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THE ENDING OF THE WAR

§ 1

ABOUT the end of the war there are two chief ways of thinking, there is a simpler sort of mind which desires merely a date, and a more complex kind which wants particulars. To the former class belong most of the men out at the front. They are so bored by this war that they would welcome any peace that did not definitely admit defeat—and examine the particulars later. The “tone” of the German army, to judge by its captured letters, is even lower. It would welcome peace in any form. Never in the whole history of the world has a war been so universally unpopular as this war.

The mind of the soldier is obsessed by a vision of home-coming for good, so vivid and alluring that it blots out nearly every other consideration. The visions of people at home are of plenty instead of privation, lights up, and the cessation of a hundred tiresome restrictions. And it is natural therefore that a

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writer rather given to guesses and forecasts should be asked very frequently to guess how long the war has still to run.

All such forecasting is the very wildest of shooting. There are the chances of war to put one out, and of a war that changes far faster than the military intelligence. I have made various forecasts. At the outset I thought that military Germany would fight at about the 1899 level, would be lavish with cavalry and great attacks, that it would be reluctant to entrench, and that the French and British had learnt the lesson of the Boer war better than the Germans. I trusted to the melodramatic instinct of the Kaiser. I trusted to the quickened intelligence of the British military caste. The first rush seemed to bear me out, and I opened my paper day by day expecting to read of the British and French entrenched and the Germans beating themselves to death against wire and trenches. In those days I wrote of the French being over the Rhine before 1915. But it was the Germans who entrenched first.

Since then I have made some other attempts. I did not prophesy at all in 1915, so far as I can remember. If I had I should certainly have backed the Gallipoli attempt to win. It was the right thing to do, and it was done abominably. It should have given us Con-

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stantinople and brought Bulgaria to our side ; it gave us a tragic history of administrative indolence and negligence, and wasted bravery and devotion. I was very hopeful of the western offensive in 1915 ; and in 1916 I counted still on our continuing push. I believe we were very near something like decision this last September, but some archaic dream of doing it with cavalry dashed these hopes. The "Tanks" arrived too late to do their proper work, and their method of use is being worked out very slowly. . . . I still believe in the western push, if only we push it for all we are worth. If only we push it with our brains, with our available and still unorganised brains ; if only we realise that the art of modern war is to invent and invent and invent. Hitherto I have always hoped and looked for decision, a complete victory that would enable the Allies to dictate peace. But such an expectation is largely conditioned by these delicate questions of adaptability that my tour of the front has made very urgent in my mind. A spiteful German American writer has said that the British would rather kill twenty thousand of their men than break one general. Even a grain of truth in such a remark is a very valid reason for lengthening one's estimate of the duration of the war.

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There can be no doubt that the Western allies are playing a winning game upon the western front, and that this is the front of decision now. It is not in doubt that they are beating the Germans and shoving them back. The uncertain factor is the rate at which they are shoving them back. If they can presently get to so rapid an advance as to bring the average rate since July 1st up to two or three miles a day, then we shall still see the Allies dictating terms. But if the shove drags on at its present pace of less than a mile and four thousand prisoners a week over the limited Somme front only, if nothing is attempted elsewhere to increase the area of pressure,* then the intolerable stress and boredom of the war will bring about a peace long before the Germans are decisively crushed. But the war, universally detested, may go on into 1918 or 1919. Food riots, famine, and general disorganisation will come before 1920, if it does. The Allies have a winning game before them, but they seem unable to discover and promote the military genius needed to harvest an unquestionable victory. In the long run this may not be an unmixed evil. Victory, complete and dramatic, may be bought too dearly. We need not

* This was written originally before the French offensive at Verdun.

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triumphs out of this war but the peace of the world.

This war is altogether unlike any previous war, and its ending, like its development, will follow a course of its own. For a time people's minds ran into the old grooves, the Germans were going *nach Paris* and *nach London*; Lord Curzon filled our minds with a pleasant image of the Bombay Lancers riding down *Unter den Linden*. But the Versailles precedent of a council of victors dictating terms to the vanquished is not now so evidently in men's minds. The utmost the Allies talk upon now is to say, "We must end the war on German soil." The Germans talk frankly of "holding out." I have guessed that the western offensive will be chiefly on German soil by next June; it is a mere guess, and I admit it is quite conceivable that the "push" may still be grinding out its daily tale of wounded and prisoners in 1918 far from that goal.

