefinitely delayed. Were it made now publicly and boldly, there can be no doubt that the decision would mean a renaissance of monarchy, a considerable outbreak of royalist enthusiasm in the empire. There



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are times when a king or queen must needs be dramatic and must a little anticipate occasions. It is not seemly to make concessions perforce; kings may not make obviously unwilling surrenders; it is the indecisive kings who lose their crowns.

No doubt the Anglicisation of the royal family by national marriages would gradually merge that family into the general body of the British peerage. Its consequent loss of distinction might be accompanied by an associated fading out of function, until the king became at last hardly more functional than was the late Duke of Norfolk as premier peer. Possibly that is the most desirable course from many points of view.

It must be admitted that the abandonment of marriages within the royal caste and a bold attempt to introduce a strain of British blood in the royal family does not in itself fulfil all that is needed if the British king is indeed to become the crowned president of his people and the nominal and accepted leader of the movement towards republican institutions. A thing that is productive of an enormous amount of republican talk in Great Britain is the suspicion—I believe an ill-founded suspicion—that there are influences at work at court antagonistic to republican institutions in friendly states and that there is even a disposition to sacrifice the interests of the liberal allies to dynastic sympathies. These things are not to be believed, but something like a royal and public repudiation of the weaknesses of cousinship would be a feat of vast impressiveness. The behaviour of the Allies towards that great Balkan statesman Venizelos, the sacrificing

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of the friendly Greek republicans in favour of the manifestly treacherous King of Greece, has produced the deepest shame and disgust in many quarters that are altogether friendly, that are even warmly "loyal" to the British monarchy.

And in a phase of tottering thrones it is very undesirable that the British habit of asylum should be abused. We have already in England the dethroned monarch of a friendly republic; he is no doubt duly looked after. In the future there may be a shaking of the autumnal boughs and a shower of emperors and kings. We do not want Great Britain to become a hotbed of reactionary plotting and the starting-point of restoration raids into the territories of emancipated peoples. This is particularly desirable if presently, after the Kaiser's death—which by all the statistics of Hohenzollern mortality cannot be delayed now for many years—the present Crown Prince goes awandering. We do not want any German ex-monarchs; Sweden is always open to them and friendly, and to Sweden they ought to go; and particularly do British people dread an irruption of Hohenzollerns or Coburgers. Almost as undesirable would be the arrival of the Tzar and Tzarina. It is supremely important that no wind of suspicion should blow between us and the freedom of Russia. After the war even more than during the war will the enemy be anxious to sow discord between the great Russian-speaking and English-speaking democracies. Quite apart from the scandal of their inelegant domesticities, the establishment of the Tzar and Tzarina in England with frequent and easy access to our royal

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family may be extraordinarily unfortunate for the British monarchy. I will confess a certain sympathy for the Tzar myself. He is not an evil figure, he is not a strong figure, but he has that sort of weakness, that failure in decision, which trails revolution in its wake. He has ended one dynasty already. The British royal family owes it to itself that he bring not the infection of his misfortunes to Windsor.

The security of the British monarchy lies in such a courageous severance of its destinies from the Teutonic dynastic system. Will it make that severance? There I share an almost universal ignorance. The loyalty of the British is not to what kings are too prone to call "my person," not to a chosen and admired family, but to a renascent mankind. We have fought in this war for Belgium, for France, for general freedom, for civilisation and the whole future of mankind, far more than for ourselves. We have not fought for a king. We are discovering in that spirit of human unity that lies below the idea of a League of Free Nations the real invisible king of our heart and race. But we will very gladly go on with our task under a nominal king unless he hampers us in the task that grows ever more plainly before us. . . . That, I think, is a fair statement of British public opinion on this question. But every day when I am in London I walk past Buckingham Palace to lunch at my club, and I look at that not very expressive façade and wonder—and we all wonder—what thoughts are going on behind it and what acts are being conceived there. Out of it there might yet come some gesture of acceptance fine enough to set

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beside President Wilson's magnificent declaration of war. . . .

These are things in the scales of fate. I will not pretend to be able to guess even which way the scales will swing.

### § 8

#### THE PLAIN NECESSITY FOR A LEAGUE

Great as the sacrifices of prejudice and preconception which any effective realisation of this idea of a League of Free Nations will demand, difficult as the necessary delegations of sovereignty must be, none the less are such sacrifices and difficulties unavoidable. People in France and Italy and Great Britain and Germany alike have to subdue their minds to the realisation that some such League is now a necessity for them if their peace and national life are to continue. There is no prospect before them but either some such League or else great humiliation and disastrous warfare driving them down towards social dissolution; and for the United States it is only a question of a little longer time before the same alternatives have to be faced.

Whether this war ends in the complete defeat of Germany and German imperialism, or in a revolutionary modernisation of Germany, or in a practical triumph for the Hohenzollerns, are considerations that affect the nature and scope of the League, but do not affect its essential necessity. In the first two cases the League of Free Nations will be a world league including Germany as a principal partner, in

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the latter case the League of Free Nations will be a defensive league standing steadfast against the threat of a world imperialism, and watching and restraining with one common will the homicidal maniac in its midst. But in all these cases there can be no great alleviation of the evils that now blacken and threaten to ruin human life altogether, unless all the civilised and peace-seeking peoples of the world are pledged and locked together under a common law and a common world policy. There must rather be an intensification of these evils. There must be wars more evil than this war continuing this war, and more destructive of civilised life. There can be no peace and hope for our race but an organised peace and hope, armed against disturbance as a state is armed against mad, ferocious, and criminal men.

Now, there are two chief arguments, running one into the other, for the necessity of merging our existing sovereignties into a greater and, if possible, a world-wide league. The first is the present geographical impossibility of nearly all the existing European states and empires; and the second is the steadily increasing disproportion between the tortures and destructions inflicted by modern warfare and any possible advantages that may arise from it. Underlying both arguments is the fact that modern developments of mechanical science have brought the nations of Europe together into too close a proximity. This present war, more than anything else, is a violent struggle between old political ideas and new antagonistic conditions.

It is the unhappy usage of our schools and univer-

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sities to study the history of mankind only during periods of mechanical unprogressiveness. The historical ideas of Europe range between the time when the Greeks were going about the world on foot or horseback or in galleys or sailing ships to the days when Napoleon, Wellington, and Nelson were going about at very much the same pace in much the same vehicles and vessels. At the advent of steam and electricity the muse of history holds her nose and shuts her eyes. Science will study and get the better of a modern disease, as, for example, sleeping sickness, in spite of the fact that it has no classical standing; but our history schools would be shocked at the bare idea of studying the effect of modern means of communication upon administrative areas, large or small. This defect in our historical training has made our minds politically sluggish. We fail to adapt readily enough. In small things and great alike we are trying to run the world in areas marked out in or before the eighteenth century, regardless of the fact that a man or an army or an aeroplane can get in a few minutes or a few hours to points that it would have taken days or weeks to reach under the old foot-and-horse conditions. That matters nothing to the learned men who instruct our statesmen and politicians. It matters everything from the point of view of social and economic and political life. And the grave fact to consider is that all the great states of Europe, except for the unification of Italy and Germany, are still much of the size and in much the same boundaries that made them strong and safe in the eighteenth century, that is to say, in the closing

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years of the foot-horse period. The British Empire grew and was organised under those conditions, and had to modify itself only a little to meet the needs of steam shipping. All over the world are its linked possessions and its ports and coaling stations and fastnesses on the trade routes. And British people still look at the red-splashed map of the world with the profoundest self-satisfaction, blind to the swift changes that are making that scattered empire—if it is to remain an isolated system—almost the most dangerous conceivable.

Let me ask the British reader who is disposed to sneer at the League of Nations and say he is very well content with the empire, thank you, to get his atlas and consider one or two propositions. And, first, let him think of aviation. I can assure him, because upon this matter I have some special knowledge, that long-distance air travel for men, for letters and light goods and for bombs, is continually becoming more practicable. But the air routes that air transport will follow must go over a certain amount of land, for this reason that every few hundred miles at the longest the machine must come down for petrol. A flying-machine with a safe non-stop range of 1,500 miles is still a long way off. It may indeed be permanently impracticable because there seems to be an upward limit to the size of an aeroplane engine. And now will the reader take the map of the world and study the air routes from London to the rest of the empire? He will find them perplexing—if he wants them to be “All-Red.” Happily this is not a British difficulty only. Will he next study the

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air routes from Paris to the rest of the French possessions? And, finally, will he study the air routes out of Germany to anywhere? The Germans are as badly off as any people. But we are all badly off. So far as world air transit goes any country can, if it chooses, choke any adjacent country. Directly any trade difficulty breaks out, any country can begin a vexatious campaign against its neighbour's air traffic. It can oblige it to alight at the frontier, to follow prescribed routes, to land at specified places on those routes and undergo examinations that will waste precious hours. But so far as I can see, no European statesmen, German or Allied, have begun to give their attention to this amazing difficulty. Without a great pooling of air control, either a world-wide pooling or a pooling at least of the Atlantic-Mediterranean Allies in one Air League, the splendid peace possibilities of air transport—and they are indeed splendid—must remain very largely a forbidden possibility to mankind.

