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H.G. Wells, The Shape of Things to Come, annoté par Vernon Lee

Auteurs : Lee, Vernon

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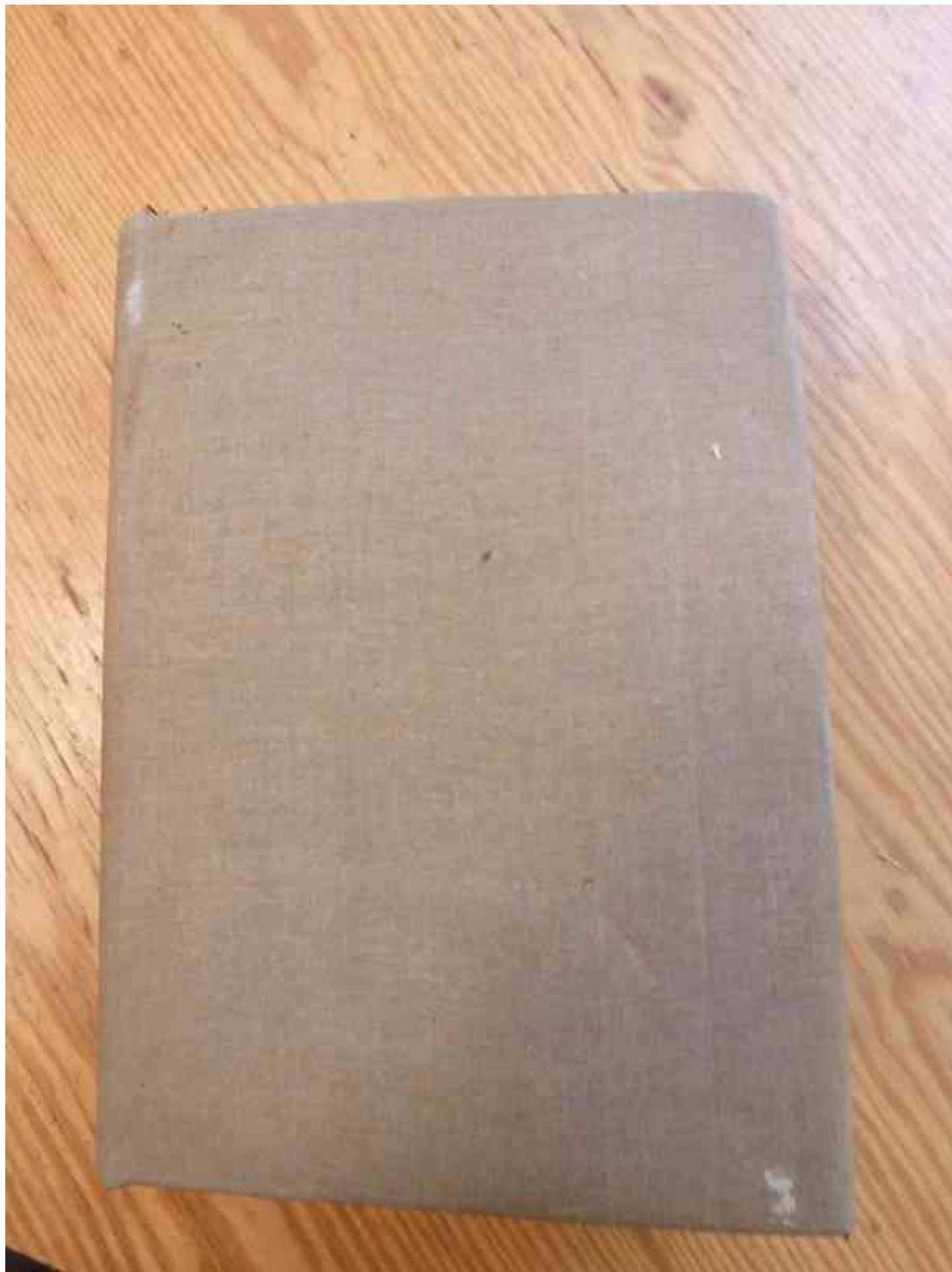
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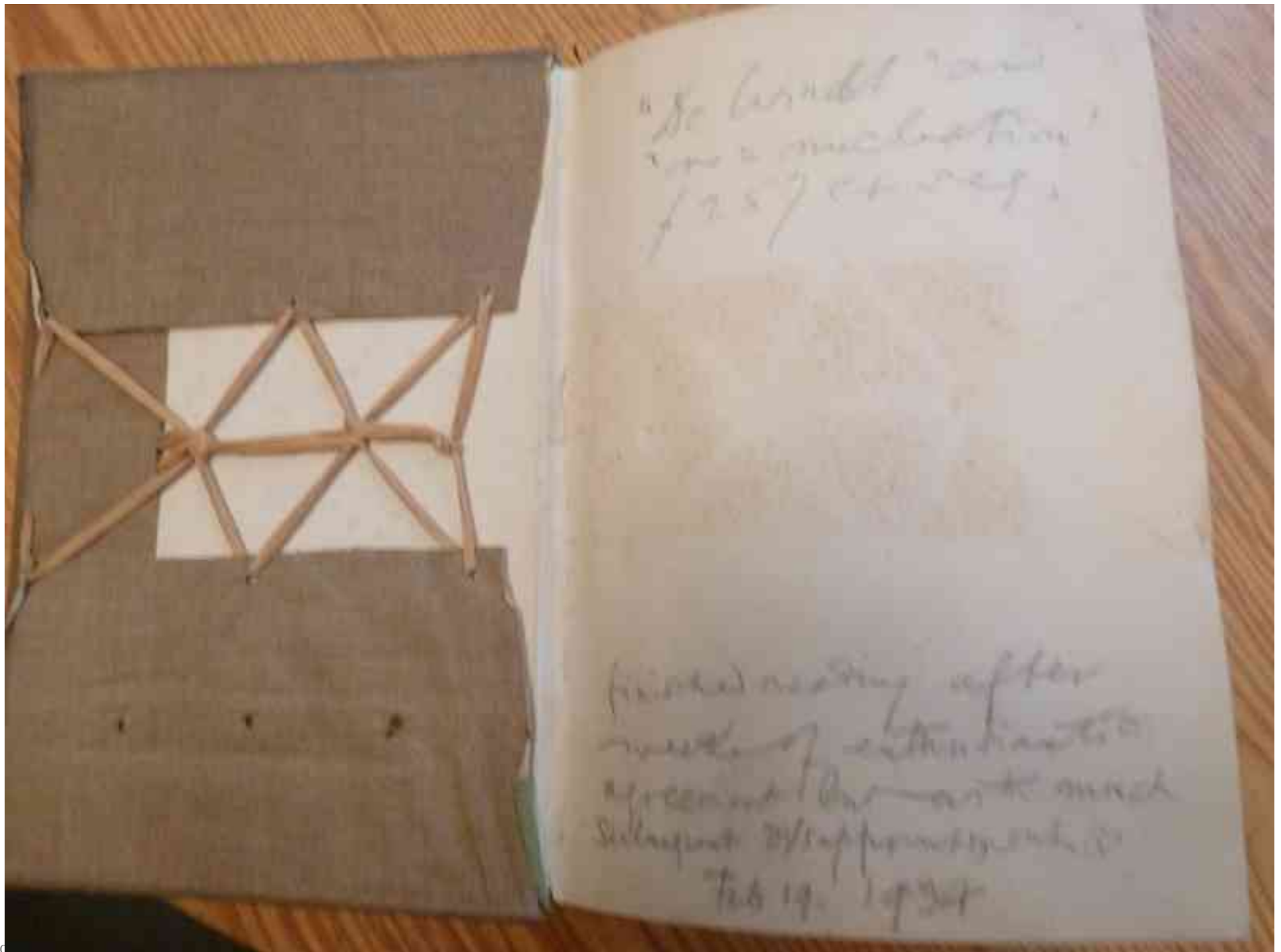
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"de windt" and
"n = nucleation"
/257 et seq.

finished reading after
weeks of enthusiastic
agreement but with much
subsequent disappointment B

Feb 19. 1934

#308 - The aesthetic producer is dominated by acceptance. He writes for response. The scientific worker aims at knowledge & is quite indifferent whether people like or dislike the knowledge he produces Literature & art are necessarily time-servers ... They reflect real moods or speculate upon possible moods in the Community ...

V.P. from Dr Helen Exton

THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

The Ultimate Revolution

Xmas

1933

by

H. G. WELLS

London :
HUTCHINSON & CO. (Publishers), LTD.
MCMXXXIII

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begin again on a hopeful basis would be to scale down all debts impartially, by a reduction of the amount of gold in the pound sterling and proportionally in the dollar and all other currencies based on gold. It seemed to me then an obvious necessity. It was, I recognize now, a crude idea—evidently I had not even got away from the idea of intrinsically valuable money—but none of us in those days had had the educational benefit of the monetary and credit convulsions that followed the Peace of Versailles. We were without experience, it wasn't popular to think about money, and at best we thought like precocious children. Seventeen years later this idea of appreciating gold is accepted as an obvious suggestion by quite a number of people. Then it was received merely as the amateurish comment of an ignorant writer upon what was still regarded as the mysterious business of "monetary experts". But it attracted the attention of Raven, who came along to talk over that and one or two other post-war possibilities I had started, and so he made my acquaintance.

Raven was as free from intellectual pompousness as William James; as candidly receptive to candid thinking. He could talk about his subject to an artist or a journalist; he would have talked to an errand boy if he thought he would get a fresh slant in that way. "Obvious" was the word he brought with him. "The thing, my dear fellow"—he called me my dear fellow in the first five minutes—"is so obvious that everybody will be too clever to consider it for a moment. Until it is belated. It is impossible to persuade anybody responsible that there is going to be a tremendous financial and monetary mix-up after this war. The victors will exact vindictive penalties and the losers of course will undertake to pay, but none of them realizes that money is going to do the most extraordinary things to them when they begin upon that. What they are going to do to each other is what occupies them, and what money is going to do to the whole lot of them is nobody's affair."

*Keynes
1919*

I can still see him as he said that in his high-pitched remonstrating voice. I will confess that for perhaps our first half-hour, until I was accustomed to his flavour, I did not like him. He was too full, too sure, too rapid and altogether too vivid for my slower Anglo-Saxon make-up. I did not like the evident preparation of his talk, nor the fact that he assisted it by the most extraordinary

THE STONE
gestures. He would not sit down; he imperious
peering at books and pictures while he talked in his cracked forced
voice, and waving those long lean hands of his about almost as if
he was swimming through his subject. I have compared him to
Maxton plus Shelley, rather older, but at the first outset I was
reminded of Svengali in Du Maurier's once popular *Tribby*. A
shaven Svengali. I felt he was *foreign*, and my instincts about
foreigners are as insular as my principles are cosmopolitan. It
always seemed to me a little irreconcilable that he was a Balliol
scholar, and had been one of the brightest ornaments of our
Foreign Office staff before he went to Geneva.

At bottom I suppose much of our essential English shyness
is an exaggerated wariness. We suspect the other fellow of our own
moral subtleties. We restrain ourselves often to the point of in-
sincerity. I am a rash man with a pen perhaps, but I am as cir-
cumpect and evasive as any other of my fellow countrymen when
it comes to social intercourse. I found something almost indelicate
in Raven's direct attack upon my ideas.

He wanted to talk about my ideas beyond question. But
at least equally he wanted to talk about his own. I had more than
a suspicion that he had, in fact, come to me in order to talk to
himself and hear how it sounded—against me as a sounding-
board.

He went on to discuss various other collateral suggestions
of mine, which were also, he said, of the "obvious" class. He offered
me a series of flattering insults. He said he found a certain mental
simplicity I possess very refreshing. He was being tormented by
the way things were going behind the fronts—and behind the
scenes. Everybody, he declared, was busy fighting the war or
planning to best our enemies or allies after the war; everybody
was being so damned subtle that they were forgetting every clear
realization they had ever had, and nobody, with the exception of a
few such onlookers and outsiders as myself, was putting in any time
in working out the broad inevitabilities of the process. With these
others it is always what trick X will play next, and what will be
Y's dodge, and whether the Z's will stand this, that, or the other
thing that is put upon them—if it is put in this, that, or the other
way to them. But, of course, none of this was essential. In the long
run only the essentials mattered.

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"In the long run," said I.

"In the long run. And not such a very long run either in these days."

I accepted that.

Gradually I warmed to his intellectual glow. What were the essentials? On that issue I was as keen as, if less outspoken than, he. "What is *really* happening now?", I asked.

"Yes," he agreed, in manifest delight. "What is *really* happening now? Damn them! Not one of them asks that question. That's where you are so good, that's where you are worth while. The others all think they know so well that they can afford to be shut and sly about it. They can't."

He called me then a Dealer in the Obvious, and he repeated that not very flattering phrase on various occasions when we met. "You have," he said, "defects that are almost gifts: a rapid but inexact memory for particulars, a quick grasp of proportions, and no patience with detail. You hurry on to wholes. You have to see things simply or you could not see them at all. Consequently you cannot endure any conventional elaborations, any side-shows, needless complexities, indirect methods, diplomacies, legal fictions and tactful half-statements. It's a joy to rattle on to you and feel there's no complications. It isn't, I think, that you have the power to take up all those things in your stride; I won't flatter you like that; no—but you have the intuitive sense to drop them in your stride. There's the secret of your simplicity; you come as near stupidity as wisdom can. How men of affairs must hate you—if and when they hear of you! They must think you an awful mug, you know—and yet you get there! Complications are their life. You try to get all these complications out of the way. You are a stripper, a damned impatient stripper. I would be a stripper too if I hadn't the sort of job I have to do. But it is really extraordinarily refreshing to spend these occasional hours stripping events in your company."

The reader must forgive my egotism in quoting these comments upon myself; they are necessary if my relations with Raven are to be made clear and if the spirit of this book is to be understood. I met him upon an unusual side that he could afford to reveal to very few other persons. That is my point. "If I generalized to other people as I do to you," he said, "if I talked as plainly, my

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reputation as an expert would go up—like a battleship hit in the magazine."

I was, in fact, an outlet for a definite mental exuberance of his which it had hitherto distressed him to suppress. In my presence he could throw off Balliol and the Foreign Office—or, later on, the Secretariat—and let himself go. He could become the European Cosmopolitan he was by nature and descent. I became, as it were, an imaginative boon companion for him, his disreputable friend, a sort of intelligent butt, his Watson. I got to like the relationship. I got used to his physical exoticism, his gestures. I sympathized more and more with his irritation and distress as the Conference at Versailles unfolded. My instinctive racial distrust faded before the glowing intensity of his intellectual curiosity. We found we supplemented each other. I had a ready unclouded imagination and he had knowledge. We would go on the speculative spree together.

Finally it may be he started out to take me on the greatest speculative spree of all. I am quite open to the idea that this book is nothing more than that. It is well to bear that in mind in weighing what I have next to tell about this anticipatory History of his.

Among other gifted and original friends who, at all too rare intervals, honour me by coming along for a gossip is Mr. J. W. Dunne, who years ago invented one of the earliest and most "different" of aeroplanes, and who has since done a very considerable amount of subtle thinking upon the relationship of time and space to consciousness. Dunne clings to the idea that in certain ways we may anticipate the future, and he has adduced a series of very remarkable observations indeed to support that in his well-known *Experiment with Time*. That book was published in 1927, and I found it so attractive and stimulating that I wrote about it in one or two articles that were syndicated very extensively throughout the world. It was so excitingly fresh.