None of the combatants expected such a war as this, and the consequence is that the world at large has no idea how to get out of it. The war may stay with us like a schoolboy caller, because it does not know how to go. The Italians said as much to me. "Suppose we get to Innsbruck and Laibach and Trieste," they said, "it isn't an end!" Lord North-

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cliffe, I am told, came away from Italy with the conviction that the war would last six years.

There is the clearest evidence that nearly everyone is anxious to get out of the war now. Nobody at all, except perhaps a few people who may be called to account, and a handful of greedy profit-seekers, wants to keep it going. Quietly perhaps and unobtrusively, everyone I know is now trying to find the way out of the war, and I am convinced that the same is the case in Germany. That is what makes the Peace-at-any-price campaign so exasperating. It is like being chased by clamorous geese across a common in the direction in which you want to go. But how are we to get out—with any credit—in such a way as to prevent a subsequent collapse into another war as frightful?

At present three programmes are before the world of the way in which the war can be ended. The first of these assumes a complete predominance of our Allies. It has been stated in general terms by Mr. Asquith. Evacuation, reparation, due punishment of those responsible for the war, and guarantees that nothing of the sort shall happen again. There is as yet no mention of the nature of these guarantees. Just exactly what is to happen to Poland, Austria, and the Turkish Empire does not appear in this prospectus. The German Chancellor is equally

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elusive. The Kaiser has stampeded the peace-at-any-price people of Great Britain by solemnly proclaiming that Germany wants peace. We knew that. But what sort of peace? It would seem that we are promised vaguely evacuation and reparation on the western frontier, and in addition there are to be guarantees—but it is quite evident they are altogether different guarantees from Mr. Asquith's—that nothing of the sort is ever to happen again. The programme of the British and their Allies seems to contemplate something like a forcible disarmament of Germany; the programme of Germany hints at least at a disarmament and military occupation of Belgium, the desertion of Serbia and Russia, and the surrender to Germany of every facility for a later and more successful German offensive in the west. But it is clear that on these terms as stated the war must go on to the definite defeat of one side or the other, or a European chaos. They are irreconcilable sets of terms.

Yet it is hard to say how they can be modified on either side, if the war is to be decided only between the belligerents and by standards of national interest only, without reference to any other considerations. Our Allies would be insane to leave the Hohenzollern at the end of the war with a knife in his hand,

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after the display he has made of his quality. To surrender his knife means for the Hohenzollern the abandonment of his dreams, the repudiation of the entire education and training of Germany for half a century. When we realise the fatality of this antagonism, we realise how it is that, in this present anticipation of hell, the weary, wasted and tormented nations must still sustain their monstrous dreary struggle. And that is why this thought that possibly there may be a side way out, a sort of turning over of the present endlessly hopeless game into a new and different and manageable game through the introduction of some external factor, creeps and spreads as I find it creeping and spreading.

That is what the finer intelligences of America are beginning to realise, and why men in Europe continually turn their eyes to America, with a surmise, with a doubt.

A point of departure for very much thinking in this matter is the recent speech of President Wilson that heralded the present discussion. All Europe was impressed by the truth, and by President Wilson's recognition of the truth, that from any other great war after this America will be unable to abstain. Can America come into this dispute at the end to insist upon something better than a new

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diplomatic patchwork, and so obviate the later completer Armageddon? Is there, above the claims and passions of Germany, France, Britain, and the rest of them, a conceivable right thing to do for all mankind, that it might also be in the interest of America to support? Is there a Third Party solution, so to speak, which may possibly be the way out from this war?

And further I would go on to ask, is not this present exchange of Notes, appealing to the common sense of the world, really the beginning, and the proper beginning, of the unprecedented Peace Negotiations to end this unprecedented war? And, I submit, the longer this open discussion goes on before the doors close upon the secret peace congress the better for mankind.