And as a second illustration of the way in which changing conditions are altering political questions, let the reader take his atlas and consider the case of that impregnable fastness, that great naval station, that Key to the Mediterranean, Gibraltar. British boys are brought up on Gibraltar and the Gibraltar idea. To the British imagination Gibraltar is almost as sacred a national symbol as the lions in Trafalgar Square. Now, in his atlas the reader will almost certainly find an inset map of this valuable possession, coloured bright red. The inset map will have attached to it a small scale of miles. From that he will be able



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to satisfy himself that there is not an inch of the rock anywhere that is not within five miles or less of Spanish land, and that there is rather more than a semicircle of hills round the rock within a range of seven or eight miles. That is much less than the range of a sixteen-inch gun. In other words, the Spaniards are in a position to knock Gibraltar to bits whenever they want to do so, or to smash and sink any ships in its harbour. They can hit it on every side. Consider, moreover, that there are long sweeps of coast north, south, and west of the Rock, from which torpedoes could be discharged at any ship that approached. Inquire further where on the Rock an aeroplane can land. And having ascertained these things, ask yourself what is the present value of Gibraltar?

I will not multiply disagreeable instances of this sort, though it would be easy enough to do so in the case both of France and Italy as well as of Great Britain. I give them as illustrations of the way in which everywhere old securities and old arrangements must be upset by the greater range of modern things. Let us get on to more general conditions. There is not a capital city in Europe that twenty years from now will not be liable to a bombing raid done by hundreds or even thousands of big aeroplanes, upon or even before a declaration of war, and there is not a line of sea communication that will not be as promptly interrupted by the hostile submarine. I point these things out here only to carry home the fact that the ideas of sovereign isolation and detachment that were perfectly valid in 1900, the self-

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sufficient empire, Imperial Zollverein and all that stuff, and damn the foreigner! are now, because of the enormous continuing changes in range of action and facility of locomotion, almost as wild—or would be if we were not so fatally accustomed to them—and quite as dangerous, as the idea of setting up a free and sovereign state in the Isle of Dogs. All the European empires are becoming vulnerable at every point. Surely the moral is obvious. The only wise course before the allied European powers now is to put their national conceit in their pockets and to combine to lock up their foreign policy, their trade interests, and all their imperial and international interests into a League so big as to be able to withstand the most sudden and treacherous of blows. And surely the only completely safe course for them and mankind—hard and nearly impossible though it may seem at the present juncture—is to lock up into one unity with a democratised Germany and with all the other states of the earth in a single peace-maintaining League.

If the reader will revert again to his atlas he will see very clearly that a strongly consolidated League of Free Nations, even if it consisted only of our present allies, would in itself form a combination with so close a system of communication about the world, and so great an economic advantage, that in the long run it could oblige Germany and the rest of the world to come into its council. Divided the Oceanic Allies are, to speak plainly, geographical rags and nakedness; united they are a world. To set about organising that League now, with its necessary re-

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pudiation on the part of Britain, France, and Italy, of a selfish and, it must be remembered in the light of these things I have but hinted at here, a *now hopelessly unpracticable imperialism*, would, I am convinced, lead quite rapidly to a great change of heart in Germany and to a satisfactory peace. But even if I am wrong in that, then all the stronger is the reason for binding, locking and uniting the allied powers together. It is the most dangerous of delusions for each and all of them to suppose that either Britain, France, or Italy can ever stand alone again and be secure.

And turning now to the other aspect of these consequences of the development of material science, it is too often assumed that this war is being as horrible and destructive as war can be. There never was so great a delusion. This war has only begun to be horrible. No doubt it is much more horrible and destructive than any former war, but even in comparison with the full possibilities of known and existing means of destruction it is still a mild war. Perhaps it will never rise to its full possibilities. At the present stage there is not a combatant, except perhaps America, which is not now practising a pinching economy of steel and other mechanical material. The Germans are running short of first-class flying men, and if we and our allies continue to press the air attack, and seek out and train our own vastly greater resources of first quality young airmen, the Germans may come as near to being "driven out of the air" as is possible. I am a firmer believer than ever I was in the possibility of a complete victory

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over Germany—through and by the air. But the occasional dropping of a big bomb or so in London is not to be taken as anything but a minimum display of what air war can do. In a little while now our alliance should be in a position to commence day and night continuous attacks upon the Rhine towns. Not hour-long raids such as London knows, but week-long raids. Then and then only shall we be able to gauge the really horrible possibilities of the air war. They are in our hands and not in the hands of the Germans. In addition the Germans are at a huge disadvantage in their submarine campaign. Their submarine campaign is only the feeble shadow of what a submarine campaign might be. Turning again to the atlas the reader can see for himself that the German and Austrian submarines are obliged to come out across very narrow fronts. A fence of mines less than three hundred miles long and two hundred feet deep would, for example, completely bar their exit through the North Sea. The U-boats run the gauntlet of that long narrow sea and pay a heavy toll to it. If only our Admiralty would tell the German public what that toll is now, there would come a time when German seamen would no longer consent to go down in them. Consider, however, what a submarine campaign would be for Great Britain if instead of struggling through this bottle-neck it were conducted from the coast of Norway, where these pests might harbour in a hundred fiords. Consider too what this weapon may be in twenty years' time in the hands of a country in the position of the United States. Great Britain, if she is not altogether

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mad, will cease to be an island as soon as possible after the war, by piercing the Channel Tunnel—how different our transport problem would be if we had that now!—but such countries as Australia, New Zealand, and Japan, directly they are involved in the future in a war against any efficient naval power with an unimpeded sea access, will be isolated forthwith. I cannot conceive that any of the great ocean powers will rest content until the tremendous possibility of blockade created by the submarine is securely vested in the hands of a common league beyond any power of sudden abuse.

It must always be remembered that this war is a mechanical war conducted by men whose discipline renders them uninventive, who know little or nothing of mechanism, who are for the most part struggling blindly to get things back to the conditions for which they were trained, to Napoleonic conditions, with infantry and cavalry and comparatively light guns, the so-called "war of manœuvres." It is like a man engaged in a desperate duel who keeps on trying to make it a game of cricket. Most of these soldiers detest every sort of mechanical device; the tanks, for example, which, used with imagination, might have given the British and French overwhelming victory on the western front, were subordinated to the usual cavalry "break through" idea. I am not making any particular complaint against the British and French generals in saying this. It is what must happen to any country which intrusts its welfare to soldiers. A soldier has to be a severely disciplined man, and a severely disciplined man cannot be a versatile man,

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and on the whole the British army has been as receptive to novelties as any. The German generals have done no better; indeed, they have not done so well as the generals of the Allies in this respect. But after the war, if the world does not organise rapidly for peace, then as resources accumulate a little, the mechanical genius will get to work on the possibilities of these ideas that have merely been sketched out in this war. We shall get big land ironclads which will smash towns. We shall get air offensives—let the experienced London reader think of an air raid going on hour after hour, day after day—that will really burn out and wreck towns, that will drive people mad by the thousand. We shall get a complete cessation of sea transit. Even land transit may be enormously hampered by aerial attack. I doubt if any sort of social order will really be able to stand the strain of a fully worked out modern war. We have still, of course, to feel the full shock effects even of this war. Most of the combatants are going on, as sometimes men who have incurred grave wounds will still go on for a time—without feeling them. The educational, biological, social, economic punishment that has already been taken by each of the European countries is, I feel, very much greater than we yet realise. Russia, the heaviest and worst-trained combatant, has indeed shown the effects and is down and sick, but in three years' time all Europe will know far better than it does now the full price of this war. And the shock effects of the next war will have much the same relation to the shock effects of this, as the shock of breaking a finger-nail has to

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the shock of crushing in a body. In Russia to-day we have seen, not indeed social revolution, not the replacement of one social order by another, but disintegration. Let not national conceit blind us. Germany, France, Italy, Britain are all slipping about on that same slope down which Russia has slid. Which goes first, it is hard to guess; or whether we shall all hold out to some kind of Peace. At present the social discipline of France and Britain seems to be at least as good as that of Germany, and the *morale* of the Rhineland and Bavaria has probably to undergo very severe testing by systematised and steadily increasing air punishment as this year goes on. The next war—if a next war comes—will see all Germany, from end to end, vulnerable to aircraft. . . .

Such are the two sets of considerations that will, I think, ultimately prevail over every prejudice and every difficulty in the way of the League of Free Nations. Existing states have become impossible as absolutely independent sovereignties. The new conditions bring them so close together and give them such extravagant powers of mutual injury that they must either sink national pride and dynastic ambitions in subordination to the common welfare of mankind or else utterly shatter one another. It becomes more and more plainly a choice between the League of Free Nations and a famished race of men looting in search of non-existent food amidst the smouldering ruins of civilisation. In the end I believe that the common sense of mankind will prefer a revision of its ideas of nationality and imperialism, to the latter

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alternative. It may take obstinate men yet a few more years of blood and horror to learn this lesson, but for my own part I cherish a stubborn belief in the potential reasonableness of mankind.



**A MEMORANDUM ON PEACE  
PROPAGANDA**



## A MEMORANDUM ON PEACE PROPAGANDA

It has become manifest that for the purposes of an efficient pro-Ally propaganda in neutral and enemy countries a clear and full statement of the war aims of the Allies is vitally necessary. What is wanted is something in the nature of an authoritative text to which propagandists may refer with confidence and which can be made the standard of their activities. It is not sufficient to recount the sins of Germany and to assert that the defeat of Germany is the Allied war aim. What all the world desires to know is what is to happen *after* the war. The real war aim of a belligerent, it is more and more understood, is not merely victory, but a peace of a certain character which that belligerent desires shall arise out of that victory. What, therefore, is the peace sought by the Allies?