And among others who saw my account of this *Experiment with Time*, and who got the book and read it and then wrote to me about it, was Raven. Usually his communications to me were the briefest of notes, saying he would be in London, telling me of a change of address, asking about my movements, and so forth; but this was quite a long letter. Experiences such as Dunne's, he said, were no novelty to him. He could add a lot to what was told

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in the book, and indeed he could *extend* the experience. The thing anticipated between sleeping and waking—Dunne's experiments dealt chiefly with the premonitions in the dozing moment between wakefulness and oblivion—need not be just small affairs of to-morrow or next week ; they could have a longer range. If, that is, you had the habit of long-range thinking. But these were days when scepticism had to present a hard face to greedy superstition, and it was one's public duty to refrain from rash statements about these flimsy intimations, difficult as they were to distinguish from fantasies—except in one's own mind. One might sacrifice a lot of influence if one betrayed too lively an interest in this sort of thing.

He wandered off into such sage generalizations and concluded abruptly. The letter had an effect of starting out to tell much more than it did. "Are you coming through Geneva on your way to Italy?" it wound up. "If so, we might talk."

When, however, I talked to him in Geneva—it was hot and we took a motor launch and had dinner at a pleasant restaurant on the lake shore beyond the waterspout—he would say scarcely a word about any glimpses he had had into futurity. He was dull and depressed that day. I never found out exactly what it was had robbed him of his customary exuberance. I asked him at last outright whether he hadn't something to tell me about seeing into the future. He seemed to have forgotten his letter altogether. "*What* is there to see in the future?" he asked, hunched in his chair. "I haven't the guts for it."

"These people here mean nothing," he vouchsafed. "Nothing at all."

Afterwards we fell talking about the speculative boom that was then at its height in America. He said it was essentially an inflation of credit by bulling securities. While it lasted there would be a kind of prosperity, but there was nothing behind it but faith. At any time someone might start a selling that would collapse the whole thing. "And once they start a collapse over there . . ."

He let a grimace and a gesture of his lean long hand finish his sentence.

"It's a card case . . ."

BOOK THE FIRST

TODAY AND TOMORROW : THE AGE OF FRUSTRATION DAWNS

- § 1. *A Chronological Note.*
- § 2. *How the Idea and Hope of the Modern State First Appeared.*
- § 3. *The Accumulating Disproportions of the Old Order.*
- § 4. *Early Attempts to understand and deal with these Disproportions: The Criticisms of Karl Marx and Henry George.*
- § 5. *The Way in which Competition and Monetary Inefficiency strained the Old Order.*
- § 6. *The Paradox of Over-Production and its Relation to War.*
- § 7. *The Great War of 1914-1918.*
- § 8. *The Impulse to Abolish War: The Episode of the Ford Peace Ship.*
- § 9. *The Direct Action of the Armament Industries in Maintaining War Stresses.*
- § 10. *Versailles, Seed Bed of Disasters.*
- § 11. *The Impulse to Abolish War: Why the League of Nations failed to Pacify the World.*
- § 12. *The Breakdown of "Finance" and Social Morale after Versailles.*
- § 13. *1933: "Progress" comes to a Halt.*

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rather than advanced towards, cosmopolitan socialism. Its theories, as we have shown, were hopelessly inadequate for its practical needs. The development of its ideology was greatly hampered by the conservative dogmatism imposed upon it by the incurable egotism of Marx. His intolerance, his innate bad manners, his vain insistence that he had produced a final doctrine to put beside Darwinism, cast a long shadow of impatience and obduracy upon the subsequent development of Communism. He was bitterly jealous of the Utopian school of socialism, and so, until Lenin faced the urgencies of power, the "orthodox" Marxist took a quite idiotic pride in a planless outlook. "Overthrow capitalism," he said, and what could happen but millennial bliss? Communism insisted indeed upon the necessity of economic socialization, but—until it attained power in Russia—without a glance at its technical difficulties. It produced its belated and ill-proportioned Five Year Plan only in 1928 C.E., eleven years after its accession to power. Until then it had no comprehensive working scheme whatever for the realization of socialism. Thrown back on experiment, it was forced to such desperately urgent manoeuvres, improvisations and changes of front, and defended by such tawdry and transparent apologetics, that the general world movement passed out of its ken.

The reader of this world history knows already how the moral and intellectual force of the Communist Party proved unequal, after the death of Lenin, to control or resist the dictatorship of that forcible, worthy, devoted and limited man, the Georgian, Stalin. The premature death of the creative and adaptable Lenin and the impatient suppression by Stalin of such intelligent, troublesome, but necessary types as Trotsky—a man who, but for lack of tact and essential dignity, might well have been Lenin's successor—crippled whatever hope there may have been that the Modern State would first emerge in Russia. Terrible are the faithful disciples of creative men. Lenin relaxed and reversed the dogmatism of Marx, Stalin made what he imagined to be Leninism into a new and stiffer dogmatism. Thereafter the political doctrine dominated and crippled the technician in a struggle that cried aloud for technical competence. Just as theological disputes impoverished and devastated Europe through the long centuries of Christendom, so the influence of the Communist Party has

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them, they now insisted plainly upon the need of a world-wide reconstruction, that is to say of a world revolution—though "revolution" was still a word they shirked. The way in which this increased definition of aim and will came about is characteristic of the changing quality of social life. It was not that one or two outstanding men suddenly became audible and conspicuous as leaders in this awakening. There were no leaders. It was a widespread movement in human thought.

In a second huge supplementary volume Maxwell Brown has assembled the substance of a precise study of fifty typical writers and speakers in Europe and America, and he gives a list of nearly two thousand who yield parallel results which remain filed for reference in the Encyclopædia Library. In each case, guarded, limited and tentative suggestions give place to more and more outspoken and lucid statements of the world situation. For ten years from 1917 onward these typical people are saying mildly what might be done; then suddenly they begin to say more and more plainly what had to be done. It was a general movement of opinion affecting all the more intelligent people in the world. Whatever interchange of ideas occurred is now untraceable. The development was too rapid to establish priorities. Opinion appears now to have moved in line abreast.

The conclusions upon which all these intelligent people were converging may be briefly stated. They had arrived at the realization that human society had become one indivisible economic system with novel and enormous potentialities of well-being. By 1931 C.E. this conception becomes visible even in the obstinately intellectualist mind of France—for example, in the parting speech to America of an obscure and transitory French Prime Minister, Laval, who crossed the Atlantic on some now undiscoverable mission in that year; and we find it promptly echoed by such prominent loud speakers as President Hoover of America and Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, the British Prime Minister.

That idea at any rate had already become sufficiently popular for the politicians to render it lip service. But it was still only the intelligent minority who went on to the logical consequences of its realization; that is to say, the necessity of disavowing the sovereignty of contemporary governments, of setting up authoritative central controls to supplement or supersede them, and of

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For the first time in history the mind of man was really attempting to control his destiny. Hitherto usage, tradition, external necessity, accident, had furnished the unchallenged framework within which he had devised his explanations and his consolations. He had resisted any clear knowledge of his own nature and romanced about his destiny. He had evaded responsibility for his stresses and disasters by putting his faith in over-ruling gods; he had clung to arbitrary rules of conduct against all reason, and he had persecuted and sought to destroy every sceptical thinker, every heretical experimentalist in conduct, who disturbed the equanimity of his submission. He preferred familiar miseries to the mental torture of novel effort. Now through a complex of enlightening accidents, and especially through the jumbling together of a hundred different and discordant cultures in one world-wide mutuality of discredit and destruction, the vision of reality was forcing itself upon him. And with an ever-widening sweep of change even his mean submissiveness gave him no sense of security any more. Effort was before him and the goad behind. He was compelled to ask in spite of himself what indeed he was, and with that, in spite of his deep conservatism, he began to realize all that he might be.

When now we look back to the scattered and diverse individuals who first give expression to this idea of the modern World-State which was dawning upon the human intelligence, when we appraise their first general efforts towards its realization, we need, before we can do them anything like justice, to attempt some measure of the ignorances, prejudices and other inertias, the habits of concession and association, the herd love and the herd fear, with which they had to struggle not only in the society in which they found themselves, but within themselves. It is not a conflict of light and darkness we have to describe; it is the struggle of the purblind among the blind. We have to realize that for all that they were haunted by a vision of the civilized world of to-day, they still belonged not to our age but to their own. The thing imagined in their minds was something quite distinct from their present reality. Maxwell Brown has devoted several chapters, and a third great supplementary volume, to a special selection of early Modern State Prophets who followed public careers. He showed conclusively that in the third and fourth decades of the twentieth

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great areas trade moved with but small impediments, and the British still hoped to see their cosmopolitan conception of Free Trade accepted by the whole world. The International Institute of Agriculture in Rome was developing an annual census of staple production and reaching out towards a world control of commodity transport. Considerable movements and readjustments of population were going on, unimpeded by any government interference. Swarms of Russian Poles, for instance, drifted into Eastern Germany for the harvest work and returned; hundreds of thousands of Italians went to work in the United States for a few years and then came back with their earnings to their native villages. An ordinary traveller might go all over the more settled parts of the earth and never be asked for a passport unless he wanted to obtain a registered letter at a post office or otherwise prove his identity.

A number of minor but significant federal services had also come into existence and had a sound legal standing throughout the world, the Postal Union for example. Before 1914 C.E. a written document was delivered into the hands of the addressee at almost every point upon the planet, almost as surely as, if less swiftly than, it is to-day. (The Historical Documents Board has recently reprinted a small book, *International Government*, prepared for the little old Fabian Society during the Great War period by L. S. Woolf, which gives a summary of such arrangements. He lists twenty-three important world unions dealing at that time with trade, industry, finance, communications, health, science, art, literature, drugs, brothels, criminals, emigration and immigration and minor political affairs.) These world-wide co-operations seemed—more particularly to the English-speaking peoples—to presage a direct and comparatively smooth transition from the political patchwork of the nineteenth century, as the divisions of the patchwork grew insensibly fainter, to a stable confederation of mankind. The idea of a coming World-State was quite familiar at the time—one finds it, for instance, as early as Lord Tennyson's *Locksley Hall* (published in 1842); but there was no effort whatever to achieve it, and indeed no sense of the need of such effort. The World-State was expected to come about automatically by the inherent forces in things.

That belief in some underlying benevolence in uncontrolled events was

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error, of the time. It affected every school of thought. In exactly the same fashion the followers of Marx (before the invigorating advent of Lenin and the Bolshevist reconstruction of Communism) regarded their dream of World Communism as inevitable, and the disciples of Herbert Spencer found a benevolent Providence in "free competition". "Trust Evolution," said the extreme Socialist and the extreme Individualist, as piously as the Christians put their trust in God. It was the Bolshevik movement in the twentieth century which put will into Communism. The thought of the nineteenth-century revolutionary and reactionary alike was saturated with that confident irresponsible laziness. As Professor K. Chandra Sen has remarked, hope in the Victorian period was not a stimulant but an opiate.

We who live in a disciplined order, the chastened victors of a hard-fought battle, understand how superficial and unsubstantial were all those hopeful appearances. The great processes of mechanical invention, which have been described in our general account of the release of experimental science from deductive intellectualism, were increasing the power and range of every operating material force quite irrespective of its fitness or unfitness for the new occasions of mankind. With an equal impartiality they were bringing world-wide understanding and world-wide massacre into the range of human possibility.

It was through no fault of these inventors and investigators that the new opportunities they created were misused. That was outside their range. They had as yet no common culture of their own. Nor, since each worked in his own field, were they responsible for the fragmentary irregularity of their discoveries. Biological and especially social invention were lagging far behind the practical advances of the exacter, simpler sciences. Their application was more difficult; the matters they affected were so much more deeply embedded in ordinary use and wont, variation was more intimate, novelties could not be inserted with the same freedom. It was easy to supplant the coach and horses on the macadamized road by the steam-engine or the railway, because it was not necessary to do anything to the road or the coach and horses to bring about the change. They were just left alone to run themselves out as the railroad (and later the automobile on the rubber-glass track) superseded them. But men cannot set up new social institutions,

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new social and political and industrial relationships, side by side with the old in that fashion. It must be an altogether tougher and slower job. It is a question not of ousting but of reconstruction. The old must be converted into the new without ceasing for a moment to be a going concern. The over-running of the biologically old by the mechanically new, due to these differences in timing, was inevitable, and it reached its maximum in the twentieth century.

A pathological analogy may be useful here. In the past, before the correlation of development in living organisms began to be studied, people used to suffer helplessly and often very dreadfully from all sorts of irregularities of growth in their bodies. The medical services of the time, such as they were, were quite unable to control them. One of these, due to what is called the Xurmi ratios in the blood, was a great overproduction of bone, either locally or generally. The sufferer gradually underwent distortion into a clumsy caricature of his former self; his features became coarse and massive, his skull bones underwent a monstrous expansion; the proportions of his limbs altered, and the leverage of his muscles went askew. He was made to look grotesque; he was crippled and at last killed. Something strictly parallel happened to human society in the hundred years before the Great War. Under the stimulus of mechanical invention and experimental physics it achieved, to pursue our metaphor, a hypertrophy of bone, muscle and stomach, without any corresponding enlargement of its nervous controls.

Long before the Great War this progressive disproportion had been dimly recognized by many observers. The favourite formula was to declare that "spiritual"—for the naïve primordial opposition of spirit and matter was still accepted in those days—had not kept pace with "material" advance. This was usually said with an air of moral superiority to the world at large. Mostly there was a vague implication that if these other people would only refrain from using modern inventions so briskly, or go to church more, or marry earlier and artlessly, or read a more "spiritual" type of literature, or refrain from mixed bathing, or work harder and accept lower wages, or be more respectful and obedient to constituted authority, all might yet be well. Beyond this sort of thing there was little recognition of the great and increasing disharmonies of the social corpus until after the Great War.

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The young reader will ask, "But where was the Central Observation Bureau? Where was the professorial and student body which should have been recording these irregularities and producing plans for adjustment?"

There was no Central Observation Bureau. That did not exist for another century. That complex organization of discussion, calculation, criticism and forecast was undreamt of. Those cities of thought, full of serene activities, came into existence only after the organization of the Record and Library Network under the Air Dictatorship between 2010 and 2030. Even the mother thought-city, the World Encyclopædia Establishment, was not founded until 2012. In the early twentieth century there was still no adequate estimate of economic forces and their social reactions. There were only a few score professors and amateurs of these fundamentally important studies scattered throughout the earth. They were scattered in every sense; even their communications were unsystematic. They had no powers of enquiry, no adequate statistics, little prestige; few people heeded what they thought or said.

Maybe they deserved nothing better. They bickered stupidly with and discredited each other. They ignored or wilfully misunderstood each other. It is impossible to read such social and economic literature as the period produced without realizing the extraordinary backwardness of that side of the world's intellectual life. It is difficult to believe nowadays that the writers of these publications, at once tediously copious and incredibly jejune, were living at the same time as the lively multitude of workers in the experimental sciences who were daily adding to and reshaping knowledge to achieve fresh practical triumphs. From 1812 C.E., when public gas-lighting was first organized, to the outbreak of the Great War, while the world was being made over anew by gas, by steam, by oil, and then by the swift headlong development of electrical science, while the last *terra incognita* were being explored and mapped, while a multitude of thousands of new substances were coming into use, while epidemic diseases were being restrained and driven back, while the death rate was being halved, and the average duration of life increased by a score of years, the social and political sciences remained

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practically stagnant and unserviceable. Throughout that century of material achievement there is no single instance of the successful application of a social, economic or educational generalization.