§ 2

Let me sketch out here what I conceive to be the essentials of a world settlement. Some of the items are the mere commonplaces of everyone who discusses this question; some are less frequently insisted upon. I have been joining up one thing to another, suggestions I have heard from this man and that, and I believe that it is really possible to state a solution that will be acceptable to the bulk of

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reasonable men all about the world. Directly we put the panic-massacres of Dinant and Louvain, the crime of the *Lusitania* and so on into the category of symptoms rather than essentials, outrages that call for special punishments and reparations, but that do not enter further into the ultimate settlement, we can begin to conceive a possible world treaty. Let me state the broad outlines of this pacification. The outlines depend one upon the other; each is a condition of the other. It is upon these lines that the thoughtful, as distinguished from the merely combative people, seem to be drifting everywhere.

In the first place, it is agreed that there would have to be an identical treaty between all the great powers of the world binding them to certain things. It would have to provide:—

That the few great industrial states capable of producing modern war equipment should take over and control completely the manufacture of all munitions of war in the world. And that they should absolutely close the supply of such material to all the other states in the world. This is a far easier task than many people suppose. War has now been so developed on its mechanical side that the question of its continuance or abolition rests now entirely upon four or five great powers.

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Next comes the League of Peace idea ; that there should be an International Tribunal for the discussion and settlement of international disputes. That the dominating powers should maintain land and sea forces only up to a limit agreed upon and for internal police use only or for the purpose of enforcing the decisions of the Tribunal. That they should all be bound to attack and suppress any power amongst them which increases its war equipment beyond its defined limits.

That much has already been broached in several quarters. But so far is not enough. It ignores the chief processes of that economic war that aids and abets and is inseparably a part of modern international conflicts. If we are to go as far as we have already stated in the matter of international controls, then we must go further and provide that the International Tribunal should have power to consider and set aside all tariffs and localised privileges that seem grossly unfair or seriously irritating between the various states of the world. It should have power to pass or revise all new tariff, quarantine, alien exclusion, or the like legislation affecting international relations. Moreover, it should take over and extend the work of the International Bureau of Agriculture at Rome with a view to the control of all staple

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products. It should administer the sea law of the world, and control and standardise freights in the common interests of mankind. Without these provisions it would be merely preventing the use of certain weapons; it would be doing nothing to prevent countries strangling or suffocating each other by commercial warfare. It would not abolish war.

Now upon this issue people do not seem to me to be yet thinking very clearly. It is the exception to find anyone among the peace talkers who really grasps how inseparably the necessity for free access for everyone to natural products, to coal and tropical products, e.g. free shipping at non-discriminating tariffs, and the recognition by a Tribunal of the principle of common welfare in trade matters, is bound up with the ideal of a permanent world peace. But any peace that does not provide for these things will be merely the laying down of the sword in order to take up the cudgel. And a "peace" that did not rehabilitate industrial Belgium, Poland, and the north of France would call imperatively for the imposition upon the Allies of a system of tariffs in the interests of these countries, and for a bitter economic "war after the war" against Germany. That restoration is, of course, an implicit condition to any attempt to set up an economic peace in the world.

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These things being arranged for the future, it would be further necessary to set up an International Boundary Commission, subject to certain defining conditions agreed upon by the belligerents, to re-draw the map of Europe, Asia, and Africa. This war does afford an occasion such as the world may never have again of tracing out the "natural map" of mankind, the map that will secure the maximum of homogeneity and the minimum of racial and economic freedom. All idealistic people hope for a restored Poland. But it is a childish thing to dream of a contented Poland with Posen still under the Prussian heel, with Cracow cut off, and without a Baltic port. These claims of Poland to completeness have a higher sanction than the mere give and take of belligerents in congress.

Moreover this International Tribunal, if it was indeed to prevent war, would need also to have power to intervene in the affairs of any country or region in a state of open and manifest disorder, for the protection of foreign travellers and of persons and interests localised in that country but foreign to it.

Such an agreement as I have here sketched out would at once lift international politics out of the bloody and hopeless squalor of the present conflict. It is, I venture to assert, the peace

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of the reasonable man in any country whatever. But it needs the attention of such a disengaged people as the American people to work it out and supply it with—weight. It needs putting before the world with some sort of authority greater than its mere entire reasonableness. Otherwise it will not come before the minds of ordinary men with the effect of a practicable proposition. I do not see any such plant springing from the European battlefields. It is America's supreme opportunity. And yet it is the common sense of the situation, and the solution that must satisfy a rational German as completely as a rational Frenchman or Englishman. It has nothing against it but the prejudice against new and entirely novel things.

