

gle clear cause and against the ardent desires and prayers of the vast majority of all most deeply concerned; each protesting its own innocence and its own devotion to peace. But there was no basis to be found for peace; instead of mutual confidence and good faith there was nothing but the quicksand of distrust and suspicion; each felt compelled to strike lest the other should strike first. No one can read these documents and the history of carnage since written without feeling that the world as it existed then was hardly fit to live in, and offers no safe foundation for the further evolution of human life; it is a world that stands in need of radical and immediate change.

The present war has at least torn off the veil and exposed the total depravity of war. The world has fooled itself with pleasing phantasms of international law and rules of warfare; it even dreamed that modern war at least was noble and almost humane. The rape of Belgium, the shrieks of drowning women and children, the bombing of quiet homes in undefended towns, and other horrors new each day have provided a rude awakening. All these are merely the inevitable result of the logic of war applied without ruth; worse will come just as soon as worse can be found. The very hymn of hate, abhorrent to every human ideal, fits perfectly into the system and spirit of war. Germany has simply played the terrible role of frightfulness in becoming the last champion of war as the final arbiter of human affairs. To have been chosen by the forces of history for this role is in itself punishment enough for any national crimes. Under the pressure of their situation in the middle of Europe, Germany chose, or rather its rulers chose for it, to be aligned with the past and against the future; for this reason is the defeat of the Germans so indispensable, for their victory would set back the clock of progress five hundred years; and Germany herself, in the midst of Europe, would be the most tragic sufferer.

The world is ablaze with war because in 1914 it was an inflammable world

charged with high explosives, material and spiritual. With the material explosives, from the bomb at Sarajevo to the Krupp guns in Germany, we are not much concerned; they are but the tools of the spiritual, and of them neither make nor prevent wars. If two men live side by side they are pretty sure to quarrel sooner or later if they are quarrelsome men or if they believe they have cause to quarrel; this regardless of whether they have bowie knives or sixshooters or not. They can get sixshooters if they really want to kill each other, or if no six-shooters are to be had they can do damage enough with fists, clubs, or stones: lack of weapons is never a safeguard against war and disaster.

Of the spiritual causes of war, none is more striking than a sort of exaggerated national ego, of which Pan-Germanism is probably the most terrible example. With the Germans this characteristic can be traced far back in their history.

But Germany is not alone in her exaggerated national ego and ill-concealed contempt of other peoples; she is only the extreme case of a general rule. Every nation considers itself the Chosen people of God: not only Germans, but French, English, and of course, we Americans; also Russians, Italians, Serbs; even Turks and Mexicans. If they but felt chosen to serve, which is perhaps the only choice made by God, all would be well; but they feel chosen to rule, and then trouble comes. Fichte told the Germans they were chosen to bear light and truth to all mankind; but the Germans conceived that they were chosen to rule the rest of the world.

Even the idea of God is still clouded in petty nationalism: we profess to worship the father of all mankind, the Lord of all nations; but we cannot break away from the idea that He is peculiarly our God and we His favored people, and that He must fight with our armies and against our enemies. Here again Germany is the horrible example; scarcely a single speech or army order or battle report omits God; only