Even the attempt to bring social institutions within the range of genuine scientific enquiry did not begin until after the Great War. It is on record that a chair of "Social Biology" was set up in the London School of Economics and Political Science in 1930, and there are some allusions to a chair of Social Psychology in the same college. But here our sources are obscure. In the great London landslip of 1968, due to the weight of new buildings piled up on the northern slope, when the bed of the Thames buckled up and the Second Fire of London ensued, a vast mass of material perished, including the irreplaceable treasures of the British Museum, and among other grave, if lesser, losses were all the records of this interesting institution in Clare Market. But certainly that chair of Social Biology was the first of its kind in the European world.

Because of this belatedness of the social sciences, the progressive dislocation of the refined if socially limited and precarious civilization of the more advanced of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century sovereign states went on without any effectual contemporary understanding of what was straining it to pieces. The Europeans and the Americans of the early twentieth century apprehended the social and political forces that ravaged their lives hardly more clearly than the citizens of the Roman Empire during its collapse. Plenty and the appearance of security *happened*; then débâcle *happened*. There was no analysis of operating causes. For years even quite bold and advanced thinkers were chased by events. They did not grasp what was occurring at the time. They only realized what had really occurred long afterwards. And so they never foresaw. There was no foresight, and therefore still less could there be any understanding control.

§4. *Early Attempts to Understand and Deal with these Disproportions. The Criticisms of Karl Marx and Henry George*

There are, however, one or two exceptions to this general absence of diagnosis in the affairs of the nineteenth and twentieth century of the Christian Era which even the student of general history cannot ignore. Prominent among them is the analysis

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influx of gold and inventions, this profit-seeking system, linked to the metallic monetary system, sufficed to sustain a very great expansion and enlargement of human life, and it was hard to convince the mass of men, and still harder to convince the prosperous manufacturers, traders, miners, cultivators and financiers who dominated public affairs, that this was not a permanent system and that the world already needed very essential modifications of its economic methods. A considerable measure of breakdown, a phase of dismay, fear and distress, was necessary before they could be disillusioned.

The nineteenth century had for its watchwords "individual enterprise and free competition". But the natural end of all competition is the triumph of one competitor. It was in America that the phenomena of Big Business first appeared and demonstrated the force of this truism; at a score of points triumphant organizations capable of crushing out new competitors and crippling and restraining new initiatives that threatened their predominance appeared. In Europe there was little governmental resistance to industrial alliances and concentrations in restraint of competition, and they speedily developed upon a scale that transcended political frontiers, but in the United States of America there was a genuine effort to prevent enterprises developing on a monopolistic scale. The conspicuous leader of this preventive effort was the first President Roosevelt (1858-1919) and its chief fruit the Sherman Anti-Trust Act (1890), which proved a rich mine for lawyers in the subsequent decades.

These great consolidations, which closed the phase of free competition, were so far effective in controlling trade and arresting new developments that Hilary Hooker, in his *Studies in Business Coagulation During the First Period of General Prosperity*, is able to cite rather more than two thousand instances, ranging from radium and new fruits and foodstuffs to gramophones, automobiles, reconstructed households, artificial moonlight for the roadways by the countryside, and comfortable and economical railway plant, in which ample supplies or beneficial improvements were successfully kept off the market in the interests of established profit-making systems. After 1900 C.E. again there was a world-wide cessation of daily newspaper initiative and a consequent systole of free speech. Distribution, paper supply and news services had

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both the employed and possessing classes, together with the stimulating effect of a steady influx of gold, masked and retarded for half a century this squeezing-out of an increasing fraction of the species from its general economic life. There were nevertheless fluctuations, "cycles of trade" as they were called, when the clogging machinery threatened to stall and was then relieved and went on again. But by the opening of the twentieth century the fact that the method of running human affairs as an open competition for profit was in its nature a terminating method was forcing itself upon the attention even of those who profited most by it and had the most excuse for disregarding it, and who, as a class, knew nothing of the Marxian analysis.

We know now that the primary task of world administration is to arrest this squeezing-out of human beings from active economic life by the continual extension of new collective enterprises, but such ideas had still to be broached at that time. The common folk, wiser in their instincts than the political economists in their intellectualism, were disposed to approve of waste and extravagance because money was "circulated" and workers "found employment". And the reader will not be able to understand the world-wide tolerance of growing armaments and war preparations during this period unless he realizes the immediate need inherent in the system for unremunerative public expenditure. Somewhere the energy economized had to come out. The world of private finance would not tolerate great rehousing, great educational and socially constructive enterprises on the part of the relatively feeble governments of the time. All that had to be reserved for the profit accumulator. And so the ever-increasing productivity of the race found its vent in its ancient traditions of warfare, which admitted the withdrawal of a large proportion of the male population from employment for a year or so and secreted that vast accumulation of forts, battleships, guns, submarines, explosives, barracks and the like which still amazes us. Without this cancer growth of armies and navies the paradox of over-production latent in competitive private enterprise would probably have revealed itself in an overwhelming mass of unemployment before even the end of the nineteenth century. A social revolution might have occurred then.

Militarism, however, alleviated these revolutionary stresses by providing vast profit-yielding channels of waste. And it also

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strengthened the forces of social repression. The means of destruction accumulated on a scale that wellnigh kept pace with the increase in the potential wealth of mankind. The progressive enslavement of the race to military tyranny was an inseparable aspect, therefore, of free competition for profits. The latter system conditioned and produced the former. It needed the former so as to have ballast to throw out to destruction and death whenever it began to sink. The militarist phase of the early twentieth century and the paradox of over-production are correlated facets of the same reality, the reality of the planless hypertrophy of the social body.

It is interesting to note how this morbid accumulation of energy in belligerence and its failure to find vent in other directions became more and more evident in the physiognomy of the world as the twentieth century progressed. The gatherings of mankind became blotched with uniforms. Those admirable albums of coloured pictures, *Historical Scenes in a Hundred Volumes*, which are now placed in all our schools and show-places and supplied freely to any home in which there are children, display very interestingly the advent, predominance and disappearance of military preoccupations in the everyday life of our ancestors. These pictures are all either reproductions of actual paintings, engravings or photographs, or, in the case of the earlier volumes, they are elaborate reconditionings to the more realistic methods of our time of such illustrations as were available. Military operations have always attracted the picture-maker at all times, and there are plentiful pictures of battles from every age, from the little cricket-field battle of the Middle Ages to the hundred-mile fights of the last Great War, but our interest here is not with battles but with the general facies of social life. Even in the war-torn seventeenth century the general stream of life went on without any manifest soldiering. War was a special occupation. While the battles of the English Civil War, which set up the first English Republic (1649-1660), were in progress, we have evidence that hunting and hawking parties were busy almost within sound of the guns. The novels of Jane Austen (England, 1775-1817) pursue their even way without the faintest echo of the land and sea campaigns in progress. Goethe in Weimar (the German literary "Great Man" during the "Great Man" period of literary thought in Europe)

and the Sentimental Journey
began when

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France could not be bothered by requests for supplies of wood and food for the German troops before the battle of Jena, and was very pleased to meet his "enemy alien" Napoleon socially during that campaign.

We rarely see the monarchs of the eighteenth century depicted in military guise; the fashion was for robes and majesty rather than for the spurs and feathers of the Bantam warrior-king. It was the unprecedented vehemence of the Napoleonic adventure that splashed the social life of Europe with uniforms, infected feminine fashions, and even set plump princess colonels, frogged with gold lace and clutching bare sabres, joggling unsteadily at the heads of regiments. There was a brief return towards civilian attire with the accession of the "domesticated monarchs", Louis Philippe in France and Victoria in Great Britain; they marked a transient reaction from Napoleonic fashions; but from the middle of the nineteenth century onward the prestige of the soldier resumed its advance and the military uniform became increasingly pervasive. Flags became more abundant in the towns and "flag-days" dotted the calendar. There was never a crowd pictured in Europe after 1870 without a soldier or so.

The Great War greatly intensified the military element in the street population, not only in Europe but America. Various corps of feminine auxiliaries were enrolled during that time and paraded the world thereafter in appetizing soldierly outfits. In the United States, except at Washington, or when there was a parade of civil war veterans, a soldier in uniform had been hitherto the rarest of birds. He would have felt strange and uncomfortable. He would have offended the susceptibilities of a consciously liberated people. The Great War changed all that. When Germany was disarmed after the war, a Nazi movement and a Reichsbanner movement supplied the needed colour until a German's freedom to get into properly recognized livery was restored. The pattern of half-military, half-civilian organizations in uniform had already been spread about the world between the South African War (1899-1901) and the Great War by the Boy Scout movement.

Of the Nazi movement, the Italian Fascisti and the Polish Brotherhood at least there will be more to tell later. The black and brown shirts may be cited here as instances of the visible breaking-down of the boundaries between military and civil life that went on during and after the World War.

*8 lines from H. S. W. himself in this
same book* *declaims against* *Sabotage!*
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Hitherto war had been a marginal business, fought upon "fronts", and the ordinary citizen had lived in comparative security behind the front, but the bombing, gas-diffusing aeroplane, and later the long-range air torpedo, changed all that. The extended use of propaganda as a weapon, and the increasing danger of social mutiny under war stress, had also its share in making the entire surface of a belligerent country a war area and abolishing any vestiges of civil liberty, first during actual warfare and then in view of warfare. The desirability of getting everyone under orders, under oath, and subject to prompt disciplinary measures, became more and more manifest to governments.

So within a century the appearance of the human crowd changed over from a varied assembly of incoordinated free individuals to a medley of uniforms. Everybody's dress at last indicated function, obligation and preparedness. The militarization of the European multitude reached a maximum during the Polish wars. About 1942 gas masks, either actually worn or hanging from the neck, were common for a time, and so, too, were the small sheath-knives which were to be used in disposing of fallen aviators who might still be alive. Patella metal hats and metal epaulettes to protect the head and body against a rain of poisoned needles also appeared. Some civilians became far more formidable-looking than any soldiers.

The military authorities of those days were much perplexed by the problem of giving the general population protective apparatus and light weapons that would be effective against the military enemy and yet useless for the purposes of insurrection. For in spite of the most strenuous suppression of agitation in those troubled decades, the possible revolt of humanity against warfare, the possibility of complete "loss of morale", however illogical and incoherent, was felt by the professional soldiers as an increasing menace.

Along the streets of most of the old-world cities there presently appeared the characteristic yellow (or in France blue, and in America red-and-white-striped) air-raid pillars with their glass faces, only to be broken into and used after an official alarm, which contained respirators and first-aid sets for possible gas victims. It is also to the same period we have to ascribe the multiplication of vivid and abundant

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19 so as to throw a minimum of light upward and pointing the way to gas chambers and hospitals. It was a "gas-minded" world in the forties. The practical suppression of other vivid and illuminated street signs was a natural corollary to this preoccupation.

In the first half of the twentieth century the cities blazed with advertisement. It was the period of maximum advertisement. The pictures of the Great White Way of New York, Piccadilly Circus, the Grands Boulevards of Paris and so forth, with their polychromatic visual clamour, still strike us as distractingly picturesque. There was much flood-lighting after 1928. Then progressively the lights were turned down again and that visual clamour died away. As the air threat returned, "lights out" became at last imperative, except for the vivid furtive indications of refuge and first aid we have just mentioned.

War fear spread very rapidly after 1930. Darkness recaptured the nocturnal town. "Night-life" became stealthy and obscure, with an increasing taint of criminality. All civil hospitals and all private doctors had disappeared from the world by 1945, and the health services were only legally demilitarized again after 2010. The amalgamation of the military and civil hospital and medical services began in France as early as 1933. By 1945 every doctor in the Old World was, in theory at least, on a quasi-military footing; he wore a distinctive uniform, was subject to stringent discipline, and his premises, as well as the hospitals, bore the characteristic black and yellow chequerwork. All nurses were similarly enrolled. Finally the general public was enrolled for health treatment as common patients under oath. By 1948 in such towns as had sufficiently survived the general social demoralization to enforce such regulations, it was impossible to take a chill or break an ankle without at once falling into the category of patients and being numbered, put into a black-and-yellow uniform and marched or carried off for treatment. Theoretically this system of treatment was universal. In practice neither the uniforms nor the doctors were available. For regulation and militarization were going on in that period against an immense constant resistance.

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preceded the militarization of scenery. Even barracks and such-like army buildings were erected by army architects as a simple vulgarization of ordinary housing patterns, a mere stiffening up, so to speak, of the common "jerry-built" house. There still survive for our astonishment pictures of Victorian Military Gothic and Victorian Military Tudor, produced under the British War Office. They display homes fit for drill-sergeants. The military mind had to be roused by the experiences of the Polish conflict to the profound reconstruction of the ordinary town that had become necessary if it was still to be taken seriously. Before then, fortification scarcely affected the urban scene at all, even in the case of a fortified town. Previously a fortress had been just an ordinary civil town surrounded at distances of from three to fifty miles by forts, strong points, trench systems and the like. Now it was realized, first in Berlin, and then in Danzig, Warsaw, Paris and Turin, and after that by the whole world, that air warfare demanded not merely fortification round a town, but, much more imperatively, fortification *over* a town. The world, which had been far too stupid to realize in 1930 that the direct way out of its economic difficulties lay in the modernization and rebuilding of its houses, set itself, in a state of war panic after 1942, to as complete a revision of its architecture in the face of bombs and gas as its deepening impoverishment permitted. What it would not do for prosperity, it attempted belatedly out of fear.

The first most obvious undertaking was the construction of those immense usually ill-built concrete cavern systems for refuge, whose vestiges are still to be visited by the curious tourist at Paris and Berlin (the London ones have all fallen in, the collapse beginning after the great landslip and fire), and close upon this came the cessation of tall building and the concentration of design upon the vast (and often dangerous) carapace roof and its gigantic supporting pillars and foundation rafts. Only the ever-deepening poverty, the increasing industrial disorganization and the transitoriness of that last war-phase saved all the towns in the world from being thrust completely under such squat massive coverings.

So strong were the influences of that time that even up to 2020 the tendency of architectural design was to crouch. Hardly any mass of buildings erected between 1945 and the end of the century lifts up its head and looks the world in the face. That

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period has been called, not unjustly, Second Egyptian. And this was so in spite of the multiplying opportunities for grace and lightness afforded by the supersession of steel-frame buildings by the strong and flexible neo-concrete materials that were already available. How timidly they were used! We grovel no longer, because we are ceasing to fear each other. The soaring, ever improving homes in which we live to-day would have sent our great-grandfathers scurrying to their cellars in an ecstasy of terror.

§ 7. *The Great War of 1914-18*

There is a monstrous tedious accumulation of records concerned with the World War. The Catalogue of Historical Material stored at Atacama gives a list of 2,362,705 books and gross files, up to date, and of these over 182,000 deal exclusively or largely with the causation of the war. Nothing could bring home to the student the profound difference in mental equipment between ourselves and the men and women of that period than a visit to the long silent galleries of that great library of dead disputes and almost completely forgotten records. He will see hardly a visitor along the vistas of that shining framework of shelves; a quiet cleaner or duster perhaps will be visible, scrutinizing the condition of the material, or a young revisionist student patiently checking some current summary—or a black cat. For the rest, above, below, to right and left is a clean and luminous stillness; papers at rest.

In one large section of this sere honeycomb the student will find the records of the "war guilt controversy" that agitated the world for decades after the Peace of Versailles. Let him draw out a seat anywhere and take down a file or so at hazard and turn over its pages. He will be able to read almost all of it nowadays, whatever the original language, because practically all the collection has now been interleaved with translations into Basic English. And it will seem to him that he is reading the outpourings of lunatics, so completely have the universal obsessions of that time been exorcized since.