§ 3

In throwing out the suggestion that America should ultimately undertake the responsibility of proposing a world peace settlement, I admit that I run counter to a great deal of European feeling. Nowhere in Europe now do people seem to be in love with the United States. But feeling is a colour that passes. And the question is above matters of feeling. Whether the belligerents dislike Americans or the Americans dislike the belligerents is an incidental

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matter. The main question is of the duty of a great and fortunate nation towards the rest of the world and the future of mankind.

I do not know how far Americans are aware of the trend of feeling in Europe at the present time. Both France and Great Britain have a sense of righteousness in this war such as no nation, no people, has ever felt in war before. We know we are fighting to save all the world from the rule of force and the unquestioned supremacy of the military idea. Few Frenchmen or Englishmen can imagine the war presenting itself to an American intelligence under any other guise. At the invasion of Belgium we were astonished that America did nothing. At the sinking of the *Lusitania* all Europe looked to America. The British mind contemplates the spectacle of American destroyers acting as bottleholders to German submarines with a dazzled astonishment. "Manila," we gasp. In England we find excuses for America in our own past. In '64 we betrayed Denmark; in '70 we deserted France. The French have not these memories. They do not understand the damning temptations of those who feel they are "*au-dessus de la mêlée*." They believe they had some share in the independence of America, that there is a sacred cause in republicanism, that there are grounds for a peculiar

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sympathy between France and the United States in republican institutions. They do not realise that Germany and America have a common experience in recent industrial development, and a common belief in the "degeneracy" of all nations with a lower rate of trade expansion. They do not realise how a political campaign with the slogan of "Peace and a Full Dinner-Pail" looks in the middle west, what an honest, simple, rational appeal it makes there. Atmospheres alter values. In Europe, strung up to tragic and majestic issues, to Europe gripping a gigantic evil in a death struggle, that would seem an inscription worthy of a pigsty. A child in Europe would know now that the context is, "until the bacon-buyer calls," and it is difficult to realise that adult citizens in America may be incapable of realising that obvious context.

I set these things down plainly. There is a very strong disposition in all the European countries to believe America fundamentally indifferent to the rights and wrongs of the European struggle; sentimentally interested perhaps, but fundamentally indifferent. President Wilson is regarded as a mere academic sentimentalist by a great number of Europeans. There is a very widespread disposition to treat America lightly and contemptuously, to believe that

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America, as one man put it to me recently, "hasn't the heart to do anything great or the guts to do anything wicked." There is a strong undercurrent of hostility therefore to the idea of America having any voice whatever in the final settlement after the war. It is not for a British writer to analyse the appearances that have thus affected American world prestige. I am telling what I have observed.

Let me relate two trivial anecdotes.

X came to my hotel in Paris one day to take me to see a certain munitions organisation. He took from his pocket a picture postcard that had been sent him by a well-meaning American acquaintance from America. It bore a portrait of General Lafayette, and under it was printed the words, "General Lafayette, *Colonel in the United States army.*"

"Oh! these Americans!" said X with a gesture.

And as I returned to Paris from the French front, our train stopped at some intermediate station alongside of another train of wounded men. Exactly opposite our compartment was a car. It arrested our conversation. It was, as it were, an ambulance *de grand luxe*; it was a thing of very light, bright wood and very golden decorations; at one end of it was

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painted very large and fair the Stars and Stripes, and at the other fair-sized letters of gold proclaimed—I am sure the lady will not resent this added gleam of publicity—"Presented by Mrs. William Vanderbilt."

My companions were French writers and French military men, and they were discussing with very keen interest that persistent question, "the ideal battery." But that ambulance sent a shaft of light into our carriage, and we stared together.

Then Colonel Z pointed with two fingers and remarked to us, without any excess of admiration:

"America!"

Then he shrugged his shoulders and pulled down the corners of his mouth.

We felt there was nothing more to add to that, and after a little pause the previous question was resumed.

I state these things in order to make it clear that America will start at a disadvantage when she starts upon the mission of salvage and reconciliation which is, I believe, her proper rôle in this world conflict. One would have to be blind and deaf on this side to be ignorant of European persuasion of America's triviality. I would not like to be an American travelling in Europe now, and those I meet here and there

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have some of the air of men who at any moment may be dunned for a debt. They explode without provocation into excuses and expostulations.

