

PREFACE

One returning from the war is astonished to find how little of the true horror of it crosses the ocean. That this is so is due partly to the strict censorship that suppresses the details of the war, and partly to the fact that the mind is not accustomed to consider misery on a scale so gigantic. The loss of hundreds of thousands of lives, the wrecking of cities, and the laying waste of half of Europe cannot be brought home to people who learn of it only through newspapers and moving pictures and by sticking pins in a map. Were they nearer to it, near enough to see the women and children fleeing from the shells and to smell the dead on the battle-fields, there would be no talk of neutrality.

Such lack of understanding our remoteness from the actual seat of war explains. But on the part of many Americans one finds another attitude of mind which is more difficult to explain. It is the cupidity that in the misfortunes of others sees only a chance for profit. In an offer made to its readers a prominent American magazine best expresses this attitude. It promises prizes for the essays on "What the war means to me."