

ARE WE TO PUNISH GERMANY—

The war is a life-and-death struggle, they say ; and they will make it as desperate as possible. They do not look beyond it to the future peace, because that will be made by the crushing of one side or the other ; and there will not be enough left of the losers to feel exasperation or, at any rate, to vent it. That, of course, is nonsense, as the war of 1870 proves. The Germans will not cease to be a nation, if they lose ; nor shall we, if they win. There will always be enough of us left to desire revenge and to make that desire a danger to Germany. But the Germans will not believe that now. We cannot, at present, make any appeal to their reason. We must, therefore, consider only the question of our own conduct.

In discussing this it is worse than useless to express amiable sentiments vaguely or to lament the general wickedness of war. These particular crimes are not part of the general wickedness of war ; and it only exasperates people now to tell them that every nation at war is equally guilty, because it is not true. We have to deal with a situation in which one nation thinks nothing of the future of Europe and wages war with no thought except of victory. She does not care whether she wrecks civilization in the process. If she wins, by whatever means, civilization is secured ; if she loses, it will be destroyed. That is her belief ; and so victory is her only aim, beyond