And I will further confess that when Viscount Grey answered the intimations of President Wilson and ex-President Taft of an American initiative to found a World League for Peace, by asking if America was prepared to back that idea with force, he spoke the doubts of all thoughtful European men. No one but an American deeply versed in the idiosyncrasies of the American population can answer that question, or tell us how far the delusion of world isolation which has prevailed in America for several generations has been dispelled. But if the answer to Lord Grey is "Yes," then I think history will emerge with a complete justification of the obstinate maintenance of neutrality by America. It is the end that reveals a motive. It is our ultimate act that sometimes teaches us our original intention. No one can judge the United States yet. Were you neutral because you are too mean and cowardly, or too stupidly selfish, or because you had in view an end too great to be sacrificed to a moment of indignant pride and a force in reserve too precious to dispel? That is the still open question for America.

Every country is a mixture of many strands.

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There is a Base America, there is a Dull America, there is an Ideal and Heroic America. And I am convinced that at present Europe under-rates and misjudges the possibilities of the latter.

All about the world to-day goes a certain freemasonry of thought. It is an impalpable and hardly conscious union of intention. It thinks not in terms of national but human experience; it falls into directions and channels of thinking that lead inevitably to the idea of a world-state under the rule of one righteousness. In no part of the world is this modern type of mind so abundantly developed, less impeded by antiquated and perverse political and religious forms, and nearer the sources of political and administrative power, than in America. It does not seem to matter what thousand other things America may happen to be, seeing that it is also that. And so, just as I cling to the belief, in spite of hundreds of adverse phenomena, that the religious and social stir of these times must ultimately go far to unify mankind under the kingship of God, so do I cling also to the persuasion that there are intellectual forces among the rational elements in the belligerent centres, among the other neutrals and in America, that will co-operate in enabling the United States to play that rôle of the Unimpassioned Third Party, which be-

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comes more and more necessary to a generally satisfactory ending of the war.

§ 4

The idea that the settlement of this war must be what one might call an unimpassioned settlement or, if you will, a scientific settlement or a judicial and not a treaty settlement, a settlement, that is, based upon some conception of what is right and necessary rather than upon the relative success or failure of either set of belligerents to make its Will the standard of decision, is one that, in a great variety of forms and partial developments, I find gaining ground in the most different circles. The war was an adventure, it was the German adventure under the Hohenzollern tradition, to dominate the world. It was to be the last of the Conquests. It has failed. Without calling upon the reserve strength of America the civilised world has defeated it, and the war continues now partly upon the issue whether that adventure shall ever be repeated or whether it shall be made for ever impossible, and partly because Germany has no organ but its Hohenzollern organisation through which it can admit its failure and develop its latent readiness for a new understanding on lines of mutual tolera-

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tion. For that purpose nothing more reluctant could be devised than Hohenzollern imperialism. But the attention of every combatant—it is not only Germany now—has been concentrated upon military necessities; every nation is a clenched nation, with its powers of action centred in its own administration, bound by many strategic threats and declarations, and dominated by the idea of getting and securing advantages. It is inevitable that a settlement made in a conference of belligerents alone will be shortsighted, harsh, limited by merely incidental necessities, and obsessed by the idea of hostilities and rivalries continuing perennially; it will be a trading of advantages for subsequent attacks. It will be a settlement altogether different in effect as well as in spirit from a world settlement made primarily to establish a new phase in the history of mankind.

Let me take three instances of the impossibility of complete victory *on either side*, giving a solution satisfactory to the conscience and intelligence of reasonable men.

The first—on which I will not expatiate, for everyone knows of its peculiar difficulty—is Poland.

The second is a little one, but one that has taken hold of my imagination. In the settle-

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ment of boundaries preceding this war the boundary between Serbia and north-eastern Albania was drawn with an extraordinary disregard of the elementary needs of the Albanians of that region. It ran along the foot of the mountains which form their summer pastures and their refuge from attack, and it cut their mountains off from their winter pastures and market towns. Their whole economic life was cut to pieces and existence rendered intolerable for them. Now an intelligent Third Party settling Europe would certainly restore these market towns, Ipek, Jakova, and Prisrend, to Albania. But the Albanians have no standing in this war; theirs is the happy lot that might have fallen to Belgium had she not resisted; the war goes to and fro through Albania; and when the settlement comes, more particularly if it is a settlement with the allies of Serbia in the ascendant, it is highly improbable that the slightest notice will be taken of Albania's plight in this region. In which case these particular Albanians will either be driven into exile to America or they will be goaded to revolt, which will be followed no doubt by the punitive procedure usual in the Balkan peninsula.