It would be superfluous even to summarise here the primary case of the Allies, that the war is on their part a war to resist the military aggression of Germany, assisted by the landowning Magyars of Hungary, the Turks, and the King of Bulgaria, upon the rest of mankind. It is a war against belligerence, against aggressive war and the preparation for aggressive war. Such it was in its beginning, and such it remains. But it would be idle to pretend that the ideas of the Governments and peoples allied against Germany have not developed very greatly during the

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years of the war. There has been a deepening realisation of the danger to mankind of existing political divisions and separations, a great experience in the suffering, destruction, and waste of war; a quickening of consciences against conquests, annexations, and subjugations; and a general clearing up of ideas that have hitherto stood in the way of an organised world peace. While German Imperialism, to judge by the utterances of its accredited heads, and by the behaviour of Germany in the temporarily disorganised States on her eastern front, is still as truculent, aggressive, and treacherous as ever, the mind of her antagonists has learned and has matured. There has arisen in the great world outside the inner lives of the Central Powers a will that grows to gigantic proportions, that altogether overshadows the boasted *will to power* of the German junker and exploiter, *the will to a world peace*. It is like the will of an experienced man set against the will of an obstinate and selfish youth. The war aims of the anti-German Allies take more and more definitely the form of a world of States leagued together to maintain a common law, to submit their mutual differences to a conclusive tribunal, to protect weak communities, to restrain and suppress war threats and war preparations throughout the earth.

Steadfastly the great peoples of the world outside the shadow of German Imperial domination have been working their way to unanimity, while the ruling intelligences of Germany have been scheming for the base advantages of conquest; while they have been undermining, confusing, and demoralising the

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mentality of Russia, crushing down the subject peoples of the Austro-Hungarian Imperialism, and threatening and cajoling neutrals there has been a wide, free movement in the minds of their antagonists towards the restraint and wisdom of a greater and nobler phase in human affairs. The thought of the world crystallises now about a phrase, the phrase "The League of Free Nations." The war aims of the Allies become more and more explicitly associated with the spirit and implications of that.

Like all such phrases, "The League of Free Nations" is subject to a great variety of detailed interpretation, but its broad intentions can now be stated without much risk of dissent. The ideal would, of course, include all the nations of the earth, including a Germany purged of her military aggressiveness; it involves some sort of INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS that can revise, codify, amend and extend international law, a supreme Court of Law in which States may sue and be sued, and whose decision the League will be pledged to enforce, and the supervision, limitation, and use of armaments under the direction of the international congress. It is also felt very widely that such a congress must set a restraint upon competitive and unsanctioned "expansionist" movements into unsettled and disordered regions, must act as the guardian of feeble races and communities, and must be empowered to make conclusive decisions upon questions of transport, tariffs, access to raw material, migration, and international intercourse generally. The constitution of this congress remains indefinite; it is the crucial matter upon which

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the best thought of the world is working at the present time. But given the prospect of a suitable congress there can be little dispute that the great Imperial Powers among the Allies are now prepared for great and generous limitations of their sovereignty in the matter of armaments, of tropical possessions and of subject peoples, in the common interest of mankind. The spectacle of German Imperialism, boastful, selfish, narrow, and altogether hateful, in its terrible blood-dance through Europe, has been an object-lesson to humanity against excesses of national vanity and national egotism and against Imperial pride. Among the Allies, the two chief Imperial Powers, measured by the extent of territory they control, are Britain and France, and each of these is more completely prepared to-day than ever it has been before to consider its imperial possessions as a trust for their inhabitants and for mankind, and its position in the more fertile and less settled regions of the world as that of a mandatory and trustee. These admissions involve a plain prospect and promise of the ultimate release and liberation of all the peoples in these great and variegated Empires to complete world citizenship.

But in using the phrase "The League of Nations," it may be well to dispel certain misconceptions that have arisen through the experimental preparation by more or less irresponsible persons and societies of elaborate schemes and constitutions of such a league. Proposals have been printed and published of a Court of World Conciliation, in which each sovereign State will be represented by one member—Montenegro,

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for example, by one, and the British Empire by one—and other proposals have been mooted of a Congress of the League of Nations, in which such States as Hayti, Abyssinia, and the like will be represented by one or two representatives, and France and Great Britain by five or six. All such projects should be put out of mind when the phrase "League of Free Nations" is used by responsible speakers for the Allied Powers. Certain most obvious considerations have evidently been overlooked by the framers of such proposals. It will, for instance, be a manifest disadvantage to the smaller Powers to be at all over-represented upon the Congress of any such League; it may even be desirable that certain of them should not have a *voting* representative at all, for this reason that a great Power still cherishing an aggressive spirit would certainly attempt, as the beginning of its aggression, to compel adjacent small Powers to send representatives practically chosen by itself. The coarse fact of the case in regard to an immediate world peace is this, that only five or six great Powers possess sufficient economic resources to make war under modern conditions at the present time, namely, the United States of America, Great Britain, France, Germany, Japan, and, doubtfully, Austria-Hungary. Italy suffers under the disadvantage that she has no coal-supply. These five or six Powers we may say, therefore, permit war and can prevent it. They are at present necessarily the custodians of the peace of the world, and it is mere pedantry not to admit that this gives them a practical claim to preponderance in the opening Congress

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of the World League. It may be pointed out that a small State with a voice in the discussions, but no vote in the decisions of the League, would logically be excused from the liability to assist in enforcing those decisions.

But this question of the constitution of a World Congress is not to be solved by making a coarse classification of States into large and war-capable Powers, and small and weak Powers. Take the case of Italy, for example: though she is almost incapable of sustaining a war against the world by herself because of her weakness in the matter of coal, she can as an ally be at once of enormous importance. Take the case of Spain again, a very similar case. And whatever the war ability of Latin America may be to-day, there can be no question that this great constellation of States must count heavily in the framing of the world of to-morrow. Then, again, we have to consider the vast future possibilities of the Chinese Republic, with coal, steel, and a magnificent industrial population, and the probable reconstruction of eastern Europe and a renaissance of Russia which may give the world a loose-knit but collectively important Slavonic confederation. While an isolated small Power within the orbit of attraction of a large Power, a State of 5,000,000 people or less, must always remain a difficult problem in the world representation, it is clear that something like an adequate representation of small and weak Powers becomes possible so soon as they develop a disposition towards aggregation, for the purposes of world politics, into associations with States racially, linguistically, and



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historically akin to them. The trend of Allied opinion is to place not Peru or Ukraine, nor Norway, nor Finland on a level with the United States of America or the British Empire at the League of Nations Congress, but to prepare the way for adequate representation through a preliminary Latin-American or a Slavonic or a Scandinavian Confederation, which could speak with a common idea at the World Congress.

It should be manifest that there is one Power whose splendid achievement in this war, and whose particular needs, justify her over-representation (as measured by material wealth, and millions of population) upon the Congress of the League, and that is France. It is open to question whether Italy should not also be disproportionately over-represented, seeing that she will not have, as Spain will have, the moral reinforcement of kindred nations overseas. And with regard to the British Empire, seeing that there exists no real Imperial legislature, it is open to consideration whether Canada, South Africa, and Australasia should come into the Council as separate nationalities. The Asiatic and African possessions of Britain and France, Belgium and Italy, possessions, that is, which have no self-government, might possibly for a time be represented by members appointed by the governing power in each case. These are merely suggestions here, indications of a disposition of mind, but they are suggestions upon which it is necessary for the Allied Powers to decide as speedily as possible. The effective working out of this problem of the League of Nations Congress by the Allies without

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undue delay is as vital a part of the Allied policy as the effective conduct of the war.

It has to be recognised that the institution of a League of Nations precludes any annexations or any military interference with any peoples whatever, without a mandate from the Congress of the League. The League must directly or indirectly become the guardian of all unsettled regions and order must be kept and development promoted by it in such derelict regions as Mesopotamia and Armenia, for example, have now become. In these latter instances it is open to consideration whether the League should operate through some single power acting as a mandatory of the League, or by international forces under the control of the League as a whole. Theoretically the latter course is to be preferred, but there are in many cases enormous practical advantages to be urged for the former. The Allies have indeed had a considerable experience during the war of joint controls and joint expeditions; there has been a great education in internationalism since August, 1914; but nevertheless the end of the war is likely to come long before any real international forces have been evolved. It is, however, towards the ultimate use of international forces in such cases that the joint policy of the Allies is plainly and openly directed.