Had "Germany" planned the war? Was "France" the guilty party? Had "Britain" much to answer for? With difficulty will the student let down his mind into the fantastic world of

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at least none of them seemed to have had the vigour and imagination to attempt a control. They were driven by the economic necessity we have explained in the previous section. They had to arm preposterously. They had to threaten. They had to go through with the business.

These forces account for the outbreak and universality of the Great War, but they do not account for its peculiar frightfulness. For that it is necessary to realize that, though governments expanded only against an enormous pressure of mutual restraint, no limitations had been set to the hypertrophy of financial and industrial enterprises. These last were under the sway of a relentless and unrestrained progress: they expanded, invented, urged and sold; they brought weapons of a strange and terrible effectiveness to the settlement of what were in comparison small and antiquated disputes. To that hypertrophy of the armourer we will return presently, because the Great War was really only a first revelation of this peculiar disproportion between economics and politics, and the evil still went on in an exaggerated form after the formal conclusion of the struggle at the Peace of Versailles (1919). But let us first tell what needs to be known of the details of the Great War.

How little that is now! There is a vast literature both of fiction based on experience and of personal reminiscence about it, and some of it is admirably written; almost any of it may be read for interest and edification, and hardly any of it need be read with scholarly precision. The picture of the outbreak of the war still touches us. There was a curious unconsciousness of the grossness of the menace in events, even on the part of myriads doomed to suffer and die in a few months' time. Many of the stories told begin with a holiday party or a country-house gathering or some such bright setting. The weather that August (1914) was exceptionally fine.

The details of the struggle itself were as horrible and distressing as they were inconsequent, and there is no need whatever for anyone but the specialist to master their sequence in detail. The old-fashioned history, with its lists of names, dates, battles and so on, was designed rather to supply easily marked material for examinations than to give any sense of the historical process. Examinations have long passed out of educational practice; they

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special airships whose signals guided the destroyers to their quarry. Ingenious listening contrivances were invented to locate them. They were shot at on the surface, rammed, and pursued by "depth-charges" which could strain their plates and disable them even when exploded scores of metres away.

Such, briefly, were the conditions of submarine warfare in the years 1917-18. And yet to the very end of the war men could be found to carry it on, to destroy and drown and be in their turn hunted and destroyed. The building and launching of submersibles never ceased. Men went down in them to chilly confinement, to the perpetual anxiety of mine or ram, to the quivering menace of the distant depth-charge, to the reasonable probability of a frightful death beyond all human aid. Few submarines returned to harbour ten times; many went out new upon their first voyage never to return. Two hundred of them were lost by the Germans alone; each loss a tragedy of anguish and dismay in the deeps. Towards the end it was claimed by their antagonists that the crews were losing morale. Once or twice an undamaged submarine that had been cornered surrendered, and the new commanders showed a growing tendency to return to port for minor repairs or other slight pretexts. But on the whole, such is the unimaginative heroic submissiveness of our species, the service was sustained. The Germans supplied most of the flesh for this particular altar; willing and disciplined, their youngsters saluted and carried their kit down the ladder into this gently swaying clumsy murder-mechanism which was destined to become their coffin.

Their obedience brings us to one of the most fundamental lessons that the Great War has for us: the extreme slowness with which the realization of even the most obvious new conditions pierces through the swathings of habitual acceptance. Millions of human beings went open-eyed to servitude, bullying, hardship, suffering and slaughter without a murmur, with a sort of fatalistic pride. In obedience to the dictates of the blindest prejudices and the most fatuous loyalties they did their utmost to kill men against whom they had no conceivable grievance, and they were in their turn butchered gallantly, fighting to the last. The *War Pictures* volumes dismay our imaginations by portraying a series of wholesale butcheries, many of them on a stupendous scale, of men who died facing their enemies. After the great slaughter of the French

war-nightmare. Mutinies broke out in sixteen separate French army corps, 113 regiments were involved, divisions elected soldiers' councils and whole regiments set out for Paris to demand a reasonable wind-up of the struggle. The one last hope of the despairing soldiers, said Pierre Laval, had been Stockholm. That disappointment had made life unbearable. But the storm abated with the entry of the United States of America into the war, and the powers in control of the Western World were still able to pursue their dreadful obsessions for another year.

War Pictures for Posterity by Pen, Pencil and Camera devotes a whole volume (xxi) to the tragedy of a special Russian infantry corps in France. Fifteen thousand Russians had been sent thither in 1916 to be equipped and armed and put into the line with the French armies. Many of these poor lads scarcely knew the difference between a Frenchman and a German, and the ostensible objects of the war were quite beyond their understanding. But they heard of the revolution in their own country and they resolved to consider their attitude with regard to it. They elected representatives and put it to the vote whether they should continue to fight, which meant for them to take part in that "experiment" of Nivelle's known to be in preparation at the time. They chose what seemed to them the generous part and went into the battle. The French command used them ruthlessly, and nearly 6,000 were killed or wounded. The rest came out of the line and mutinied. They would fight no more. Thereupon these defenceless men were surrounded by trustworthy French troops, a great concentration of guns was assembled, fire was opened upon them suddenly and they were massacred. Horrible photographs of the details of this—photographs hidden away at the time from the authorities and brought to light later—are given in the summary already cited.

For nearly a year the French lost confidence in the morale of their own men and dared make no more great attacks, but their allies offered up another 400,000 men in the battle of Passchendaele and accounted for 300,000 Germans, and in the spring the Germans made a vast multitudinous attack in the West which succeeded at first and then collapsed, whereupon their antagonists, reinforced by new armies from America, waded back through blood to a dreadful final victory. The last nine months of the conflict saw more slaughter than any preceding year. From March 21st,

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in his ferocity ; we are almost forced to believe he was drunk or mad, until we realize from the "laughter" that punctuated his utterances, from the hearty thanks of his commanding officer, and the "three cheers" which rewarded him at the conclusion of his discourse, that he was merely expressing the spirit of war service as it was then understood.

"If you see a wounded German," he said, "shove him out and have no nonsense about it."

He was all against taking prisoners—and for murdering them after surrender. He told with sympathy and approval of how a corporal under him butchered a group of German boys. "Can I do these blokes in, sir?" asked the corporal, pointing to a bunch of disarmed enemies.

"Please yourself," said the sergeant-major. . . .

When they had been "done in", the honest corporal, a released convict from Dartmoor prison, came back to the sergeant-major very gratified and honoured, and, still in favour, discussed the technical difficulties of withdrawing a bayonet quickly in order to be ready for the "next fellow".

That was, that is, the spirit to which war brings a human being. That gallant Sergeant-Major had abundant equivalents in every army engaged. We are able to quote an English document, freely published. Participants in many other countries had less freedom. On the whole the English were as gentle as any other soldiers. But fear and bloodlust, it is plain, wipe out all the slowly acquired restraints and tolerance of social order very quickly and completely from any breed of men. History must not be written in pink and gilt. Prisoners and wounded were not simply neglected and ill-treated and "shoved out". Many were actually tortured to death—either by way of reprisals or in sheer wanton cruelty. There is also a series of photographs of foully mutilated bodies, mutilated and indecently displayed while they were dying or immediately after they were dead. Those millions marched indeed right out of civilization, right out of any sort of human life as we know it to-day, marched down to something viler than mere bestiality, when they marched into the war zone.

After the summer of 1918, which brought with it the certainty of ultimate defeat, the combatant energy of Germany evaporated. Everywhere there was distress and hunger due to a rigorous

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of blinding flashes show the *Defence* has been hit by the fire of some other German battleship coming to the help of her sister ship, and in a moment she has blown up and gone; she is no more than a mounting unfolding column of smoke and flying fragments, including, we realize with an effort, the torn and scalded bodies of eight hundred men. Then a welter of littered tumbled water. . . .

There is no end to the multitude of such pictures.

But let us return to our phrase "incoherently revolutionary". That is the key to the whole human situation at that time. The distaste for the war throughout the world was enormous, if not in its opening phases, then certainly before the second year was reached. It bored; it disgusted. Its events had none of the smashing decisiveness that seizes the imagination. Even the great naval battle of Jutland was, from the point of view of spectacle, a complete failure. None the less, for a very simple reason a comparatively small minority of resolutely belligerent persons was able to keep this vast misery going. On the one hand the war was in accordance with the ruling ideas of the time, while on the other the hundreds of millions whose astonishment and dismay deepened daily, as horror unfolded beyond horror, had no conception of any alternative pattern of life to which they could turn as a refuge from its relentless sequences.

To cry, "End the war!" ended nothing, because it gave no intimations of what had to replace belligerent governments in the control of human affairs. The peace the masses craved for was as yet only a featureless negative. But peace must be a positive thing, designed and sustained, for peace is less natural than warfare. We who have at last won through to the Pax Mundi know how strong and resolute, how powerfully equipped and how vigilant, the keepers of the peace must be.

§ 8. *The Impulse to Abolish War: The Episode of the Ford Peace Ship*

One quaint expedition, grotesque and childish and yet an augury of greater things to come, flits very illuminatingly across the dreadful record of these war years. It is the voyage of a passenger steamship from New York to Norway. The dark curtains of oblivion fall in heavier and heavier folds before the thundering

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to drive the horse not only from the road but, by making farm tractors, from the fields. He created factories at Dearborn that even to-day seem vast. He became enormously rich and an outstanding "character" in the world, and particularly in America. And he remained curiously simple and direct in his outlook upon life.

The first effect of the Great War upon him, as on a vast proportion of the English-speaking peoples, was incredulous amazement. He had known there were armies and sovereign nations in the world, but apparently he had never supposed they would fight. He felt there must be some mistake. He exchanged views with other Americans in a similar phase of astonishment. By the beginning of 1915 they had accumulated a sufficient mass of evidence from the belligerent countries to convince them that great masses of people in these countries were as amazed and as anxious to end the widening bloodshed and brutalization as the neutral onlookers. There had been deputations to the President (President Wilson), who was at that time, in harmony with his country, highly pacificist, and there was a widespread ambition that the United States should evoke some sort of permanent arbitration council alone, or in concert with the other Powers still neutral, which should stand, so to speak, on the edge of the battlefield and continue to offer its mediatory services to the warring governments until they were accepted. There was the suggestion of a deputation to Europe to further this idea, and the question arose how should it go across the Atlantic. Ford offered to charter a ship to take it.

Then his peculiar imagination seized upon his own offer. He would make this ship a spectacular ship; it should be the "Peace Ship". It should take a complement of chosen delegates to Europe in such a blaze of publicity that at its coming the war would be, as it were, arrested, to look at it. Its mere appearance would recall infuriated Europe to its senses. "I want to get those boys out of the trenches," said Ford. "They don't want to fight, and would be only too glad to shake hands with each other." At the back of his mind there seems to have been an idea of calling a general strike at the fronts. "Out of the trenches by Christmas, never to return again," was his brief speech at a public meeting in Washington in November. All sorts of

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enthusiastic and energetic people were invited to join the mission. He sought the overt approval of the President, but the President was far too seasoned a politician to squander his publicity upon this "gesture" of Henry Ford's. He was meditating a gesture of his own later on.

American life at that time had its conspicuous popular stars, who embodied its ideals of greatness and goodness. Some of them are still for various reasons remembered by the historian. Jane Addams and Thomas Edison, for example, William Jennings Bryan (the "Last Creationist") and Luther Burbank. These names are still to be found even in the Lower School Encyclopædia. Ford tried to include them all in one meteoric shipload. The governors of all the states in the Union were also invited, groups of representative university students, and so on. The Historical Collection at Atacama has gathered all the surviving originals or replicas of Ford's invitations, and the replies in which these outstanding individuals hesitated over or evaded his proposals. Several were only prevented by sudden attacks of ill-health at the very last moment from joining him. And there was a number of newspaper reporters, cinema operators and other photographers, stenographers, typists, translators, interpreters, baggage masters and publicity agents who made no trouble about coming. A certain Madame Rosika Schwimmer, an Hungarian lady, gleams forth and vanishes again from history as the organizing spirit of this selection. A vast multitude of adventurers and crazy people offered to assist when Ford's project was made public, and many were only prevented with the utmost difficulty from coming aboard the *Oscar II*.

There is still material for a great writer in the details of that expedition, but our interest here is neither with the expedition as a whole nor with Ford or the other persons concerned in it as personalities, but with this idea that flamed and faded, this idea of an *appeal against war to human sanity*. And with the vicissitudes of that idea.

The first thing to note is that it evoked response, and a very wide response. Eminent people, both in America and Europe, with their popularity to consider, found it advisable to be sympathetic, even if unhelpful. President Wilson, for example, was sympathetic but unhelpful. All the pretentious weathercocks

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of the Western World swung round towards it. We have every indication indeed of a very considerable drive towards a world war in these years. But presently the weathercocks began to waver and swing away.

Why did they waver? From the first there was a sustained, malignant antagonism to the project. This grew in force and vigour. The American Press, and in its wake the European Press, set itself to magnify and distort every weakness, every slight absurdity, in the expedition and to invent further weaknesses and absurdities. A campaign of ridicule began, so skilful and persistent that it stripped away one blushing celebrity after another from the constellation, and smothered the essential sanity of the project in their wilting apologies. While Ford and his surviving missionaries discussed and discoursed on their liner, the newspaper men they had brought with them concocted lies and absurd stories about their host—as though they were under instructions.

We know now they were under instructions. The Historical Documents Series makes this perfectly plain.

As our students disentangle strand after strand of that long hidden story, we realize more and more clearly the tortuous dishonesty, the confused double-mindedness, of the times. The export trade of the United States was flourishing under war conditions as it had never flourished before. Munitions of every sort were being sold at enormously enhanced prices to the belligerents. Such great banking houses as Morgan and Co. were facilitating the financial subjugation of Europe to America, through debts for these supplies. It is clear that American finance and American Big Business had not foreseen this. They had no exceptional foresight. But suddenly they found themselves in a position of great advantage, and by all their traditions they were bound to make use of that advantage. And Ford in his infinite artlessness, "butting in", as they said, "on things that were not his business", was setting out to destroy this favourable state of affairs.

There was just enough plausibility in this endeavour to make it seem dangerous. Ford could not be ignored; his available publicity was too great for that. He was by no means beneath contempt; so he had to be made contemptible. With an earnestness

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worthy of a better cause, the American Press was launched against him. And it was one of the strange traditions of the American Press that a newsman should have no scruples. The ordinary reporter was a moral invert taking a real pride in his degradation. No expedient was too mean, no lie, no trick too contemptible if only it helped thwart and disillusion Ford.

And they did thwart and disillusion him. They got him wrong with himself. This half-baked man of genius, deserted by his friends, lost confidence in his project. He began to suspect his allies and believe his enemies.

We have to accept the evidence preserved for us, but even with that evidence before us, some of the details of that Press campaign appear incredible. There are a hundred gross files of newspaper cuttings at Atacama, and some of the most amazing are reproduced in the selected Historical Documents. The reporters and writers, who were abroad as Ford's guests, invented and sent home by wireless fantastic reports of free fights among the members of the mission, of disputes among the leaders, of Ford being chained to his bed by his secretary, of mutinies and grotesque happenings. Ford was told of and could have prevented these radio messages being sent—it was his ship for the time being—but a kind of fanaticism for free opinion—even if in practice that meant free lying—restrained him. "Let them do their darnedest," he said, still valiant. "Our work will speak for itself."

But presently he caught the influenza, a lowering disease long since extinct but very rife in that period, and, under the clumsy medical attention of the day, he arrived in Europe deflated and tired, physically and morally, prepared now to believe that there was something essentially foolish in the whole affair. He had been drenched in ridicule beyond his powers of resistance, and he was giving way. He gave way.