For my third instance I would step from a matter as small as three market towns and the

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grazing of a few thousand head of sheep to a matter as big as the world. What is going to happen to the shipping of the world after this war? The Germans, with that combination of cunning and stupidity which baffles the rest of mankind, have set themselves to destroy the mercantile marine not merely of Britain and France but of Norway and Sweden, Holland, and all the neutral countries. The German papers openly boast that they are building a big mercantile marine that will start out to take up the world's overseas trade directly peace is declared. Every such boast receives careful attention in the British press. We have heard a very great deal about the German will-to-power in this war, but there is something very much older and tougher and less blatant and conspicuous, the British will. In the British papers there has appeared and gained a permanent footing this phrase, "ton for ton." This means that Britain will go on fighting until she has exacted and taken over from Germany the exact equivalent of all the British shipping Germany has submarined. People do not realise that a time may come when Germany will be glad and eager to give Russia, France and Italy all that they require of her, when Great Britain may be quite content to let her allies make an advantageous peace and herself still go on

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fighting Germany. She does not intend to let that furtively created German mercantile marine ship or coal or exist upon the high seas—so long as it can be used as an economic weapon against her. Neither Britain nor France nor Italy can tolerate anything of the sort.

It has been the peculiar boast of Great Britain that her shipping has been unpatriotic. She has been the impartial carrier of the whole world. Her shippers may have served their own profit; they have never served hers. The fluctuations of freight charges may have been a universal nuisance, but they have certainly not been an aggressive national conspiracy. It is Britain's case against any German ascendancy at sea, an entirely convincing case, that such an ascendancy would be used ruthlessly for the advancement of German world power. The long-standing freedom of the seas vanishes at the German touch. So beyond the present war there opens the agreeable prospect of a mercantile struggle, a bitter freight war and a war of Navigation Acts for the ultimate control in the interests of Germany or of the Anti-German allies, of the world's trade.

Now how in any of these three cases can the bargaining and trickery of diplomatists and the advantage-hunting of the belligerents pro-

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duce any stable and generally beneficial solution? What all the neutrals want, what every rational and far-sighted man in the belligerent countries wants, what the common sense of the whole world demands, is neither the "ascendancy" of Germany nor the "ascendancy" of Great Britain nor the "ascendancy" of any state or people or interest in the shipping of the world. The plain right thing is a world shipping control, as impartial as the Postal Union. What right and reason and the welfare of coming generations demand in Poland is a unified and autonomous Poland, with Cracow, Danzig, and Posen brought into the same Polish-speaking ring-fence with Warsaw. What everyone who has looked into the Albanian question desires is that the Albanians shall pasture their flocks and market their sheepskins in peace, free of Serbian control. In every country at present at war, the desire of the majority of people is for a non-contentious solution that will neither crystallise a triumph nor propitiate an enemy, but which will embody the economic and ethnological and geographical common sense of the matter. But while the formulæ of national belligerence are easy, familiar, blatant, and insistently present, the gentler, greater formulæ of that wider and newer world pacificism has still to be gener-

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ally understood. It is so much easier to hate and suspect than negotiate generously and patiently ; it is so much harder to think than to let go in a shrill storm of hostility. The rational pacifist is hampered not only by belligerency, but by a sort of malignant extreme pacificism as impatient and silly as the extremest patriotism.

§ 5

I sketch out these ideas of a world pacification from a third-party standpoint, because I find them crystallising out in men's minds. I note how men discuss the suggestion that America may play a large part in such a permanent world pacification. There I end my account rendered. These things are as much a part of my impression of the war as a shell-burst on the Carso or the yellow trenches at Martinpuich. But I do not know how opinion is going in America, and I am quite unable to estimate the power of these new ideas I set down, relative to the blind forces of instinct and tradition that move the mass of mankind. On the whole I believe more in the reason-guided will-power of men than I did in the early half of 1914. If I am doubtful whether after all this war will "end war," I think on

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the other hand it has had such an effect of demonstration that it may start a process of thought and conviction, it may sow the world with organisations and educational movements considerable enough to grapple with and either arrest or prevent the next great war catastrophe. I am by no means sure even now that this is not the last great war in the experience of men. I still believe it may be.