The bringing of the League into practical politics profoundly affects the question of territorial adjustment after the war. The Allies are bound in honour to follow the will of France in the matter of Alsace-Lorraine, and the rectification of the Italian frontier and the bringing of the bulk of the Italian-speaking

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population, now under Austrian dominion, into one ring-fence with Italy, also seem a necessary part of a world pacification. It is, however, of far less importance in the war aims of the Allies that this and that particular scrap of territory should change hands from the control of one group of combatants to that of the other, than that the present practical ascendancy of German Imperialism over the resources of the Polish, Russian, Ukrainian, Czech, Jugo-Slav, Finnish, and Roumanian peoples should cease. The war aim of the Allies in eastern Europe is to create in the place of the present Austro-Hungarian Empire a larger synthesis of associated States, something in the nature of an "East Central European League," within the League of Nations, a confederation that might possibly reach from Poland to the Black and Adriatic Seas, and have also access to, if not a port upon, the Baltic at Danzig. The Allies are necessarily obliged to wait upon the development of affairs in Russia, but the hopes and efforts of the Allies are towards a reconciliation of at least Great Russia, Siberia, and Ukraine into a workable association within the League. It is premature to speculate upon the grouping of Finland at the present time. Relieved of the feverish and impossible ambitions the political weaknesses of these peoples have stimulated, a free and united Germany could then become one of the predominant partners in the World League of Free Nations. The Allies do not propose an unconditional return of the former African possessions of Germany, but they contemplate an overruling international *régime* in Africa between the Sahara and the

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Zambesi, restraining armament, reorganising native education, and giving absolute equality of trade to all the nations in the League. Such an international *régime* under the League may not be incompatible with the retention of national flags in the former "possessions" of the leagued Powers.

Exact territorial definition does not appear to the Allies to be of nearly such importance as the establishment of a common system of disarmament and a common effort to restore the ravages of the war. The full effect of the war is still not realised by the mass of the belligerent peoples, more especially in America and western Europe, where life is still fairly comfortable. There has already been a destruction not merely of the political, but of the social, order over great areas of the world, especially in eastern Europe, and it is doubtful whether any peace can restore these disorganised areas to anything like their former productivity for many years. A universal shortage not merely of man-power but of transport and machinery available for the purposes of peace cannot be avoided. It is doubtful, moreover, if social discipline in the ports of the British Empire and America will be strong enough to restrain an organised resistance to the use of German shipping after the war for any purpose, and to the use of Allied shipping for the transport of goods to and from Germany on the part of Allied and neutral seamen and transport workers indignant at the U-boat campaign; moreover, there is a world-wide cry for a vindictive trade after the war against Germany, and for organised boycotts that may further restrict the process

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of economic world recovery. It is doubtful if the menace of these "revenge" movements and the difficulty of controlling them in democratic States is properly appreciated in Germany. The militarist Government of Germany, fighting now for bare existence, is concealing from its people this world-wide disposition to boycott German trade and industry at any cost to the boycotting populations, and buoying them up with preposterous hopes of "business as usual" as soon as peace is made. The fact has to be faced that while the present German Government remains no such economic resumption is possible. The "War after the War" possibility has to be added to the economic destruction in Russia, Belgium, and elsewhere in any estimate of the situation after the war.

The plain prospect of material disorganisation thus opened should alone suffice to establish the absolute necessity for peace now of such a nature as will permit a world-wide concentration upon reconstruction, in good faith and without any complications of enmity and hostility. But in addition to the material destruction and dislocation, and to the "hatred" disorganisation already noted, the financial transactions of the last few years have created a monetary inflation which, *without the concerted action of all the Powers*, may mean a collapse of world credit. Add now the plain necessity for continued armament if a real League of Nations is not attained. Without any exaggeration the prospect of the nations facing these economic difficulties in an atmosphere of continuing hostility, intrigue, and conflict, under a continuing

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weight of armaments, and with a continuing distrust, is a hopeless one. The consequences stare us in the face; Russia is only the first instance of what must happen generally. The alternative to a real League of Nations is the steady descent of our civilisation towards a condition of political and social fragmentation such as the world has not seen since the fall of the Roman Empire. The honest co-operation of Germany in the League of Nations, in disarmament, and in world reconstruction is, therefore, fundamentally necessary. There is now no other rational policy. And since it is impossible to hope for any such help or co-operation from the Germany of the Belgian outrage, the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, the betrayal of Ukraine, **THE CHANGING OF GERMANY** becomes a primary war aim, *the* primary war aim for the Allies. How Germany is to be changed is a complex question. The word *Revolution* is, perhaps, to be deprecated. We do not, for instance, desire a Bolshevik breakdown in Germany, which would make her economically useless to mankind. We look, therefore, not so much to the German peasant and labourer as to the ordinary, fairly well-educated mediocre German for co-operation in the reinstatement of civilisation. Change there *must* be in Germany; in the spirit in which the Government is conducted, in the persons who exercise the control, and in the relative influence of different classes in the country. The sharpest distinction, therefore, has to be drawn between Germany and its present Government in all our propaganda and public utterances; and a constant appeal has to be made by the statesmen of the Alliance, and

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by a frank and open propaganda through the Germans of the United States of America and of Switzerland, through neutral countries and by every possible means, from Germany Junker to Germany sober. We may be inclined to believe that every German is something of a Junker, we have to remember he is also potentially a reasonable man.

And meanwhile, the Allies must continue with haste and diligence to fight and defeat Junker Germany, which cannot possibly conquer but which may nevertheless succeed in ruining the world. They must fight the German armies upon the fronts, they must fight an unregenerate Germany economically and politically, and they must demonstrate to the German reason and conscience at home, by an intensive air war and by propaganda alike, the real impossibility of these conceptions of national pride and aggressiveness in which the German population has been bred.





# DEMOCRACY



# DEMOCRACY

## § 1

ALL the talk, all the aspiration and work that is making now towards this conception of a world securely at peace under the direction of a League of Free Nations, has interwoven with it an idea that is often rather felt than understood, the idea of Democracy. Not only is justice to prevail between race and race and nation and nation, but also between man and man; there is to be a universal respect for human life throughout the earth; the world, in the words of President Wilson, is to be made "safe for democracy." I would like to subject that word to a certain scrutiny to see whether the things we are apt to think and assume about it correspond exactly with the feeling of the word. I would like to ask what, under modern conditions, does democracy mean, and whether we have got it now anywhere in the world in its fulness and completion.

And to begin with I must have a quarrel with the word itself. The eccentricities of modern education make us dependent for a number of our primary political terms upon those used by the thinkers of the small Greek republics of ancient times before those petty states collapsed, through sheer political ineptitude, before the Macedonians. They thought in terms of states so small that it was possible to gather all the citizens together for the purposes of legislation. These states were scarcely more than

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what we English might call sovereign urban districts. Fast communications were made by runners; even the policeman with a bicycle of the modern urban district was beyond the scope of the Greek imagination. There were no railways, telegraphs, telephones, books or newspapers, there was no need for the state to maintain a system of education, and the affairs of the state were so simple that they could be discussed and decided by the human voice and open voting in an assembly of all the citizens. That is what democracy meant. In Andorra, or perhaps in Canton Uri, such democracy may still be possible; in any other modern state it cannot exist. The opposite term to it was oligarchy, in which a small council of men controlled the affairs of the state. Oligarchy, narrowed down to one man, became monarchy. If you wished to be polite to an oligarchy you called it an aristocracy; if you wished to point out that a monarch was rather by way of being self-appointed, you called him a Tyrant. An oligarchy with a property qualification was a plutocracy.

Now the modern intelligence, being under a sort of magic slavery to the ancient Greeks, has to adapt all these terms to the problems of states so vast and complex that they have the same relation to the Greek states that the anatomy of a man has to the anatomy of a jelly-fish. They are not only greater in extent and denser in population, but they are increasingly innervated by more and more rapid means of communication and excitement. In the classical past—except for such special cases as the feeding of Rome with Egyptian corn—trade was a traffic in

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luxuries or slaves, war a small specialised affair of infantry and horsemen in search of slaves and loot, and empire the exaction of tribute. The modern state must conduct its enormous businesses through a system of ministries; its vital interests go all round the earth; nothing that any ancient Greek would have recognised as democracy is conceivable in a great modern state. It is absolutely necessary, if we are to get things clear in our minds about what democracy really means in relation to modern politics, first to make a quite fresh classification in order to find what items there really are to consider, and then to inquire which seem to correspond more or less closely in spirit with our ideas about ancient democracy.

Now there are two primary classes of idea about government in the modern world depending upon our conception of the political capacity of the common man. We may suppose he is a microcosm, with complete ideas and wishes about the state and the world, or we may suppose that he isn't. We may believe that the common man can govern, or we may believe that he can't. We may think further along the first line that he is so wise and good and right that we only have to get out of his way for him to act rightly and for the good of all mankind, or we may doubt it. And if we doubt it we may still believe that though perhaps "you can fool all the people some of the time, and some of the people all the time," the common man, expressing himself by a majority vote, still remains the secure source of human wisdom. But next, while we may deny this universal distribution of political wisdom, we may, if we are sufficiently

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under the sway of modern ideas about collective psychology, believe that it is necessary to poke up the political indifference and inability of the common man as much as possible, to thrust political ideas and facts upon him, to incite him to a watchful and critical attitude towards them, and above all to secure his assent to the proceedings of the able people who are managing public affairs. Or finally, we may treat him as a thing to be ruled and not consulted. Let me at this stage make out a classificatory diagram of these elementary ideas of government in a modern country.

**CLASS I.** It is supposed that the common man *can* govern:

- (1) without further organisation (Anarchy);
- (2) through a majority vote by delegates.