"Guess I had better go home to mother," said Mr. Ford, sick in bed in Christiania, and kept to his room, though all Norway was agog to greet and cheer him.

But his movement went on by the inertia it had gained. His delegation was received with great enthusiasm in Norway and subsequently in Sweden, Switzerland, Denmark and Holland, those small sovereign European states which contrived so dexterously to keep out of the conflict to the end. People in those

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countries were evidently only too eager to believe that this novel intervention might help to end the war. If Ford was discouraged, some of his associates were of more persistent material. They held great public meetings in Sweden, Holland and Switzerland, and the repercussion of their activities certainly had a heartening effect on the peace movement in Germany and Britain. They contrived to get speech with a number of politicians and statesmen, and they roused the watchful hostility of the German and British war authorities—for the military chiefs of both sides regarded this mission very properly as an attack on war morale. A Neutral Conference for Continuous Mediation came into being—very precarious being—in Stockholm. It is claimed that it checked a movement to bring Sweden into the war on the side of the Germans.

Then gradually the Ford Organization for Peace lost prominence. It was overshadowed by greater movements towards negotiation, and more particularly by the large uncertain gestures of President Wilson, who, re-elected as "the man who kept the United States out of the war", brought his people from a phase of hypocritical pacificism and energetic armament into the war in 1917. Before that culmination the Peace Ship bladder had collapsed altogether. Its last typist and photographer and clerk had been paid off, and Ford himself was already doing all that was humanly possible to draw a blanket of oblivion over that unforgettable Peace Ship. But the records have been too much for him.

He had not led his expeditionary force in Europe, even nominally, for more than five weeks. He had kept to his Norwegian hotel, avoided his more enthusiastic associates, started a vigorous reduction of his financial commitments, and finally bolted home. He deserted. He left his hotel at Christiania, stealthily, at five o'clock in the morning, and, in spite of the pleadings of those of his party who, warned at the last minute, tumbled out of bed to protest, he got away. Before the year was out he had ceased even financial support, and the various men and women who had abandoned careers and positions and faced ridicule and odium in complete faith in his simplicity were left to find their way back to their former niches or discover fresh ones.

Now what had happened to his great idea? What strange reversal of motive had occurred in the brain and heart of this

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of the time were at work. It had responded vividly and generously to the new drive towards a world pax. Lochner (*America's Don Quixote*, 1924) reports him thus on his sailing from New York:

"Have you any last word to say?" a journalist enquired.

"Yes," he replied. "Tell the people to cry peace and fight preparedness."

"What if this expedition fails?" ventured another.

"If this expedition fails I'll start another," he flashed without a moment's hesitation.

"People say you are not sincere," commented a third. . . .

"We've got peace-talk going now, and I'll pound it to the end."

And afterwards came those second thoughts. When, in 1917, the United States entered the war, the Peace Ship was a stale old joke and the vast Ford establishments were prepared and ready for the production of munitions.

Ford was a compendium of his age. That is why we give him this prominence in our history. The common man of the twentieth century was neither a pacifist nor a war-monger. He was both—and Ford was just a common man made big by accident and exceptional energy.

The main thread in the history of the twentieth century is essentially the drama of the indecisions manifested in their elementary plainness by Ford on board his Peace Ship. That voyage comes therefore like a tin-whistle solo by way of overture to the complex orchestration of human motive in the great struggle for human unity that lay ahead.

§ 9. *The Direct Action of the Armament Industries in Maintaining War Stresses*

We must now say something about the direct activities of the hypertrophied "armament firms" in bringing about and sustaining the massacres of the Great War. A proper understanding of that influence is essential if the stresses and martyrdoms of the middle years of the twentieth century are to be understood.

These "armament firms" were an outcome of the iron and steel industry, which in a few score years between 1700 and 1850 grew up—no man objecting—from a modest activity of

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artisans to relatively gigantic possibilities of production. This industry covered the world with a network of railways, and produced iron and then steel steamships to drive the wooden sailing ships off the seas. And at an early stage (all this is traced in full detail in Luke Zimmern's *Entwicklung und Geschichte des Kruppismus*, 1913; *Hist. Doc.* 394112) it turned its attention to the weapons in the world.

In a perpetual progress in the size and range of great guns, in a vast expansion of battleships that were continually scrapped in favour of larger or more elaborate models, it found a most important and inexhaustible field of profit. The governments of the world were taken unawares, and in a little while the industry, by sound and accepted methods of salesmanship, was able to impose its novelties upon these ancient institutions with their tradition of implacable mutual antagonism. It was realized very soon that any decay of patriotism and loyalty would be inimical to this great system of profits, and the selling branch of the industry either bought directly or contrived to control most of the great newspapers of the time, and exercised a watchful vigilance on the teaching of belligerence in schools. Following the established rules and usages for a marketing industrialism, and with little thought of any consequences but profits, the directors of these huge concerns built up the new warfare that found its first exposition in the Great War of 1914-18 and gave its last desperate and frightful convulsions in the Polish wars of 1940 and the subsequent decade.

Even at its outset in 1914-18 this new warfare was extraordinarily uncongenial to humanity. It did not even satisfy man's normal combative instincts. What an angry man wants to do is to beat and bash another living being, not to be shot at from ten miles distance or poisoned in a hole. Instead of drinking delight of battle with their peers, men tasted all the indiscriminating terror of an earthquake. The war literature stored at Atacama, to which we have already referred, is full of futile protest against the horror, the unsportsmanlike quality, the casual filthiness and indecency, the mechanical disregard of human dignity, of the new tactics. But such protest itself was necessarily futile, because it did not go on to a clear indictment of the forces that were making, sustaining and distorting war.

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The child howled and wept and they did not even attempt to see what it was that had tormented it.

To us nowadays it seems insane that profit-making individuals and companies should have been allowed to manufacture weapons and sell the apparatus of murder to all comers. But to the man of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries it seemed the most natural thing in the world. It had grown up in an entirely logical and necessary way, without any restraint upon the normal marketing methods of peace-time commerce, from the continually more extensive application of new industrial products to warfare. Even after the World War catastrophe, after that complete demonstration of the futility of war, men still allowed themselves to be herded like sheep into the barracks, to be trained to consume, and be consumed, by new lines of slaughter goods produced and marketed by the still active armament traders. And the accumulation of a still greater and still more dangerous mass of war material continued.

There is a queer little pseudo-scientific essay by a Bengali satirist (Professor K. Chandra Sen, 1897-1942) among the *India* series of reprints, professing to be a study of the relative stupidity of the more intelligent animals up to and including man. He is concerned by the fatuity with which the mass of humanity watched the preparation of its own destruction during this period. He considers the fate of various species of penguins which were then being swept out of the world—the twentieth century was an age of extermination for hundreds of species—and infers a similar destiny for mankind. He begins with the slaughter of the penguins; he gives photographs of these extraordinary creatures in their multitudes, gathered on the beaches of Oceanic islands and watching the advance of their slayers. One sees them scattered over a long sloping shore, standing still, or waddling about or flapping their stumpy wings while the massacre goes on. They seem to be vaguely interested in the killing of their fellows, but in no way stirred either to flight or resistance. (No thorough scientific observations, we may note, were ever made of penguin mentality, the revival of experimental psychology comes too late for that, and we are left now to guess at what went on in these queer brains of theirs during these raids. There is evidence to show that these creatures had curiosity, kindness, sympathy

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Steel Corporation of America in 1929 was revealed as actively opposing naval disarmament at the Geneva Conference of 1927. At any rate it was associated with three shipbuilding companies who were sued by a Mr. Shearer, who claimed to have been given that task, for fees alleged to be due to him. There seems to have been little dispute that he had been so employed; the case turned upon the extent of his services and the amount of his fees. Nothing was done by the penguins either to the companies concerned or to Mr. Shearer. A few expressed indignation; that was all. Just as now and then no doubt a bird or so squawked at the oil-hunters. (For a detailed account and references see *The Navy; Defence or Portent*, by C. A. Beard, 1930; reprinted Hist. Doc. Series 4,270,112.)

The clue lies in the fact that there was practically no philosophical education at all in the world, no intelligent criticism of generalizations and general ideas. There was no science of social processes at all. People were not trained to remark the correlations of things; for the most part they were not aware that there was any correlation between things; they imagined this side of life might change and that remain unaltered. The industrialists and financiers built up these monstrous armaments and imposed them on the governments of the time with a disregard of consequences that seems now absolutely imbecile. Most of these armament propagandists were admirable in their private lives: gentle lovers, excellent husbands, fond of children and animals, good fellows, courteous to inferiors, and so on. Sir Basil Zaharoff, the greatest of munition salesmen, as one sees him in the painting (ascribed to Orpen) recently discovered in Paris, with his three-cornered hat, his neat little moustaches and beardlet, and the ribbon of some Order of Chivalry about his neck, looks quite a nice, if faintly absurd, little gentleman. Those shareholding bishops and clergy may, for anything we know to the contrary, have had charming Christian personalities. But they wanted their dividends. And in order to pay those dividends, the dread of war and the need of war had to be kept alive in the public mind.

That was done most conveniently through the Press. You could buy a big newspaper in those days, lock, stock and barrel, for five or ten million dollars, and the profits made on one single battleship came to more than that. Naturally, and according to

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the best business traditions, the newspapers hired or sold themselves to the war salesmen. What was wrong in that? Telling the news in those days was a trade, not a public duty. A daily paper that had dealt faithfully with this accumulating danger would quite as naturally and necessarily have found its distribution impeded, have found itself vigorously outdone by more richly endowed competitors, able because of their wealth to buy up all the most attractive features, able to outdo it in every way with the common reader.

It wasn't that the newspaper owners and the munition dealers wanted anyone hurt. They only wanted to sell equipment and see it used up. Nor was it that the newspapers desired the wholesale mangling and butchering of human beings. They wanted sales and advertisements. The butchery was quite by the way, an unfortunate side issue to legitimate business. Shortsightedness is not diabolical, even if it produces diabolical results.

And even those soldiers? Freudheim, in his analysis of the soldierly mind, shows a picture of that Sir Henry Wilson we have already mentioned arrayed in shirt-sleeves and digging modestly in the garden of his villa during a phase of retirement, and the same individual smirking in all his glory, buttons, straps and "decorations", as a director of military operations. It is an amazing leap from the suburban insignificance of a retired clerk to god-like importance. In peace-time, on the evidence of his own diaries, this Wilson was a tiresome nobody, an opinionated bore; in war he passed beyond criticism and became a god. One understands at once what a vital matter employment and promotion must have been to him. But so far as we can tell he desired no killing or killing. If he had been given blood to drink he would probably have been sick. Yet he lived upon tanks of blood.

These professional soldiers thought of slaughter as little as possible. It is preposterous to say they desired it, much less that they gloated over it. It might have fared better with their men if they had thought of it more. They had an age-old sentimental devotion to their country, a solemn sense of great personal worth in their services, an orgiastic delight of battle. And they did not see, nor want to see, what was beyond their occupation. Their religious teachers were quite ready to assure them they were correct in all they did and were.

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The senescent Christian Churches of that age had indeed a very direct interest in war. A marked tendency to ignore or ridicule the current religious observances had become manifest, but under the stresses of loss and death people turned again to the altar. It is easily traceable in the fiction of the time. The despised curate of the tea-cups and croquet lawn became the implicitly heroic "padre" of the sentimental war stories.

The problem that confronted the growing minority that was waking up to the perils and possibilities of our species in the third and fourth decades of the twentieth century was this: How in the first place to concentrate the minds of people out of this distraction and diffusion, how to bring them to bear upon the crude realities before them, and then how to organize the gigantic effort needed to shake off that intermittent and ever more dangerous fever of war and that chronic onset of pauperization which threatened the whole world with social dissolution.

There was no central antagonist, no ruling devil, for those anxious spirits to fight. That would have made it a straight, understandable campaign. But the Press with a certain flavouring of pious intentions was practically against them. Old social and political traditions, whatever the poses they assumed, were tacitly against them. History was against them, for it could but witness that war had always gone on since its records began. Not only the current Bishop of Hereford, and the current President of the Free Church Council, caught with their dividends upon them, but their Churches and the Catholic Church, and indeed all the Christian Churches, in spite of their allegiance to the Prince of Peace, were quietly competitive with, or antagonistic to, the secular world controls that alone could make a healthy world peace possible. The admission of the insufficiency of their own creeds to comfort or direct would have been the necessary prelude to a new moral effort.

And the idea of the naturalness and inevitability of war was not only everywhere in the world around those few forward-looking men who knew better, it was in their blood and habits. They were seeking how to attack not a fortress, but what seemed a perpetually recuperative jungle of mixed motives, tangled interests and cross-purposes, within themselves as without.

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Five decades of human distress were still needed before there was to be any extensive realization that belligerence was only one symptom, and by no means the gravest symptom, of human disunion.

The American President Woodrow Wilson, of all the delegates to the Peace Conference, was the most susceptible to the intimations of the future. The defects and limitations of his contributions to that settlement give us a measure of the political imagination of those days. He brought what was left of the individualistic liberalism that had created the American Republics to the solution of the world problem. None of the other participants in these remarkable discussions—Clemenceau (France), Lloyd George (Britain), Sonnino (Italy), Saionji (Japan), Hymans (Belgium), Paderewski (Poland), Bratianu (Roumania), Bénès (Bohemia), Venezelos (Greece), Feisal (Hedjaz), and so on through a long list of now fading names—seemed aware that, apart from any consideration of national advantage, humanity as a whole might claim an interest in the settlement. They were hard-shell "representatives", national advocates. For a brief interval Wilson stood alone for mankind. Or at least he seemed to stand for mankind. And in that brief interval there was a very extraordinary and significant wave of response to him throughout the earth. So eager was the situation that all humanity leapt to accept and glorify Wilson—for a phrase, for a gesture. It seized upon him as its symbol. He was transfigured in the eyes of men. He ceased to be a common statesman; he became a Messiah. Millions believed him as the bringer of untold blessings; thousands would gladly have died for him. That response was one of the most illuminating events in the early twentieth century. Manifestly the World-State had been conceived then, and now it stirred in the womb. It was alive.

And then for some anxious decades it ceased to stir.

Amidst different scenery and in different costumes, the story of Wilson repeats the story of Ford, the story of a man lifted by an idea too great for him, thrown up into conspicuousness for a little while and then dropped, as a stray leaf may be spun up and dropped by a gust of wind before a gale. The essential Wilson, the world was soon to learn, was vain and theatrical, with no depth of thought and no wide generosity. So far from standing

quarry was not under scrutiny
from TODAY AND TOMORROW *by Woodrow Wilson*
for all mankind, he stood indeed only for the Democratic Party in the United States—and for himself. He sacrificed the general support of his people in America to party considerations and his prestige in Europe to a craving for social applause. For a brief season he was the greatest man alive. Then for a little while he remained the most conspicuous. He visited all the surviving courts of Europe and was fêted and undone in every European capital. That triumphal procession to futility need not occupy us further here. Our concern is with his idea.

Manifestly he wanted some sort of a world pax. But it is doubtful if at any time he realized that a world pax means a world control of all the vital common interests of mankind. He seems never to have thought out this job to which he set his hand so confidently. He did not want, or, if he did, he did not dare to ask for, any such centralized world controls as we now possess. They were probably beyond the range of his reading and understanding. His project from first to last was purely a politician's project.