The most dangerous thing in the business so far as the future is concerned is the wide disregard of the fact that national economic fighting is bound to cause war, and the almost universal ignorance of the necessity of subjecting shipping and overseas and international trade to some kind of international control. These two things, restraint of trade and advantage of shipping, are the chief material causes of anger between modern states. But they would not be in themselves dangerous things if it were not for the exaggerated delusions of kind and difference, and the crack-brained "loyalties" arising out of these, that seem still to rule men's minds. Years ago I came to the conviction that much of the evil in human life was due to the inherent vicious disposition of the human mind to intensify classification.*

* See my "First and Last Things," Book I. and my "Modern Utopia," Chapter X.

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I do not know how it will strike the reader, but to me this war, this slaughter of eight or nine million people, is due almost entirely to this little, almost universal, lack of clear-headedness; I believe that the share of wickedness in making war is quite secondary to the share of this universal shallow silliness of outlook. These effigies of emperors and kings and statesmen that lead men into war, these legends of nationality and glory, would collapse before our universal derision, if they were not stuffed tight and full with the unthinking folly of the common man.

There is in us all an indolent capacity for suffering evil and dangerous things, that I contemplate each year of my life with a deepening incredulity. I perceive we suffer them; I record the futile protests of the intelligence. It seems to me incredible that men should not rise up out of this muddy, bloody, wasteful mess of a world war, with a resolution to end for ever the shams, the prejudices, the pretences and habits that have impoverished their lives, slaughtered our sons, and wasted the world, a resolution so powerful and sustained that nothing could withstand it.

But it is not apparent that any such will arises. Does it appear at all? I find it hard to answer that question because my own answer

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varies with my mood. There are moods when it seems to me that nothing of the sort is happening. This war has written its warning in letters of blood and flame and anguish in the skies of mankind for two years and a half. When I look for the collective response to that warning, I see a multitude of little chaps crawling about their private ends like mites in an old cheese. The kings are still in their places, not a royal prince has been killed in this otherwise universal slaughter; when the fatuous portraits of the monarchs flash upon the screen the widows and orphans still break into loyal song. The ten thousand religions of mankind are still ten thousand religions, all busy at keeping men apart and hostile. I see scarcely a measurable step made anywhere towards that world kingdom of God, which is, I assert, the manifest solution, the only formula that can bring peace to all mankind. Mankind as a whole seems to have learnt nothing and forgotten nothing in thirty months of war.

And then on the other hand I am aware of much quiet talking. This book tells of how I set out to see the war, and it is largely conversation. . . . Perhaps men have always expected miracles to happen; if one had always lived in the night and only heard tell of the day, I suppose one would have expected dawn

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to come as a vivid flash of light. I suppose one would still think it was night long after the things about one had crept out of the darkness into visibility. In comparison with all previous wars there has been much more thinking and much more discussion. If most of the talk seems to be futile, if it seems as if everyone were talking and nobody doing, it does not follow that things are not quietly slipping and sliding out of their old adjustments amidst the babble and because of the babble. Multitudes of men must be struggling with new ideas. It is reasonable to argue that there must be reconsideration, there must be time, before these millions of mental efforts can develop into a new collective purpose and really *show*—in consequences.

But that they will do so is my hope always and, on the whole, except in moods of depression and impatience, my belief. When one has travelled to a conviction so great as mine it is difficult to doubt that other men faced by the same universal facts will not come to the same conclusion. I believe that only through a complete simplification of religion to its fundamental idea, to a world-wide realisation of God as the king of the heart and of all mankind, setting aside monarchy and national egotism altogether, can mankind come to any certain

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happiness and security. The precedent of Islam helps my faith in the creative inspiration of such a renaissance of religion. The Sikh, the Moslem, the Puritan have shown that men can fight better for a Divine Idea than for any flag or monarch in the world. It seems to me that illusions fade and effigies lose credit everywhere. It is a very wonderful thing to me that China is now a republic. . . . I take myself to be very nearly an average man, abnormal only by reason of a certain mental rapidity. I conceive myself to be thinking as the world thinks, and if I find no great facts, I find a hundred little indications to reassure me that God comes. Even those who have neither the imagination nor the faith to apprehend God as a reality will, I think, realise presently that the Kingdom of God over a world-wide system of republican states, is the only possible formula under which we may hope to unify and save mankind.