**CLASS II.** It is supposed that the common man *cannot* govern, and that government therefore must be through the agency of Able Persons who may be classified under one of the following subheads, either as

- (1) persons elected by the common man because he believes them to be persons able to govern—just as he chooses his doctors as persons able to secure health, and his electrical engineers as persons able to attend to his tramways, lighting, etc., etc.;
- (2) persons of a special class, as, for example, persons born and educated to rule (e. g., *Aristocracy*), or rich business adventurers

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(*Plutocracy*) who rule without consulting the common man at all.

To which two subclasses we may perhaps add a sort of intermediate stage between them, namely:

- (3) persons elected by a special class of voter.

Monarchy may be either a special case of Class II, (1), (2) or (3), in which the persons who rule have narrowed down in number to one person, and the duration of monarchy may be either for life or a term of years. These two classes and the five subclasses cover, I believe, all the elementary political types in our world.

Now in the constitution of a modern state, because of the conflict and confusion of ideas, all or most of these five subclasses may usually be found intertwined. The British constitution, for instance, is a complicated tangle of arrangements, due to a struggle between the ideas of Class I (2), Class II (3), tending to become Class II (1) and Class II (2) in both its aristocratic and monarchist forms. The American constitution is largely dominated by Class I (2), from which it breaks away in the case of the President to a short-term monarchist aspect of Class II (1). I will not elaborate this classification further. I have made it here in order to render clear first, that what we moderns mean by democracy is not at all what the Greeks meant, that is to say direct government by the assembly of all the citizens; and secondly and more important, that the word "democracy" is being used very largely in current discussion so that

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it is impossible to say in any particular case whether the intention is Class I (2) or Class II (1), and that we have to make up our minds whether we mean, if I may coin two phrases, "delegate democracy" or "selective democracy," or some definite combination of these two, when we talk about "democracy," before we can get on much beyond a generous gesture of equality and enfranchisement towards our brother man. The word is being used, in fact, confusingly for these two quite widely different things.

Now it seems to me that though there has been no very clear discussion of the issue between those two opposite conceptions of democracy, largely because of the want of proper distinctive terms, there has nevertheless been a wide movement of public opinion away from "delegate democracy" and towards "selective democracy." People have gone on saying "democracy," while gradually changing its meaning from the former to the latter. It is notable in Great Britain, for example, that while there has been no perceptible diminution in our faith in democracy, there has been a growing criticism of "party" and "politicians," and a great weakening in the power and influence of representatives and representative institutions. There has been a growing demand for personality and initiative in elected persons. The press, which was once entirely subordinate politically to parliamentary politics, adopts an attitude towards parliament and party leaders nowadays which would have seemed inconceivable insolence in the days of Lord Palmerston. And there has been a vigorous agitation in support of electoral methods which are



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manifestly calculated to subordinate "delegated" to "selected" men.

The movement for electoral reform in Great Britain at the present time is one of quite fundamental importance in the development of modern democracy. The case of the reformers is that heretofore modern democracy has not had a fair opportunity of showing its best possibilities to the world, because the methods of election have persistently set aside the better types of public men, or rather of would-be public men, in favour of mere party hacks. That is a story common to Britain and the American democracies, but in America it was expressed in rather different terms and dealt with in a less analytical fashion than it has been in Great Britain. It was not at first clearly understood that the failure of democracy to produce good government came through the preference of "delegated" over "selected" men, the idea of delegation did in fact dominate the minds of both electoral reformers and electoral conservatives alike, and the earlier stages of the reform movement in Great Britain were inspired not so much by the idea of getting a better type of representative as by the idea of getting a fairer representation of minorities. It was only slowly that the idea that sensible men do not usually belong to any political "party" took hold. It is only now being realised that what sensible men desire in a member of parliament is honour and capacity rather than a mechanical loyalty to a "platform." They do not want to dictate to their representative; they want a man they can trust as their representative. In the fifties and sixties of the last

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century, in which this electoral reform movement began and the method of Proportional Representation was thought out, it was possible for the reformers to work untroubled upon the assumption that if a man was not necessarily born a

“ . . . little Liber-al,  
or a little Conser-vative,”

he must at least be a Liberal-Unionist or a Conservative Free-Trader. But seeking a fair representation for party minorities, these reformers produced a system of voting at once simple and incapable of manipulation, that leads straight, not to the representation of small parties, but to a type of democratic government by selected best men.

Before giving the essential features of that system, it may be well to state in its simplest form the evils at which the reform aims. An election, the reformers point out, is not the simple matter it appears to be at the first blush. Methods of voting can be manipulated in various ways, and nearly every method has its own liability to falsification. We may take for illustration the commonest, simplest case—the case that is the perplexity of every clear-thinking voter under British or American conditions—the case of a constituency in which every elector has one vote, and which returns one representative to Parliament. The naïve theory on which people go is that all the possible candidates are put up, that each voter votes for the one he likes best, and that the best man wins. The bitter experience is that hardly ever are there more than two candidates, and still more rarely is

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either of these the best man possible. Suppose, for example, the constituency is mainly Conservative. A little group of pothouse politicians, wire-pullers, busybodies, local journalists, and small lawyers, working for various monetary interests, have "captured" the local Conservative organisation. They have time and energy to capture it, because they have no other interest in life except that. It is their "business," and honest men are busy with other duties. For reasons that do not appear these local "workers" put up an unknown Mr. Goldbug as the official Conservative candidate. He professes a generally Conservative view of things, but few people are sure of him and few people trust him. Against him the weaker (and therefore still more venal) Liberal organisation now puts up a Mr. Kentshire (formerly Wurstberg) to represent the broader thought and finer generousities of the English mind. A number of Conservative gentlemen, generally too busy about their honest businesses to attend the party "smokers" and the party cave, realise suddenly that they want Goldbug hardly more than they want Wurstberg. They put up their long-admired, trusted, and able friend Mr. Sanity as an Independent Conservative.

Every one knows the trouble that follows. Mr. Sanity is "going to split the party vote." The hesitating voter is told, with considerable truth, that a vote given for Mr. Sanity is a vote given for Wurstberg. At any price the constituency does not want Wurstberg. So at the eleventh hour Mr. Sanity is induced to withdraw, and Mr. Goldbug goes into Parliament to misrepresent this constituency. And

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so with most constituencies, and the result is a legislative body consisting largely of men of unknown character and obscure aims, whose only credential is the wearing of a party label. They come into Parliament not to forward the great interests they ostensibly support, but with an eye to the railway jobbery, corporation business, concessions and financial operations that necessarily go on in and about the national legislature. That in its simplest form is the dilemma of democracy. The problem that has confronted modern democracy since its beginning has not really been the representation of organised minorities—they are very well able to look after themselves—but *the protection of the unorganised mass of busily occupied, fairly intelligent men from the tricks of the specialists who work the party machines*. We know Mr. Sanity, we want Mr. Sanity, but we are too busy to watch the incessant intrigues to oust him in favour of the obscurely influential people, politically docile, who are favoured by the organisation. We want an organiser-proof method of voting. It is in answer to this demand, as the outcome of a most careful examination of the ways in which voting may be protected from the exploitation of those who *work* elections, that the method of Proportional Representation with a single transferable vote has been evolved. It is organiser-proof. It defies the caucus. If you do not like Mr. Goldbug you can put up and vote for Mr. Sanity, giving Mr. Goldbug your second choice, in the most perfect confidence that in any case your vote cannot help to return Mr. Wurstberg.

With Proportional Representation with a single

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transferable vote (this specification is necessary, because there are also the inferior imitations of various election-riggers figuring as proportional representation), it is *impossible to prevent the effective candidature of independent men of repute beside the official candidates.*

The method of voting under the Proportional Representation system has been ignorantly represented as complex. It is really almost ideally simple. You mark the list of candidates with numbers in the order of your preference. For example, you believe A to be absolutely the best man for Parliament; you mark him 1. But B you think is the next best man; you mark him 2. That means that if A gets an enormous amount of support, ever so many more votes than he requires for his return, your vote will not be wasted. Only so much of your vote as is needed will go to A; the rest will go to B. Or, on the other hand, if A has so little support that his chances are hopeless, you will not have thrown your vote away upon him; it will go to B. Similarly you may indicate a third, a fourth, and a fifth choice; if you like you may mark every name on your paper with a number to indicate the order of your preferences. And that is all the voter has to do. The reckoning and counting of the votes presents not the slightest difficulty to any one used to the business of computation. Silly and dishonest men, appealing to still sillier audiences, have got themselves and their audiences into humorous muddles over this business, but the principles are perfectly plain and simple. Let me state them here; they can be fully and exactly stated, with various

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ornaments, comments, arguments, sarcastic remarks, and digressions, in seventy lines of this type.