The pattern conceived by him was a naïve adaptation of the parliamentary governments of Europe and America to a wider union. His League, as it emerged from the Versailles Conference, was a typical nineteenth-century government enlarged to planetary dimensions and greatly faded in the process; it had an upper chamber, the Council, and a lower chamber, the Assembly, but, in ready deference to national susceptibilities, it had no executive powers, no certain revenues, no army, no police, and practically no authority to do anything at all. And even as a political body it was remote and ineffective; it was not in any way representative of the peoples of the earth as distinguished from the governments of the earth. Practically nothing was done to make the common people of the world feel that the League was theirs. Its delegates were appointed by the Foreign Offices of the very governments its only conceivable rôle was to supersede. They were national politicians and they were expected to go to Geneva to liquidate national politics. The League came into being at last, a solemn simulacrum to mock, cheat and dispel the first desire for unity that mankind had ever betrayed.

Yet what else was possible then? If Wilson seemed to embody the formless aspirations of mankind, there can be no dispute that

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he impressed the politicians with whom he had to deal as a profoundly insincere visionary. They dealt with him as that and they beat him as that. The only way to have got anything more real than this futile League would have been a revolutionary appeal to the war-weary peoples of the earth against their governments, to have said, as indeed he could have said in 1918, to the whole world that the day of the World-State had come. That would have reverberated to the ends of the earth.

He was not the man to do that. He had not that power of imagination. He had not that boldness with governments. He had the common politician's way of regarding great propositions as a means to small ends. If he had been bolder and greater, he might have failed, he might have perished; but he failed and perished anyhow; and a bolder bid for world unity might have put the real issue before mankind for ever and shortened the Age of Frustration by many decades.

What he did do was to reap an immediate harvest of popular applause, to present to human hope a white face rigid with self-approval, bowing from processional carriages and decorated balconies, retiring gravely into secret conference with the diplomats and politicians of the old order and emerging at last with this League of Nations, that began nothing and ended nothing and passed in a couple of decades out of history.

It was a League not to end sovereignties but preserve them. It stipulated that the extraordinarily ill-contrived boundaries established by the Treaty in which it was incorporated should be guaranteed by the League for evermore. Included among other amiable arrangements were clauses penalizing Germany and her allies as completely as Carthage was penalized by Rome after the disaster of Zama—penalizing her in so overwhelming a way as to make default inevitable and afford a perennial excuse for her continued abasement. It was not a settlement, it was a permanent punishment. The Germans were to become the penitent helots of the conquerors; a generation, whole generations, were to be born and die in debt, and to ensure the security of this arrangement Germany was to be effectually disarmed and kept

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of the other Allies who were gathered together in the Paris atmosphere and working amidst the vindictive memories of Versailles were only too ready to fall in with this punitive conception of their task. It was the easiest conception; it put a hundred difficult issues into a subordinate place. It always looks so much easier to men of poor imagination to put things back than to carry them on. If the French dreaded a resurrection of the German armies, the British feared a resurrection of the German fleet and of German industrial competition. Japan and Italy, seeking their own compensations elsewhere, were content to see the German-speaking peoples, who constituted the backbone of the Continent, divided and reduced to vassalage.

The antiquated form of Wilson's ideas produced still more mischievous consequences in the multiplication of sovereign governments in the already congested European area. Deluded by the vague intimations of unity embodied in the League, Wilson lent himself readily to a reconstruction of the map of Europe upon strictly nationalist lines. The Polish nation was restored. Our history has already studied the successive divisions of this country in the eighteenth century. It is a great region of the Central Plain, whose independent existence became more and more inconvenient as the trade and commerce of Europe developed. Geography fought against it. It was a loose-knit union of individualistic equestrian aristocrats dominating a peasantry. But its partition between Russia, Prussia and Austria was achieved with the utmost amount of brutality, and after the Napoleonic wars a romantic legend about this lost kingdom of Poland seized upon the sentiment of France, Britain and America. These rude nobles and their serfs, so roughly incorporated by the adjacent states, were transfigured into a delicate, brave and altogether wonderful people, a people with a soul torn asunder and trampled underfoot by excessively booted oppressors. The restoration of Poland—the excessive restoration of Poland—was one of the brightest ambitions of President Wilson.

Poland was restored. But instead of a fine-spirited and generous people emerging from those hundred and twenty years of subjugation and justifying the sympathy and hopes of liberalism throughout the world, there appeared a narrowly patriotic government, which presently developed into an aggressive,

*to the
music
of Chopin*

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vindictive and pitiless dictatorship, and set itself at once to the zestful persecution of the unfortunate ethnic minorities (about a third of the entire population) caught in the net of its all too ample boundaries. The real Poland of the past had been a raiding and aggressive nation which had ridden and harried to the very walls of Moscow. It had not changed its nature. The Lithuanian city of Vilna was now grabbed by a *coup de main* and the southeastern boundary pushed forward in Galicia. In the treatment of the Ukrainians and Ruthenians involved in liberation, Poland equalled any of the atrocities which had been the burden of her song during her years of martyrdom. In 1932 one-third of the budget of this new militant Power was for armament.

Not only was Poland thus put back upon the map. As a result of a sedulous study of historical sentimentalities, traditions, dialects and local feelings, a whole cluster of new sovereign Powers, Czecho-Slovakia, Yugo-Slavia, Finland, Esthonia, Latvia, Lithuania, an attenuated Hungary and an enlarged Roumania, was evoked to crowd and complicate the affairs of mankind by their sovereign liberties, their ambitions, hostilities, alliances, understandings, misunderstandings, open and secret treaties, tariffs, trade wars and the like. Russia was excluded from the first attempt at a World Parliament because she had repudiated her vast war debts—always a matter of grave solicitude to the Western creditor, and—strangest fact of all in this strange story—the United States, the Arbitrator and Restorer of Nations, stood out from the League, because President Wilson's obstinate resolve to monopolize the immortal glory of World Salvation for himself and his party had estranged a majority of his senators.

The Senate, after some attempts at compromise, rejected the Covenant of the League altogether, washed its hands of world affairs, and the President, instead of remaining for ever Prince of Everlasting Peace and Wonder of the Ages, shrank again very rapidly to human proportions and died a broken and disappointed man. Like Ford, the United States returned to normal business and the Profit and Loss Account, and the Europeans were left with the name of Wilson written all over their towns, upon streets, avenues, esplanades, railway stations, parks and squares, to make what they could of this emasculated League he had left about among their affairs.

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If Russia and Germany in their character of Bad Peoples were excluded from the League, such remote peoples as the Chinese and the Japanese were included as a matter of course. It was assumed, apparently, that they were "just fellows" of the universal Treaty-of-Westphalia pattern. The European world knew practically nothing of the mental processes of these remote and ancient communities, and it seems hardly to have dawned upon the conferring statesmen that political processes rest entirely upon mental facts. The League, after much difficulty, and after some years' delay, did indeed evolve a Committee of Intellectual Coöperation, but so far as its activities can now be traced, this was concerned with dilettante intellectualism only; there is no indication that it ever interested itself in the League as an idea.

Considering all things in the light of subsequent events, it would have been well if the League of Nations had committed hari-kari directly the United States Senate refused participation, and if the European Powers, realizing their failure to stabilize the planet at one blow, had set themselves at once to the organization of a League of Conciliation and Coöperation within the European area. The League's complete inability to control or even modify the foreign policy of Japan (modelled on the best nineteenth-century European patterns) was the decisive factor in its declension to a mere organization of commentary upon current affairs.

As its authority declined the courage and pungency of its reports increased. Some of the later ones are quite admirable historical documents. Gradually the member governments discontinued their subsidies and the secretariat dwindled to nothing. Like the Hague Tribunal, the League faded out of existence before or during the Famished Fifties. It does not figure in history after the first Polish war, but its official buildings were intact in 1965, and in 1968, and for some years later, they were used as auxiliary offices by the Western branch of the Transport Union.

The imposition of vast monetary payments upon Germany was the only part of the settlement of Versailles that dealt with the financial and economic life of our race. Astounding as this seems to us to-day, it was the most natural oversight possible to the Versailles politicians. Political life was still deep in the old purely combatant tradition, still concentrated upon boundaries

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and strategic advantages; and it was extraordinarily innocent in the face of economic realities. The mighty forces demanding economic unification, albeit they were, as we have shown, the real causes of the Great War, were ignored at Versailles as completely as if they had never existed.

Only one outstanding voice, that of the British economist J. M. Keynes (*Economic Consequences of the Peace*, 1919), was audible at the time in protest and warning against the preposterous dislocation of credit and trade involved in the reparation payments. There was no arrangement whatever for the liquidation of the debts piled up by the Allies *against each other* (!), and no economic parallel to the political League of Nations. No control of economic warfare was even suggested. The Americans, Wilson included, were still in a stage of financial individualism; they thought money-getting was an affair of individual smartness within the limits of the law, and the American conception of law was of something that presented interesting obstacles rather than effectual barriers to enlightened self-seeking. The contemporary American form of mutual entertainment was a poker party, and that great people therefore found nothing inimical in sitting down after the war to play poker, with France and Great Britain as its chief opponents, for the gold and credit of the world.

It was only slowly during the decade following after the war that the human intelligence began to realize that the Treaty of Versailles had not ended the war at all. It had set a truce to the bloodshed, but it had done so only to open a more subtle and ultimately more destructive phase in the traditional struggle of the sovereign states. The existence of independent sovereign states is war, white or red, and only an elaborate mis-education blinded the world to this elementary fact. The peoples of the defeated nations suffered from a real if not very easily defined sense of injustice in this Treaty, which was framed only for them to sign, and sign in the rôle of wrongdoers brought to book. Very naturally they were inspired by an ill-concealed resolve to revise, circumvent or disregard its provisions at the earliest possible opportunity. The conquering Powers, on the other hand, were conscious of having not only humiliated their defeated enemies but thrust them into a state of exasperated disadvantage. The thought of a *revanche* was equally present therefore to the victors.

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and instead of disarming as the Germans were compelled to do, they broke the obligations of the Treaty and retained and increased their military establishments.

The armament firms and their newspapers naturally did all they could to intensify this persistence in an armed "security". Any disposition on the part of the French public, for instance, to lay aside its weapons was promptly checked by tales of secret arsenals and furtive drilling in Germany. And the narrow patriotic forces that guided France not only kept her extravagantly armed against her fallen foe, but carried on a subtle but ruthless financial warfare that, side by side with the American game, overcame every effort of Germany to recover socially or economically.

Moreover, the conquering Powers, so soon as they considered their former antagonists conclusively "disposed of", turned themselves frankly, in full accordance with the traditions of the sovereign state system, to the task of getting the better of each other in the division of the spoils. Their "Alliances" had brought about no sense of community. Already within a year of the signing of the Peace Treaty of Versailles heavy fighting was going on in Asia Minor between the Greeks and the Turks. The Greeks had British encouragement; the French and Italians had supported the Turks. It was a war of cat's-paws. This war culminated in a disastrous rout of the Greeks and the burning of the town of Smyrna. This last was a quite terrible massacre; multitudes of women and children were outraged, men and boys gouged, emasculated or killed; all but the Turkish quarter was looted and burnt. The quays in front of the flaming town were dense with terror-stricken crowds, hoping against hope to get away upon some ship before they were fallen upon, robbed, butchered, or thrust into the water.

A little before this the Turks had driven the French out of the ancient province of Cilicia, and had completed the extermination of that ancient people the Hittites or Armenians. During the war or after the war mattered little to the Armenians, for fire and sword pursued them still. Over two million died—for the most part violent deaths.

Fighting still went on after the Great Peace in the north and south of Russia and in eastern Siberia; and China became a prey to armies of marauders. Poland seized Vilna, invaded eastern

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Galicia and fought Russia in the Ukraine, and a raid of patriotic Italians expelled a mixed Allied garrison from Finme.

Presently there was a dreadful famine in south-east Russia which neither America nor Europe was able to alleviate. Always before the war a famine in any part of the world had exercised the philanthropic element in the Anglo-Saxon community. But philanthropy had lost heart. There was a faint but insufficient flutter of the old habits in America but none in Britain.

Such was the peace and union of the world immediately achieved by the Conference of Versailles.

A number of unsatisfactory appendices and patches had presently to be made to correct the most glaring defects and omissions of the Treaty. Constantinople, which had been taken from the Turks and held by a mixed force of the Allies, was restored to them in 1923 after the Smyrna massacre and some warlike gesticulation between them and the British.

In drawing the boundaries of the new and revised states of the European patchwork there was the utmost disregard of economic common sense; peasants would find themselves cut off from winter or summer pasture or from market towns which had been developed by their needs. Great foundries and chemical and metallurgical works were separated from the ores and deposits on which they relied. Vienna, once the financial and business centre of all south-east Central Europe, was decapitated. Most fantastic and, as it proved, most disastrous of all the follies of Versailles was the creation of the free city of Danzig and what was called the Polish Corridor.

Let us note a point or so about this latter tangle to illustrate the mental quality of the Conference at its worst. Here more than anywhere else did the simple romantic idea that the Germans were Bad, and that anyone opposed to the Germans was without qualification Good, rule the situation. The Poles were Good, and they were the chosen of the Allies, the particular protégés of the sentimental historian from America. He had come to put down the mighty from their seats and to exalt the humble and the meek. The hungry and eager were to be filled with good things and the rich, the erstwhile rich, were to be sent empty away. Germany, like Dives in hell, was to look up and see Poland like Lazarus in Woodrow Wilson's bosom. Not only were the Good

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Poles to be given dominion over Ruthenians, Ukrainians, Jews (whom particularly they detested), Lithuanians, White Russians and Germans, they were to have also something of profound economic importance—"access to the sea".

On that President Wilson had been very insistent. Switzerland had done very well in pre-war Europe without access to the sea, but that was another story. The difficulty was that by no stretch of ethnic map-colouring could Poland be shown to border on the sea. A belt of Pomeranians and Germans stretched across the mouth of the Vistula, and the only possibility of a reasonable trading outlet to the sea, so far as Poland needed such an outlet—for most of its trade was with its immediate neighbours—was through an understanding with that belt of people. That would have been easy enough to arrange. At the mouth of the Vistula stood the entirely German city of Danzig. It lived mainly as an outlet for Polish trade, and it could prosper in no other way. There was no reason to suppose it would put any difficulties in the way of Polish imports and exports. It was an ancient, honest, clean and prosperous German city. Ninety-six per cent of its inhabitants were German.

This was the situation to which the Conference of Versailles, under the inspiration of that magic phrase "access to the sea", turned its attention. Even the profound belief of the Conquerors that there were no Germans but bad Germans could ~~not~~ justify their turning over Danzig itself to Polish rule. But they separated it from Germany and made it into a "free city", and to the west of it they achieved that "access to the sea" of Wilson's, by annexing a broad band of Pomeranian territory to Poland. (This was the actual "Corridor" of the controversies.) It had no port to compare with Danzig, but the Poles set themselves to create a rival in Gdynia, which should be purely Polish, and which should ultimately starve the trading Germans out of Danzig.

And to keep the waters of the Vistula as pure and sweet for Poland as the existence of Danzig at the estuary allowed, the peace-makers ran the Vistula boundary between Poland and east Prussia, not in the usual fashion midway along the stream, but at a little distance on the east Prussian side. (Jacques Kayser, *La Paix en Péril*, 1931; Hist. Doc., 711711.) So that the east German population, the peasant cultivator, the erstwhile

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fisherman, the shepherd with his flocks to water, was pulled up by a line of frontier posts and a Polish rifle within sight of the stream. Moreover, that eastward country was flat and low-lying and, had hitherto been protected from floods and a relapse to marsh conditions by a line of dykes. The frontier cut that line five times, and, since the Poles had no interest whatever in these defences, they fell rapidly out of repair. Further along the boundary cut off the great towns of Garnsee and Bischofswerder from their railway station.