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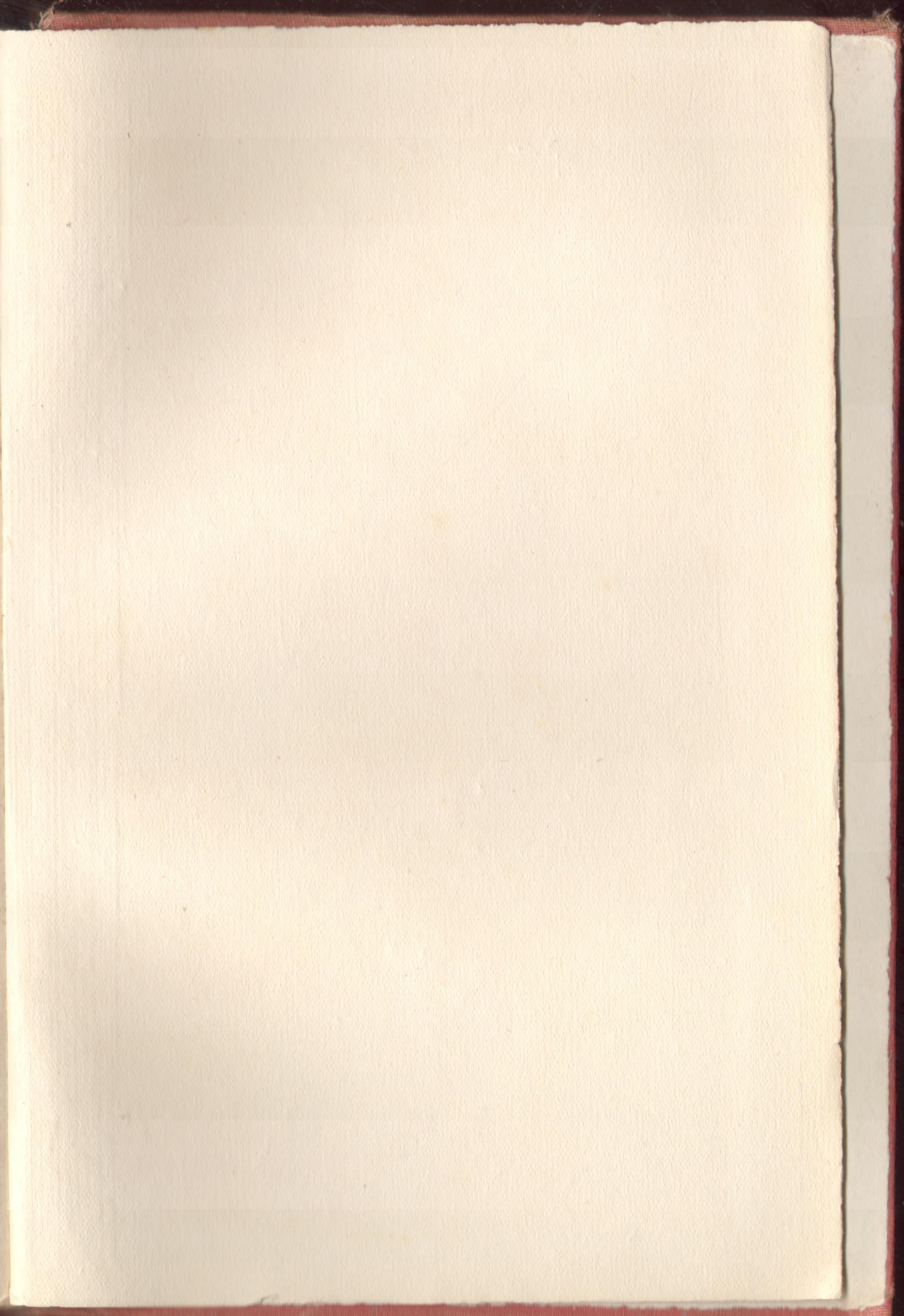
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