It will be evident that, in any election under this system, any one who has got a certain proportion of No. 1 votes will be elected. If, for instance, five people have to be elected and 20,000 voters vote, then any one who has got 4,001 first votes or more *must* be elected. 4,001 votes is in that case enough to elect a candidate. This sufficient number of votes is called the *quota*, and any one who has more than that number of votes has obviously got more votes than is needful for election. So, to begin with, the voting papers are classified according to their first votes, and any candidates who have got more than a quota of first votes are forthwith declared elected. But most of these elected men would under the old system waste votes because they would have too many; for manifestly a candidate who gets more than the quota of votes *needs only a fraction of each of these votes to return him*. If, for instance, he gets double the quota he needs only half each vote. He takes that fraction, therefore, under this new and better system, and the rest of each vote is entered on to No. 2 upon that voting paper. And so on. Now this is an extremely easy job for an accountant or skilled computer, and it is quite easily checked by any other accountant and skilled computer. A reader with a bad arithmetical education, ignorant of the very existence of such a thing as a slide rule, knowing nothing of account keeping, who thinks of himself working out the resultant fractions with a stumpy pencil on a bit of greasy paper in a bad light, may

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easily think of this transfer of fractions as a dangerous and terrifying process. It is, for a properly trained man, the easiest, exactest job conceivable. The Cash Register people will invent machines to do it for you while you wait. What happens, then, is that every candidate with more than a quota, beginning with the top candidate, sheds a fraction of each vote he has received, down the list, and the next one sheds his surplus fraction in the same way, and so on until candidates lower in the list, who are at first below the quota, fill up to it. When all the surplus votes of the candidates at the head of the list have been disposed of, then the hopeless candidates at the bottom of the list are dealt with. The second votes on their voting papers are treated as whole votes and distributed up the list, and so on. It will be plain to the quick-minded that, towards the end, there will be a certain chasing about of little fractions of votes, and a slight modification of the quota due to voting papers having no second or third preferences marked upon them, a chasing about that it will be difficult for an untrained intelligence to follow. *But untrained intelligences are not required to follow it.* For the skilled computer these things offer no difficulty at all. And they are not difficulties of principle but of manipulation. One might as well refuse to travel in a taxicab until the driver had explained the magneto as refuse to accept the principle of Proportional Representation by the single transferable vote until one had remedied all the deficiencies of one's arithmetical education. The fundamental principle of the thing, that a candidate who gets more votes than he wants

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is made to hand on a fraction of each vote to the voter's second choice, and that a candidate whose chances are hopeless is made to hand on the whole vote to the voter's second choice, so that practically only a small number of votes are ineffective, is within the compass of the mind of a boy of ten.

But simple as this method is, it completely kills the organisation and manipulation of voting. It completely solves the Goldbug-Wurstberg-Sanity problem. It is knave-proof—short of forging, stealing, or destroying voting papers. A man of repute, a leaderly man, may defy all the party organisations in existence and stand beside and be returned over the head of a worthless man, though the latter be smothered with party labels. That is the gist of this business. The difference in effect between Proportional Representation and the old method of voting must ultimately be to change the moral and intellectual quality of elected persons profoundly. People are only beginning to realise the huge possibilities of advance inherent in this change of political method. It means no less than a revolution from "delegate democracy" to "selective democracy."

Now, I will not pretend to be anything but a strong partisan in this matter. When I speak of "democracy" I mean "selective democracy." I believe that "delegate democracy" is already provably a failure in the world, and that the reason why to-day, after three and a half years of struggle, we are still fighting German autocracy and fighting with no certainty of absolute victory, is because the affairs of the three great Atlantic democracies have been largely in the



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hands not of selected men but of delegated men, men of intrigue and the party machine, of dodges rather than initiatives, second-rate men. When Lord Haldane, defending his party for certain insufficiencies in their preparation for the eventuality of the great war, pleaded that they had no "mandate" from the country to do anything of the sort, he did more than commit political suicide, he bore conclusive witness against the whole system which had made him what he was. Neither Britain nor France in this struggle has produced better statesmen nor better generals than the German autocracy. The British and French Foreign Offices are old monarchist organisations still. To this day the British and French politicians haggle and argue with the German ministers upon petty points and debating society advantages, smart and cunning, while the peoples perish. The one man who has risen to the greatness of this great occasion, the man who is, in default of any rival, rapidly becoming the leader of the world towards peace, is neither a delegate politician nor the choice of a monarch and his councillors. He is the one authoritative figure in these transactions whose mind has not been subdued either by long discipline in the party machine or by court intrigue, who has continued his education beyond those early twenties when the mind of the "budding politician" ceases to expand, who has thought, and thought things out, who is an educated man among dexterous undereducated specialists. By something very like a belated accident in the framing of the American constitution, the President of the United States is more in the nature of a selected man

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than any other conspicuous figure at the present time. He is specially elected by a special electoral college after an elaborate preliminary selection of candidates by the two great party machines. And be it remembered that Mr. Wilson is not the first great President the United States have had, he is one of a series of figures who tower over their European contemporaries. The United States have had many advantageous circumstances to thank for their present ascendancy in the world's affairs: isolation from militarist pressure for a century and a quarter, a vast virgin continent, plenty of land, freedom from centralisation, freedom from titles and social vulgarities, common schools, a real democratic spirit in its people, and a great enthusiasm for universities; but no single advantage has been so great as this happy accident which has given it a specially selected man as its voice and figurehead in the world's affairs. In the average congressman, in the average senator, as Ostrogorski's great book so industriously demonstrated, the United States have no great occasion for pride. Neither the Senate nor the House of Representatives seem to rise above the level of the British Houses of Parliament, with a Government unable to control the rebel forces of Ulster, unable to promote or dismiss generals without an outcry, weakly amenable to the press, and terrifyingly incapable of great designs. It is to the United States of America we must look now if the world is to be made "safe for democracy." It is to the method of selection, as distinguished from delegation, that we must look if democracy is to be saved from itself.

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### § 2

British political life resists cleansing with all the vigour of a dirty little boy. It is nothing to your politician that the economic and social organisation of all the world is strained almost to the pitch of collapse, and that it is vitally important to mankind that everywhere the whole will and intelligence of the race should be enlisted in the great tasks of making a permanent peace and reconstructing the shattered framework of society. These are remote, unreal considerations to the politician. What is the world to him? He has scarcely heard of it. He has been far too busy as a politician. He has been thinking of smart little tricks in the lobby and brilliant exploits at question time. He has been thinking of jobs and appointments, of whether Mr. Asquith is likely to "come back" and how far it is safe to bank upon L. G. His one supreme purpose is to keep affairs in the hands of his own specialised set, to keep the old obscure party game going, to rig his little tricks behind a vast, silly camouflage of sham issues, to keep out able men and disinterested men, the public mind, and the general intelligence, from any effective interference with his disastrous manipulations of the common weal.

I do not see how any intelligent and informed man can have followed the recent debates in the House of Commons upon Proportional Representation without some gusts of angry contempt. They were the most pitiful and alarming demonstration of the intellectual and moral quality of British public life at the present time.

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From the wire-pullers of the Fabian Society and from the party organisers of both Liberal and Tory party alike, and from the knowing cards, the pot-house shepherds, and jobbing lawyers who "work" the constituencies, comes the chief opposition to this straightening out of our electoral system so urgently necessary and so long overdue. They have fought it with a zeal and efficiency that is rarely displayed in the nation's interest. From nearly every outstanding man outside that little inner world of political shams and dodges, who has given any attention to the question, comes, on the other hand, support for this reform. Even the great party leaders, Mr. Balfour and Mr. Asquith, were in its favour. One might safely judge this question by considering who are the advocates on either side. But the best arguments for Proportional Representation arise out of its opponents' speeches, and to these I will confine my attention now. Consider Lord Harcourt—heir to the most sacred traditions of the party game—hurling scorn at a project that would introduce "faddists, mugwumps," and so on and so on—in fact independent thinking men—into the legislature. Consider the value of Lord Curzon's statement that London "rose in revolt" against the project. Do you remember that day, dear reader, when the streets of London boiled with passionate men shouting, "No Proportional Representation! Down with Proportional Representation"? You don't. Nor do I. But what happened was that the guinea-pigs and solicitors and nobodies, the party hacks who form the bulk of London's misrepresentation in the House of Commons,

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stampeded in terror against a proposal that threatened to wipe them out and replace them by known and responsible men. London, alas! does not seem to care how its members are elected. What Londoner knows anything about his member? Hundreds of thousands of Londoners do not even know which of the ridiculous constituencies into which the politicians have dismembered our London they are in. Only as I was writing this in my flat in St. James's Court, Westminster, did it occur to me to inquire who was representing me in the councils of the nation while I write. . . .

After some slight difficulty I ascertained that my representative is a Mr. Burdett Coutts, who was, in the romantic eighties, Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett. And by a convenient accident I find that the other day he moved to reject the Proportional Representation Amendment made by the House of Lords to the Representation of the People Bill, so that I am able to look up the debate in Hansard and study my opinions as he represented them and this question at one and the same time. And, taking little things first, I am proud and happy to discover that the member for me was the only participator in the debate who, in the vulgar and reprehensible phrase, "threw a dead cat," or, in polite terms, displayed classical learning. My member said, "*Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*," with a rather graceful compliment to the Labour Conference at Nottingham. "I could not help thinking to myself," said my member, "that at that conference there must have been many men of sufficient classical reading to say to themselves,

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*'Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes.'* ” In which surmise he was quite right. Except perhaps for “*Tempus fugit,*” “*verbum sap.,*” “*Arma virumque,*” and “*Quis custodiet,*” there is no better known relic of antiquity. But my member went a little beyond my ideas when he said: “We are asked to enter upon a method of legislation which can bear no other description than that of law-making in the dark,” because I think it can bear quite a lot of other descriptions. This was, however, the artistic prelude to a large, vague, gloomy dissertation about nothing very definite, a muddling up of the main question with the minor issue of a schedule of constituencies involved in the proposal.