But we must not lose ourselves in the details of this exasperating settlement. The maximum of irritation developed in the absurd Corridor itself. The current of traffic had hitherto run to and fro between east and west, the trend of the railways was in that direction; the traffic in the north and south direction had come to Danzig along the great river. Now the Poles set themselves to obstruct both these currents and to wrench round all the communications into a north and south direction avoiding Danzig. Every German going east or west found himself subjected to a series of frontier examinations, to tariff payments, to elaborate delays, to such petty but memorable vexations as that all the windows of an express train passing across the Corridor should be closed, and so forth, and the city of Danzig, cut off from German trade, found its Polish business being steadily diverted to Gdynia. French capital was poured into Gdynia and into its new railway to the south, so that French financial interests were speedily entangled in the dispute.

The indignity and menace of Danzig burnt into the German imagination. That Corridor fretted it as nothing else in the peace settlement had fretted it. It became a dominant political issue. There was an open sore of a similar character in Upper Silesia; there was a sore in the Saar Valley; there was the sore of an enforced detachment from Austria; there were many other bitter memories and grievances, but this was so intimate, so close to Berlin, that it obsessed all German life.

Within a dozen years of the signing of the Treaty of Versailles the Polish Corridor was plainly the most dangerous factor in the European situation. It mocked every projection of disarmament. It pointed the hypnotized and impotent statescraft of Europe straight towards a resumption of war. A fatalistic

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attitude towards war as something terrible indeed but inevitable, which had already been evident among the politicians of Europe before 1914, reappeared and spread.

History had an air of repeating itself. Nobody made any definite suggestions about any of these open sores, but there was scarcely a politician of the period who could not claim to have been very eloquent on various occasions against war—with, of course, a skilful avoidance of anything that could be considered specific, controversial, unpatriotic or likely to wound the susceptibilities of the Powers immediately concerned.

§ II. *The Impulse to Abolish War: Why the League of Nations Failed to Pacify the World*

Before we leave that bleak and futile idealist, Woodrow Wilson, altogether, we will draw the attention of the student to the essential factors of his failure. The defects of his personality must not blind us to the impossibility of his ambition. His narrow egotism, the punitive treatment of the Central Powers and so forth, merely emphasized a disadvantage that would have been fatal to the launching of any League of Nations at that time. There had been an insufficient mental preparation for a world system to operate. No ideology existed to sustain it. The World-State, the Modern State, was still only a vaguely apprehended suggestion; it had not been worked out with any thoroughness and the League was the most hasty of improvisations.

It needed the life scheming of de Windt and his associates, which we shall presently describe; it needed a huge development and application of the science of social psychology, before the supersession of the chaos of sovereign states by a central control was even a remote possibility. Wilson thought he could get together with a few congenial spirits and write a recipe for human unity. He had not the slightest inkling of the gigantic proportions, the intricacy, intimacy and profundity, of the task that was opening before him. He attempted to patch up the outworn system of his time and pass it off as a new one. He did not dream of the monetary reconstruction, the need for a thoroughgoing socialism throughout the world, and for a complete revolution in education, before the peace and security of mankind could

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be established. Yet, narrow and blind as he was, he seems to have been in advance of the general thought of his age.

This premature and ineffectual League was a hindrance rather than a help to the achievement of world peace. It got in the way. It prevented people from thinking freely about the essentials of the problem. Organizations of well-meaning folk, the British League of Nations Union, for example, came into existence to support it, and resisted rather than helped any effectual criticism of its constitution and working. They would say that it was "better than nothing", whereas a false start is very much worse than nothing. In the post-war decade, the amount of vigorous constructive thought in the general mind about world politics was extraordinarily small. It was only when the insufficiency of the League had passed beyond any possibility of dispute that men began to take up the abandoned search for world unification again.

A dozen years later the Modern State movement was still only foreshadowed in sketchy attempts to find a comprehensive set of general formulæ for liberal progressive effort. The pacifists, communists, socialists and every other sort of "ists" who gave a partial and confused expression to human discontent had still to be drawn together into understanding and coöperation. Most of their energy was wasted in obscure bickerings, mutual suspicion and petty and partial tentatives. The middle of the century had been passed before there was any considerable body of Modern State propaganda and education on earth.

§ 12. *The Breakdown of "Finance" and Social Morale after Versailles*

The unprecedented range and destruction of the World War were, we have pointed out, largely ascribable to the hypertrophy of the world's iron and steel industry relatively to the political and social concepts of the race. But in the first "post-war" decade the stresses of other disproportionate developments began to make themselves manifest at various other weak points in the loosely linked association of our species. The war from the economic point of view had been the convulsive using up of an excess of production that the race had no other method of

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distributing and consuming. But the necessities of the struggle, and particularly its interference with international trading, which had evoked factories and finishing processes in many undeveloped regions hitherto yielding only raw or unfinished materials, had added greatly to the gross bulk of productive plant throughout the world, and so soon as the open war-furnaces ceased to burn up the surplus and hold millions of men out of the labour market, this fact became more and more oppressively apparent. The post-war increase in war preparation, which went on in spite of endless palaver about disarmament, did not destroy men, nor scrap and destroy material, in sufficient quantity to relieve the situation.

Moreover, the expansion of productive energy was being accompanied by a positive contraction of the distributive arrangements which determined consumption. The more efficient the output, the fewer were the wages-earners. The more stuff there was, the fewer consumers there were. The fewer the consumers, the smaller the trading profits, and the less the gross spending power of the shareholders and individual entrepreneurs. So buying dwindled at both ends of the process and the common investor suffered with the wages-earner. This was the "Paradox of Over-production" which so troubled the writers and journalists of the third decade of the twentieth century.

It is easy for the young student to-day to ask, "Why did they not adjust?" But let him ask himself who there was to adjust. Our modern superstructure of applied economic science, the David Lubin Bureau and the General Directors' Board, with its vast recording organization, its hundreds of thousands of stations and observers, directing, adjusting, apportioning and distributing, had not even begun to exist. Adjustment was left to blind and ill-estimated forces. It was the general interest of mankind to be prosperous, but it was nobody's particular interest to keep affairs in a frame of prosperity. Manifestly a dramatic revision of the liberties of enterprise was necessary, but the enterprising people who controlled politics, so far as political life was controlled, were the very last people to undertake such a revision.

With the hypertrophy of productive activities there had been a concurrent hypertrophy of banking and financial organization generally, but it had been a flabby hypertrophy, a result

of the expansion of material production rather than a compensatory and controlling development.

It is so plain to us to-day that the apportionment of the general product of the world for enterprise or consumption is a department of social justice and policy, and can be dealt with only in the full light of public criticism and upon grounds of claim and need, that it is difficult for us to understand the twentieth-century attitude to these things. We should no more dream of leaving the effectual control in these matters in private profit-seeking hands than we should leave our law courts or our schools to the private bidder. But nothing of the sort was plain in 1935 C.E. That lesson had still to be learnt.

The story of banking and money in the early twentieth century has so much in it verging upon the incredible that it has become one of the most attractive and fruitful fields for the student of historical psychology. The system had grown up as a tangle of practice. It was evolved, not designed. There was never any attempt to gauge the justice or the ultimate consequences of any practice, so long as it worked at the time. Men tried this and that, did this and that, and concealed their opinions of what the results might be. Reserve was essential in the system. So little was the need for publicity in this universal interest understood that the most fundamental decisions affecting the common man's purchasing power and the credit of industrial undertakings were made in secret, and the restriction and stimulation of trade and work went on in the profoundest obscurity. Neither in the ordinary courses of the schools and universities was there any instruction in these essential facts. The right of private enterprise to privacy was respected in the Churches, the law courts and private practice alike. Men found themselves employed or unemployed, cheated of their savings or better off, they knew not why. Instead of the clear knowledge of economic pressures and movements that we have to-day, strange Mystery Men were dimly visible through a fog of baffling evasions and mis-statements, manipulating prices and exchanges.

Prominent among these Mystery Men was a certain Mr Montagu Norman, Governor of the Bank of England from 1920 to 1935. He is among the least credible figures in all history, and a great incrustation of legends has accumulated about him. In

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truth the only mystery about him was that he was mysterious. His portrait shows a slender, bearded man, dressed more like a successful artist or musician than the conventional banker of the time. He was reputed to be shy and, in the phraseology of the time, "charming", and he excited the popular imagination by a habit of travelling about under assumed names and turning up in unexpected places. Why he did so, nobody now knows. Perhaps he did it for the fun of doing it. He gave evidence before an enquiry into finance in 1930 (the Macmillan Committee), and from that and from one or two of his public speeches that have been preserved it is plain that he had what we should now consider an entirely inadequate education for the veiled activities in which he was engaged. Of human ecology he betrays no knowledge, and his ideas of social and economic processes are not what we should now recognize as adequate general ideas even for an ordinary citizen. Indeed his chief qualification for his darkly responsible post was some practical experience acquired in association with various private banking firms before he entered the service of the Bank of England. This experience was acquired during what we know now to have been a period of quite accidental and transitory expansion of human wealth. Plainly he did not even bring a blank mind to his task. He had a mind warped and prejudiced by gainful banking under abnormal conditions. Yet for a time he was regarded as an "expert" of almost magical quality, and during the convulsions of the post-war period he was able to dictate or defeat arrangements that enriched or impoverished millions of people in every country in Europe.

Another big obscure financial force in the war and post-war periods was the complex of great private banking ganglia of which Morgan and Co., with its associated firms, was the most central and most typical. This particular firm carried on its business upon a scale that completely overshadowed many minor governments. The loans it made or refused, confirmed or shattered régimes. Its founder, J. P. Morgan, a queer combination of Yankee "gentleman" and German junker, whose innate acquisitiveness overflowed in great collections of pictures and "art" objects generally, had died before the outbreak of the war, but a phrase he used in a dispute with President Roosevelt the First was taken up later and made into a deadly critical weapon against

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the whole private banking world. "Roosevelt," he protested, "wants all of us to have glass pockets!"

A second President Roosevelt was presently to revive that demand.

Nothing could better betray the habit of deep gained manœuvrings than that phrase. Morgan was never dishonest and always disingenuous. That was the rule of his game. Opaque pockets he insisted upon, and hidden motives, but also the punctual performance of a bargain. His tradition lived after him. His firm became an octopus of credit. The interweaving bargains it made hung like a shadowy group of spiders' webs about European life. It did its work of strangulation by its nature and without malice, as a spider spins. No contemporary could apprehend it. The particulars of any particular situation could only be unravelled vaguely by a normal enquirer after many months of study.

Interacting with such mystery systems as these of the banking world were other dark figures and groups, controlling vast industrial activities, obsessing and perverting spending power. There was, for example, that Mystery Man of Mystery Men, Sir Basil Zaharoff, the armaments salesman, still the delight of our schoolboy novelists, and Ivar Kreuger, who created an almost world-wide system of lucifer match monopolies, lent great sums to governments and was finally caught forging big parcels of bonds. He then staged a suicide in Paris to escape the penalty of fraud. (We have to remember that in those days the lucifer matches we now see in museums were consumed by the billion. There was no other handy source of fire, and their manufacture and distribution was on the scale of a primary industry.) Kreuger, unlike Morgan, was not a man of the acquisitive type; he neither hoarded nor collected; he kept nothing, not even the law, but he built lavishly and gave away money for scientific research. (The discovery of Pekin Man, a memorable incident in early archaeology, was, for instance, made possible by his gifts.) Morgan forestalled and accumulated; Kreuger robbed and gave. When Morgan spent his gains he bought "Old Masters", manuscripts and suchlike indisputably genuine and valuable junk; when Kreuger dispersed the moneys that had been entrusted to him he made the most extraordinary experiments in decorative art, in electric lighting and fantastic building. But each

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uncertainty; it was like being in an earthquake, when it seems equally unsafe to stand still or run away; and the multitudes of unemployed increased continually. The economically combatant nations entrenched themselves behind tariffs, played each other tricks with loans, repudiations, sudden inflations and deflations, and no power in the world seemed able to bring them into any concerted action to arrest and stop their common dégringolade.

The opening years of the second third of the twentieth century saw *Homo sapiens* in the strangest plight. The planet had a healthier and more abundant human population than it had ever carried before, and it lacked nothing in its available resources to give the whole of this population full and happy lives. That was already the material reality of the position. But through nothing in the world but a universal, various muddle-headedness, our species seemed unable to put out its hand and take the abundance within its reach. As we turn over the periodicals and literature of the time the notes of apprehension and distress increase and deepen. The war period of 1914-1918 was full of suffering, but also it was full of excitement; even the dying on the battlefields believed that a compensatory peace and happiness lay close ahead. The survivors were promised "homes fit for heroes". But the Depression of 1930 and onward was characterized by its inelasticity; it was a phase of unqualified disappointment and hopelessly baffled protest. One lived, as one contemporary writer put it, in "a world bewitched".

The economic consequences of this monetary disorganization followed hard upon it, but the deeper-lying destruction of social morale and its effects were manifested less immediately. The whole world system heretofore had been sustained by the general good behaviour of common men, by the honesty and punctuality of clerks, workers of every sort, traders, professional men. General security depended upon habitual decent behaviour in the street and on the countryside. But the common man behaved well because he had faith that his pay was a safe, if sometimes a scanty, assurance of a certain comfort and dignity in his life. He imagined an implicit bargain between himself and society that he should be given employment and security in exchange for his law-abiding subordination, and that society

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would keep faith with his savings. He assumed that the governments would stand by the money they issued and see that it gave him the satisfactions it promised him. He was not a good boy for nothing. Nobody is. But now in various terms and phrases all over the world millions of men and women were asking themselves whether it "paid" to be industrious, skilful and law-abiding. The cement of confidence in the social fabric from 1918 onward was more and more plainly decaying and changing to dust. The percentage of criminal offences, which had been falling through all the period of prosperity, rose again.

§ 13. 1933: "Progress" Comes to a Halt

So we bring the history of mankind to that great pause in social expansion which concluded the first third of the twentieth century. The year 1933 closed in a phase of dismayed apprehension. It was like that chilly stillness, that wordless interval of suspense, that comes at times before the breaking of a storm. The wheels of economic life were turning only reluctantly and uncertainly; the millions of unemployed accumulated and became more and more plainly a challenge and a menace. All over the world the masses were sinking down through distress and insufficiency to actual famine. And collectively they were doing nothing effectual in protest or struggle. Insurrectionary socialism lurked and muttered in every great agglomeration. But insurrection alone could remedy nothing without constructive ideas, and there was no power and energy yet behind any such constructive ideas as had appeared. The merely repressive forces, whatever their feebleness in the face of criminality, were still fully capable of restraining popular insurrection. They could keep misery stagnant and inoperative.

Everywhere, in everything, there was an ebb of vitality. A decline in the public health was becoming perceptible. A diminishing resistance to infections and a rise in the infantile death-rate was already very evident in the vital statistics after 1933.

War was manifestly drawing nearer, in Eastern Asia, in Eastern Europe; it loitered, it advanced, it halted, and no one displayed the vigour or capacity needed to avert its intermittent, unhurrying approach.

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Still the immense inertia of the old order carried things on. Under a darkling sky, the majority of people were going about their businesses according to use and wont. The unprofitable industries still carried on with reduced staffs; the shopkeepers opened their shops to a dwindling tale of customers; the unemployed queued up at the Labour Exchanges by force of habit, and some at least got a job; the landlord's agent no longer collected the rent that was due but called for an instalment of his arrears; the unfed or ill-fed children went sniffing to chilly schools to be taught by dispirited teachers on reduced salaries, but still the schools were not closed; the bankrupt railways and steamship lines ran diminished but punctual services; hotels stayed open not to make profits but to mitigate losses; the road traffic lost something of its newness and smartness and swiftness, but still it flowed; the crowds in the streets moved less briskly, but, if anything, these sluggish crowds were more numerous, and the police, if less alertly vigilant, maintained order.