The other parts of my member's speech do not, I confess, fill me with the easy confidence I would like to feel in my proxy. Let me extract a few gems of eloquence from the speech of this voice which speaks for me, and give also the only argument he advanced that needs consideration. “History repeats itself,” he said, “very often in curious ways as to facts, but generally with very different results.” That, honestly, I like. It is a sentence one can read over several times. But he went on to talk of the entirely different scheme for minority representation, which was introduced into the Reform Bill of 1867, and there I am obliged to part company with him. That was a silly scheme for giving two votes to each voter in a three-member constituency. It has about as much resemblance to the method of scientific voting under discussion as a bath-chair has to an aeroplane. “But that measure of minority representation led to a baneful inven-

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tion," my representative went on to say, "and left behind it a hateful memory in the Birmingham caucus. I well remember that when I stood for Parliament thirty-two years ago *we had no better platform weapon than repeating over and over again in a sentence the name of Mr. Schnadhorst*, and I am not sure that it would not serve the same purpose now. Under that system the work of the caucus was, of course, far simpler than it will be if this system ever comes into operation. All the caucus had to do under that measure was to divide the electors into three groups and with three candidates, A, B, and C, to order one group to vote for A and B, another for B and C, and the third for A and C, and they carried the whole of their candidates and kept them for many years. But the multiplicity of ordinal preferences, second, third, fourth, fifth, up to tenth, which the single transferable vote system would involve, will require a more scientific handling in party interests, and neither party will be able to face an election with any hope of success without the assistance of the most drastic form of caucus and *without its orders being carried out by the electors.*"

Now, I swear by Heaven that, lowly creature as I am, a lost vote, a nothing, voiceless and helpless in public affairs, I am not going to stand the imputation that that sort of reasoning represents the average mental quality of Westminster—outside Parliament, that is. Most of my neighbours in St. James's Court, for example, have quite large pieces of head above their eyebrows. Read these above sentences over and ponder their significance—so far as they

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have any significance. Never mind my keen personal humiliation at this display of the mental calibre of my representative, but consider what the mental calibre of a House must be that did not break out into loud guffaws at such a passage. The line of argument is about as lucid as if one reasoned that because one can break a window with a stone it is no use buying a telescope. And it remains entirely a matter for speculation whether my member is arguing that a caucus *can* rig an election carried on under the Proportional Representation system or that it cannot. At the first blush it seems to read as if he intended the former. But be careful! Did he? Let me suggest that in that last sentence he really expresses the opinion that it cannot. It can be read either way. Electors under modern conditions are not going to obey the "orders" of even the "most drastic caucus"—whatever a "drastic caucus" may be. Why should they? In the Birmingham instance it was only a section of the majority, voting by wards, in an election on purely party lines, which "obeyed" in order to keep out the minority party candidate. I think myself that my member's mind waggled. Perhaps his real thoughts shone out through an argument not intended to betray them. What he did say as much as he said anything was that under Proportional Representation, elections are going to be very troublesome and difficult for party candidates. If that was his intention, then, after all, I forgive him much. I think that and more than that. I think that they are going to make party candidates who are merely party candidates impossible. That is exactly what



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we reformers are after. Then I shall get a representative more to my taste than Mr. Burdett Coutts.

But let me turn now to the views of other people's representatives.

Perhaps the most damning thing ever said against the present system, damning because of its empty absurdity, was uttered by Sir Thomas Whittaker. He was making the usual exaggerations of the supposed difficulties of the method. He said English people didn't like such "complications." They like a "straight fight between two men." Think of it! A straight fight! For more than a quarter-century I have been a voter, usually with votes in two or three constituencies, and never in all that long political life have I seen a single straight fight in an election, but only the dismalest sham fights it is possible to conceive. Thrice only in all that time have I cast a vote for a man whom I respected. On all other occasions, the election that mocked my citizenship was either an arranged walkover for one party or the other, or I had a choice between two unknown persons, mysteriously selected as candidates by obscure busy people with local interests in the constituency. Every intelligent person knows that this is the usual experience of a free and independent voter in England. The "fight" of an ordinary Parliamentary election in England is about as "straight" as the business of a thimblerrigger.

And consider just what these "complications" are of which the opponents of Proportional Representation chant so loudly. In the sham election of to-day, which the politicians claim gives them a mandate to

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muddle up our affairs, the voter puts an X against the name of the least detestable of the two candidates that are thrust upon him. Under the Proportional Representation method there will be a larger constituency, a larger list of candidates, and a larger number of people to be elected, and he will put 1 against the name of the man he most wants to be elected, 2 against his second choice, and if he likes he may indulge in marking a third, or even a further choice. He may, if he thinks fit, number off the whole list of candidates. That is all he will have to do. That is the stupendous intricacy of the method that flattens out the minds of Lord Harcourt and Sir Thomas Whittaker. And as for the working of it, if you must go into that, all that happens is that if your first choice gets more votes than he needs for his return, he takes only the fraction of your vote that he requires, and the rest of the vote goes on to your No. 2. If 2 isn't in need of all of it, the rest goes on to 3. And so on. That is the profound mathematical mystery, that is the riddle beyond the wit of Westminster, which overpowers these fine intelligences and sets them babbling of "senior wranglers." Each time there is a debate on this question in the House, member after member hostile to the proposal will play the ignorant fool and pretend to be confused himself, and will try to confuse others, by deliberately clumsy statements of these most elementary ideas. Surely if there were no other argument for a change of type in the House, these poor knitted brows, these public perspirations of the gentry who "cannot understand P. R.," should suffice.

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But let us be just; it is not all pretence; the inability of Mr. Austen Chamberlain to grasp the simple facts before him was undoubtedly genuine. He followed Mr. Burdett Coutts, in support of Mr. Burdett Coutts, with the most Christian disregard of the nasty things Mr. Burdett Coutts had seemed to be saying about the Birmingham caucus from which he sprang. He had a childish story to tell of how voters would not give their first votes to their real preferences, because they would assume he "would get in in any case"—God knows why. Of course on the assumption that the voter behaves like an idiot, anything is possible. And never apparently having heard of fractions, this great Birmingham leader was unable to understand that a voter who puts 1 against a candidate's name votes for that candidate anyhow. He could not imagine any feeling on the part of the voter that No. 1 was his man. A vote is a vote to this simple rather than lucid mind, a thing one and indivisible. Read this—

"Birmingham," he said, referring to a Schedule under consideration, "is to be cut into three constituencies of four members each. I am to have a constituency of 100,000 electors, I suppose. How many thousand inhabitants I do not know. *Every effort will be made to prevent any of those electors knowing—in fact, it would be impossible for any of them to know—whether they voted for me or not, or at any rate whether they effectively voted for me or not, or whether the vote which they wished to give to me was really diverted to somebody else.*"

Only in a house of habitually inattentive men could

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any one talk such nonsense without reproof, but I look in vain through Hansard's record of this debate for a single contemptuous reference to Mr. Chamberlain's obtuseness. And the rest of his speech was a lamentable account of the time and trouble he would have to spend upon his constituents if the new method came in. He was the perfect figure of the parochially important person in a state of defensive excitement. No doubt his speech appealed to many in the House.

Of course Lord Harcourt was quite right in saying that the character of the average House of Commons member will be changed by Proportional Representation. It will. It will make the election of obscure and unknown men, of carpetbag candidates who work a constituency as a hawker works a village, of local pomposities and village-pump "leaders" almost impossible. It will replace such candidates by better known and more widely known men. It will make the House of Commons so much the more a real gathering of the nation, so much the more a house of representative men. (Lord Harcourt's "faddists and mugwumps.") And it is perfectly true as Mr. Ramsay Macdonald (also an opponent) declares, that Proportional Representation means constituencies so big that it will be impossible for a poor man to cultivate and work them. That is unquestionable. But, mark another point, it will also make it useless, as Mr. Chamberlain has testified, for rich men to cultivate and work them. All this cultivating and working, all this going about and making things right with this little jobber here, that contractor there, all the squar-

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ing of small political clubs and organisations, all the subscription blackmail and charity bribery, that now makes a Parliamentary candidature so utterly rotten an influence upon public life, will be killed dead by Proportional Representation. You cannot job men into Parliament by Proportional Representation. Proportional Representation lets in the outsider. It lets in the common, unassigned voter who isn't in the local clique. That is the clew to nearly all this opposition of the politicians. It makes democracy possible for the first time in modern history. And that poor man of Mr. Ramsay Macdonald's imagination, instead of cadging about a constituency in order to start politician, will have to make good in some more useful way—as a leader of the workers in their practical affairs, for example—before people will hear of him and begin to believe in him.

The opposition to Proportional Representation of Mr. Sidney Webb and his little circle is a trifle more "scientific" in tone than these naïve objections of the common run of antagonist, but underlying it is the same passionate desire to keep politics a close game for the politician and to bar out the politically un-specialised man. There is more conceit and less jobbery behind the criticisms of this type of mind. It is an opposition based on the idea that the common man is a fool who does not know what is good for him. So he has to be stampeded. Politics, according to this school, is a sort of cattle-driving.

The Webbites do not deny the broad facts of the case. Our present electoral system, with our big modern constituencies of thousands of voters, leads

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to huge turnovers of political power with a relatively small shifting of public opinion. It makes a mock of public opinion by caricature, and Parliament becomes the distorting mirror of the nation. Under some loud false issue a few score of thousands of votes turn over, and in goes this party or that with a big sham majority. This the Webbites admit. But they applaud it. It gives us, they say, "a strong Government." Public opinion, the intelligent man outside the House, is ruled out of the game. He has no power of intervention at all. The artful little Fabian politicians rub their hands and say, "*Now* we can get to work with the wires! No one can stop us." And when the public complains of the results, there is always the repartee, "*You* elected them." But the Fabian psychology is the psychology of a very small group of pedants who believe that fair ends may be reached by foul means. It is much easier and more natural to serve foul ends by foul means. In practice it is not tricky benevolence but tricky bargaining among the interests that will secure control of the political wires. That is a bad enough state of affairs in ordinary times, but in times of tragic necessity like the present men will not be mocked in this way. Life is going to be very intense in the years ahead of us. If we go right on to another caricature Parliament, with perhaps half a hundred leading men in it and the rest hacks and nobodies, the baffled and discontented outsiders in the streets may presently be driven to rioting and the throwing of bombs. Unless, indeed, the insurrection of the outsiders takes a still graver form, and the Press, which has ceased entirely to be a Party Press

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in Great Britain, helps some adventurous Prime Minister to flout and set aside the lower House altogether. There is neither much moral nor much physical force behind the House of Commons at the present time.

The argument of the Fabian opponents to Proportional Representation is frankly that the strongest Government is got in a House of half a hundred or fewer leading men, with the rest of the Parliament driven sheep. But the whole mischief of the present system is that the obscure members of Parliament are not sheep; they are a crowd of little-minded, second-rate men just as greedy and eager and self-seeking as any of us. They vote straight indeed on all the main party questions, they obey their Whips like sheep then; but there is a great bulk of business in Parliament outside the main party questions, and obedience is not without its price. These are matters vitally affecting our railways and ships and communications generally, the food and health of the people, armaments, every sort of employment, the appointment of public servants, the every-day texture of all our lives. Then the nobody becomes somebody, the party hack gets busy, the rat is in the granary. . . .

In these recent debates in the House of Commons one can see every stock trick of the wire-puller in operation. Particularly we have the old dodge of the man who is "in theory quite in sympathy with Proportional Representation, but . . ." It is, he declares regretfully, too late. It will cause delay. Difficult to make arrangements. Later on perhaps. And so on. It is never too late for a vital issue. Upon the speedy adoption of Proportional Representation

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depends, as Mr. Balfour made plain in an admirable speech, whether the great occasions of the peace and after the peace are to be handled by a grand council of all that is best and most leaderlike in the nation, or whether they are to be left to a few leaders, apparently leading, but really profoundly swayed by the obscure crowd of politicians and jobbers behind them. Are the politicians to hamper and stifle us in this supreme crisis of our national destinies or are we British peoples to have a real control of our own affairs in this momentous time? Are men of light and purpose to have a voice in public affairs or not? Proportional Representation is supremely a test question. It is a question that no adverse decision in the House of Commons can stifle. There are too many people now who grasp its importance and significance. Every one who sets a proper value upon purity in public life and the vitality of democratic institutions will, I am convinced, vote and continue to vote across every other question against the antiquated, foul, and fraudulent electoral methods that have hitherto robbed democracy of three-quarters of its efficiency.

### § 3

In the preceding chapter I have dealt with the discussion of Proportional Representation in the British House of Commons in order to illustrate the intellectual squalor amidst which public affairs have to be handled at the present time, even in a country professedly "democratic." I have taken this one discussion as a sample to illustrate the present imperfection



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of our democratic instrument. All over the world, in every country, great multitudes of intelligent and serious people are now inspired by the idea of a new order of things in the world, of a world-wide establishment of peace and mutual aid between nation and nation and man and man. But, chiefly because of the elementary crudity of existing electoral methods, hardly anywhere at present, except at Washington, do these great ideas and this world-wide will find expression. Amidst the other politicians and statesmen of the world President Wilson towers up with an effect almost divine. But it is no ingratitude to him to say that he is not nearly so exceptional a being among educated men as he is among the official leaders of mankind. Everywhere now one may find something of the Wilson purpose and intelligence, but nearly everywhere it is silenced or muffled or made ineffective by the political advantage of privileged or of violent and adventurous inferior men. He is "one of us," but it is his good fortune to have got his head out of the sack that is about the heads of most of us. In the official world, in the world of rulers and representatives and "statesmen," he almost alone speaks for the modern intelligence.

This general stifling of the better intelligence of the world and its possible release to expression and power seems to me to be the fundamental issue underlying all the present troubles of mankind. We cannot get on while everywhere fools and vulgarians hold the levers that can kill, imprison, silence and starve men. We cannot get on with false government and we cannot get on with mob government; we must have right

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government. The intellectual people of the world have a duty of co-operation they have too long neglected. The modernisation of political institutions, the study of these institutions until we have worked out and achieved the very best and most efficient methods whereby the whole community of mankind may work together under the direction of its chosen intelligences, is the common duty of every one who has a brain for the service. And before everything else we have to realise this crudity and imperfection in what we call "democracy" at the present time. Democracy is still chiefly an aspiration, it is a spirit, it is an idea; for the most part its methods are still to seek. And still more is this "League of Free Nations" as yet but an aspiration. Let us not under-rate the task before us. Only the disinterested devotion of hundreds of thousands of active brains in school, in pulpit, in book and press and assembly can ever bring these redeeming conceptions down to the solid earth to rule.

All round the world there is this same obscuration of the real intelligence of men. In Germany, human good-will and every fine mind are subordinated to political forms that have for a mouthpiece a Chancellor with his brains manifestly addled by the theories of *Welt-Politik* and the Bismarckian tradition, and for a figurehead a mad Kaiser. Nevertheless there comes even from Germany muffled cries for a new age. A grinning figure like a bloodstained Punch is all that speaks for the best brains in Bulgaria. Yes. We Western allies know all that by heart; but, after all, the immediate question for each one of us is,

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*“What speaks for me?”* So far as official political forms go I myself am as ineffective as any right-thinking German or Bulgarian could possibly be. I am more ineffective than a Galician Pole or a Bohemian who votes for his nationalist representative. Politically I am a negligible item in the constituency of this Mr. Burdett Coutts into whose brain we have been peeping. Politically I am less than a waistcoat button on that quaint figure. And that is all I am—except that I revolt. I have written of it so far as if it were just a joke. But indeed bad and foolish political institutions cannot be a joke. Sooner or later they prove themselves to be tragedy. This war is that. It is yesterday’s lazy, tolerant, “sense of humour” wading out now into the lakes of blood it refused to foresee.

It is absurd to suppose that anywhere to-day the nationalisms, the suspicions and hatreds, the cants and policies, and dead phrases that sway men represent the current intelligence of mankind. They are merely the evidences of its disorganisation. Even now we *know* we could do far better. Give mankind but a generation or so of peace and right education and this world could mock at the poor imaginations that conceived a millennium. But we have to get intelligences together, we have to canalise thought before it can work and produce its due effects. To that end, I suppose, there has been a vast amount of mental activity among us political “negligibles.” For my own part I have thought of the idea of God as the banner of human unity and justice, and I have made some tentatives in that direction, but men, I perceive, have argued themselves mean and petty about

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religion. At the word "God" passions bristle. The word "God" does not unite men, it angers them. But I doubt if God cares greatly whether we call Him God or no. His service is the service of man. This double idea of the League of Free Nations, linked with the idea of democracy as universal justice, is free from the jealousy of the theologians and great enough for men to unite upon everywhere. I know how warily one must reckon with the spite of the priest, but surely these ideas may call upon the teachers of all the great world religions for their support. The world is full now of confused propaganda, propaganda of national ideas, of traditions of hate, of sentimental and degrading loyalties, of every sort of error that divides and tortures and slays mankind. All human institutions are made of propaganda, are sustained by propaganda and perish when it ceases; they must be continually explained and re-explained to the young and the negligent. And for this new world of democracy and the League of Free Nations to which all reasonable men are looking, there must needs be the greatest of all propagandas. For that cause every one must become a teacher and a missionary. "Persuade to it and make the idea of it and the necessity for it plain," that is the duty of every school-teacher, every tutor, every religious teacher, every writer, every lecturer, every parent, every trusted friend throughout the world. For it, too, every one must become a student, must go on with the task of making vague intentions into definite intentions, of analysing and destroying obstacles, of mastering the ten thousand difficulties of detail. . . .

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I am a man who looks now towards the end of life; fifty-one years have I scratched off from my calendar, another slips by, and I cannot tell how many more of the sparse remainder of possible years are really mine. I live in days of hardship and privation, when it seems more natural to feel ill than well; without holidays or rest or peace; friends and the sons of my friends have been killed; death seems to be feeling always now for those I most love; the newspapers that come in to my house tell mostly of blood and disaster, of drownings and slaughterings, of cruelties and base intrigues. Yet never have I been so sure that there is a divinity in man and that a great order of human life, a reign of justice and world-wide happiness, of plenty, power, hope, and gigantic creative effort, lies close at hand. Even now we have the science and the ability available for a universal welfare, though it is scattered about the world like a handful of money dropped by a child; even now there exists all the knowledge that is needed to make mankind universally free and human life sweet and noble. We need but the faith for it, and it is at hand; we need but the courage to lay our hands upon it and in a little space of years it can be ours.











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