There had been a considerable if inadequate building boom after the Peace of Versailles, but after 1930 new construction fell off more and more. Yet some builders found work, necessary repairs were attended to, burnt-out houses were reconditioned, for example. In 1935 and 1937 the world was swept by influenza epidemics of unusual virulence. The lowered resistance, already noted by the statisticians, was now made conspicuous by this return towards mediæval conditions; but the doctors and nurses stuck to their duties stoutly and the druggists and undertakers, whose affairs had long since been reorganized on Big Business lines, profited.

Pictures of life in the shadows during this phase of devitalization are not very abundant, nor do they convey the essential misery into which a whole generation was born, in which it lived and died. One sees the rows of dilapidated houses, the wretched interiors and shabbily clad men and women standing about. In these pictures they seem always to be just standing about. Descriptive journalism brings the student nearer to the realities of a life without space, colour, movement, hope or opportunity. There were a number of "enquiries" made, more particularly by the British, American and French newspapers, and the tale they tell is always a tale of wheels slowing down to a stoppage.

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of factory gates being closed, of smokeless chimneys and rusting rails. Here is a vivid contemporary vignette, to show how things were with millions of human beings during this strange phase of human experience. It is from the pen of H. M. Tomlinson (1877-1969) one of the best of English descriptive writers.

"I chanced upon a little town above Cardiff last week. It was by pure chance: I had never before heard of the place. It is typical of these valleys, so never mind its name. It could have many names. Its population is, or was, about 6,000. Its people have faced trouble before—less than twenty years ago over 300 of its men perished in a mine explosion. We won't say the town got over that, for I spoke to those for whom the calamity is an abiding horror. It was a terrific defeat for them in the war upon Nature, but survivors returned to the struggle and said no more about it.

"When first I saw the town from a distance, with the bleak, bare uplands about it, I was reminded of the towns, once familiar, that were too near the battle-line in France. It was midday, and sunny, yet this colliery town was silent and so still that it seemed under a spell.

"As a fact, it is under a spell. It is, in a way, dead. But its people cling to this empty shell of it. Where else can they go?

"At first sight no people could have been there. Buildings in the foreground were in ruins. The gaunt pit-head gearing evidently had not moved for an age. The gaps in the blackened walls of the power-house suggested a haunt of bats and owls.

"The first man I met when I reached the end of its main street and saw then that the shops were not only closed, but abandoned, was standing on the kerb, a man in the middle years, shrewd, but haggard, his clothes brushed till they were threadbare.

"What's the matter with this town?" I asked.

"On the dole."

"Are you out too?"

"Of course I'm out."

"How long?"

"He was silent. He held up five fingers.

"Months?"

"Years."

TODAY AND TOMORROW

"Are all the men born the same?"

"Most of them. And won't go back."

He led me up a mound of refuse, where a goat was eating paper, and we had a near view of the colliery itself. That's the reason we won't go down again," he said. "How would you work it?"

"Whether by design or not a steel footbridge had fallen across the wide railway track which went to the pit-head. A deflected stream guttered down between the tracks, which were overgrown with grass and stagnant marsh stuff. The outbuildings were a huddle of dilapidations. It looked haunted. 'Some men I know,' muttered my guide, 'are still down there. Does they'll stop. They've been there nineteen years now. Would you call them lucky?'

"Two thousand five hundred men came out of the principal colliery five years ago. That is why the shops are shut, long rows of them with whitewashed windows and doorways filled with dust and straws. The woodwork of many houses has been taken for firewood. Even the Co-operative store is shut, as well as the pawnshop. Thrift and thriftlessness mean the same thing in this town, where I noticed that even Nonconformist chapels, with broken windows, had been left to the rats and birds.

"Worse than the dismal shops and broken buildings are the groups of shabby men, all neat and tidy, standing listless and silent at the street corners, waiting.

"Waiting for what? Nothing. There is nothing to come. . . .

"They are doomed, these parents, to watch a generation grow up with thin bones and a shadow on its mind. Their children learn the signs of the slow death about them when they should be at play: children that have no childhood.

"Their homes are in a graveyard of human aspiration. . . ."

The Press and literature of that period make curious reading. It varied between a bleak, ingenuous optimism and hopeless desperation. An undignified viciousness and a jeering humour invaded popular art and literature: "strong" in manner and in flavour rather than in any grasp upon the realities of contemporary life. There was also an abundant production and consumption of reassuring and deliberately "cheerful" books, a movement towards

THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

religious mysticism and other-worldliness and a marked tendency towards repressive puritanism. Excesses of libertarianism provoke conservatism and superstitious suppression, the two things are correlated aspects of a decline in human dignity. In the face of its financial and political perplexities mankind was becoming neurasthenic.

All neurasthenia has apparently unaccountable elements. To us to-day, it seems incredible that the way out of all these distresses was not plainly seen and boldly taken. There was a blindness and an effortlessness that still exercise the mind of the social psychologist. The way was so plain that it was visible, it was indicated by hundreds of intelligent and detached observers as early as the thirties of the twentieth century. Maxwell Brown, in his study of the Modern State idea, has two supplementary volumes of citations to this effect. Such phrases, for example, as "Cosmopolis, Inflation and Public Employment" (from a British provincial newspaper article in 1932) do state, in general terms at any rate, the line of escape for the race. These are crude, ill-defined terms, but manifestly they have in them the shape of the ultimate reconstruction. "Cosmopolis" foreshadows our rational world controls, "Inflation" was a plain indication of our present complete restraint upon the aggravation of debts and fluctuations of price level; "Public Employment" was our ancestors' conception of socialist enterprise.

But before the exodus to peace and freedom could be achieved, such scattered flashes of understanding had to ignite a steadier illumination. The conception of revolutionary world reconstruction had to spread from the few to the many, spread to them not merely as an idea and as a suggestion, but in such force as to saturate their minds and determine their lives. Then, and then only, could the necessary will-power be marshalled and directed to the effective reorganization of earthly affairs.

A struggle for sanity had to take place in the racial brain, a great casting-out of false assumptions, conventional distortions, hitherto unriticized maxims and impossible "rights", a great clearing-up of ideas about moral, material and biological relationships; it was a struggle that, as we shall see, involved the passing of three generations. To an analysis of the factors and decisive forces in this struggle our history must next address itself.

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Something between eight and ten thousand million human lives in all were lived out during the Age of Frustration. Compared with the average lives of to-day, they were shorter and far less healthy: nearly all of them had long phases of such infection, maladjustment and enfeeblement as are now almost outside man's experience. The great majority of them were passed laboriously in squalid or dingy surroundings, in huts, hovels, cottages, tenements and cellars almost as dismal as the ancestral cave and nearly as insanitary. A minority who could command the services of "domestics" lived in relative comfort and even with a certain freedom and luxury, at an enormous cost to the rest. This prosperous minority dwindled after 1931. It had vanished in Russia after 1917.

There was a diminishing sense of personal security in the world, an evergrowing fear and uncertainty about the morrow, through the ensuing years. There was what we find now an almost incredible amount of mutual distrust, suspicion, irritation and quarrelling. Only a small proportion of the world's population lived to be peacefully and gracefully old in this phase of deterioration. Disease or a violent death became the common end again. One of the first general histories that was ever written was called *The Martyrdom of Man* (Winwood Reade, 1871). In the Age of Frustration it seemed to many that that martyrdom was mounting to a final hopeless agony.

Yet in the welter there were also laughter, sympathy, helpfulness and courage. Those fretted and painful lives interwove with threads of great brightness. Out of that medley of human distresses, out of the brains of men stressed out of indolence and complacency by the gathering darkness and suffering about them, there came first the hope, then the broad plan and the effort, and at last the achievement of that fruitful order, gathering beauty and happy assurance, in which we live to-day.

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BOOK THE SECOND

THE DAYS AFTER TOMORROW : THE AGE OF FRUSTRATION

- § 1. *The London Conference, the Crowning Failure of the Old Governments ; The Spread of Dictatorships and Fascisms.*
- § 2. *The Sloughing of the old Educational Tradition.*
- § 3. *Disintegration and Crystallization in the Social Magma. The Gangster and Militant Political Organizations.*
- § 4. *Changes in War Practice after the World War.*
- § 5. *The Fading Vision of a World Pax : Japan reverts to Warfare.*
- § 6. *The Western Grip on Asia Relaxes.*
- § 7. *The Modern State and Germany.*
- § 8. *A Note on Hatred.*
- § 9. *The Last War Cyclone, 1940-1950.*
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BOOK THE SECOND

THE DAYS AFTER TOMORROW : THE AGE OF FRUSTRATION

§1. *The London Conference, the Crowning Failure of the Old Governments ; The Spread of Dictatorships and Fascisms*

IN the preceding chapters we have explained how the old order of the nineteenth century, the Capitalist System as it was called, came to disaster in the second and third decades of the twentieth century because of the disproportionate development of its industrial production, the unsoundness and vulnerability of its monetary nexus, and its political inadaptability. It had no inherent power of recovery, and there was no idea of a new order, sufficiently developed, to replace it. Necessarily therefore the tale of disaster went on.

The only mechanisms in existence for collective action, and that only in disconnected spurts, were the various sovereign governments. Most of these at the outset of the war were either parliamentary monarchies or parliamentary republics. The parliaments were elected upon a very preposterous system by the bulk or all of the population. The age was called the Age of Democracy. Democracy did not mean then what it means now, an equal opportunity for every human being according to his ability and the faculty to which he belongs to serve and have a voice in collective affairs. Nor did it mean the fraternal equality of a small community. It expressed a political fiction of a very extraordinary kind : that every subject of the contemporary state was equally capable of making whatever collective decisions had to be made.

The great republics of a remoter antiquity, the Carthaginian, the Athenian, the Roman, for example, were all essentially aristocratic. Democratic republics, that is to say republics in which every man was supposed to share equally in the government, in the rare instances when they occurred at all before the end of the eighteenth century, were, like Uri, Unterwalden or Andorra, small

and poor and perched in inaccessible places. The world at large knew nothing of them. Their affairs were equally small and well within the scope of a common citizen's understanding.

Then with the Era of European Predominance came a turning-point in human affairs, that outbreak of hopes and dis- confusion when the destructive criticism of faiths and loyalties feudal order to breaking. Exploration and merchandising, new financial conditions, industrial development, created new types of men, uncertain of their powers, needing and demanding free play. They did not know clearly what they wanted; they did not nor had they any conception of such a structural reform of human relations as Plato had already pictured nearly two thousand years before them. His plan for a devoted and trained order of rulers was unknown to them, though More had tried to revive it. They were simply responding to the facts about them. They chafed under an hereditary aristocracy, and they distrusted an absolute king.

Essentially the movement that evolved the phraseology of nineteenth-century democracy was a revolt against "birth" and "privilege", against the monopolization of direction and advantages by restricted and generally hereditary classes in accordance with definitely established dogmas. Because this revolt was the revolt of a very miscellaneous number of energetic and resentful individuals not definitely organized, mentally or socially, it came about that at a quite early stage of the new movement it took the form of an assertion of the equal political rights of all men.

It was not that these sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Radicals were for government by the general mass; it was that they were antagonistic to established classes and rulers. They constituted a vigorous insurgent minority rousing, so far as it could, and trailing after it the apathetic majority of submissive mankind. That was always the character of these democratic movements of the Age of European Predominance. The multitude was supposed to be demanding and deciding—and all the time it was being pushed or led. The individuality of the popular "leaders" of those centuries stands out far more vividly than the kings and ecclesiastics of the period. Only one or two such hereditary monarchs

2 William Prince of Orange, or Frederick the Great of Prussia, were as conspicuously on the record as—to cite a miscellany of new types—Cromwell, Voltaire, Mirabeau, Washington, Gladstone, Robespierre, Bonaparte or Marx.

Later on, in England, America, Scandinavia, Germany, Finland, e.g., in just the same way a minority of dissatisfied and aggressive women struggling for a rôle in affairs inflicted the vote upon the indifferent majority of women. But their achievement ended with that. Outside that sexual vindication, women at that time had little to contribute to the solution of the world's problems, and as a matter of fact they contributed nothing.

Research in social psychology is still only beginning to unravel the obscure processes by which faith in "democracy" became for the better part of a century the ruling cant of practically all America and the greater part of Europe. There was often a profound internal disingenuousness even in those who were known as "Thinkers" in that age. They were afraid in their hearts of stark realities, they tried instinctively to adapt even their heresies to what seemed to them invincibly established prejudices. Their primary conception of democracy was of some far-away simple little republic of stout upstanding men, all similar, all practically equal in fortune and power, managing the affairs of the canton in a folk-meeting, by frank speech and acclamation. All the old-world democracies, up to and including the Republic of Rome, were ruled, in theory at least, by such meetings of all the citizens. The people, it was imagined, watched, listened, spoke, and wisdom ensued.

The extension of this ideal to the large communities of the new world that was replacing the feudal order involved such manifest difficulties and even such absurdities that mysticism was inevitable if the people was still to be supposed the sovereign of the community. But there was so strong and widespread a dread that if this supposition was not maintained privilege, restriction, tyranny would come back that the mystical interpretation was boldly adopted. At any cost those old inequalities must not return, said the adventurers of the dawning capitalist age, and, flying from our subjugation, they hurried on to another.

They found the doctrine of man's natural virtue as expounded by Rousseau extraordinarily helpful and effective. The common man, when he is not beguiled by Priest or King, is always right.

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The Common People became therefore a mystical sympathetic being, essentially a God, whose altar was the hustings and whose oracle the ballot box. A little slow and lumpish was this God of the Age of European Predominance, but, though his mills ground slowly, men were assured that they ground with ultimate exactitude. And meanwhile business could be carried on. You could fool some of the people all the time and all the people some of the time, said Abraham Lincoln, but you could not fool all the people all the time. Yet for such crucial purposes as bringing about a war or exploiting an economic situation, this was manifestly a quite disastrous degree of foolability.

And the situation naturally evolved a Press of the very highest fooling capacity.

This belatedly inevitable Divinity proved now to be altogether too slow-witted for the urgent political and economic riddles, with ruin and death at hand, which pressed upon our race as the twentieth century unfolded. The experience of the futile Disarmament and Economic Conferences of 1932 and 1933, the massive resistance in every national legislature to any but the most narrow egotism in foreign policy, the inability of the world as a whole to establish any unanimity of action in face of swift economic collapse, revealed the final bankruptcy of Parliamentary Democracy.

The inability of the world's nominal rulers to shake off their lifelong habit of speaking to, or at, a vaguely conceived crowd of prejudiced voters, and their invincible repugnance from clear statement, frustrated every effort towards realism. They recoiled from any suggestion of definitive or novel action on the plea that their function was purely representative. Behind them all the reader feels the sprawling uneasy presence of that poor invertebrate mass deity of theirs, the Voter, easily roused to panic and frantic action against novel, bold or radical measures, very amenable to patriotic claptrap, very easily scared and maddened into war, and just as easily baffled to distrust and impotence by delays, side issues, and attacks on the personalities of decisive people he might otherwise have trusted. An entirely irresponsible Press, mercenary or partisan, played upon his baser emotions, which were so easy to play upon, and made no appeal whatever to his intelligence or his conscience.

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