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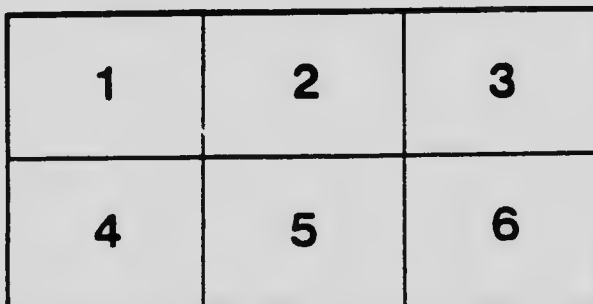
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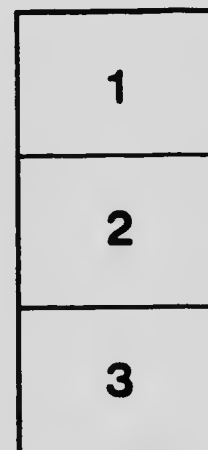
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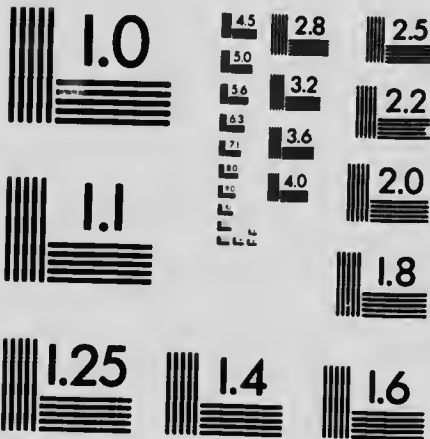
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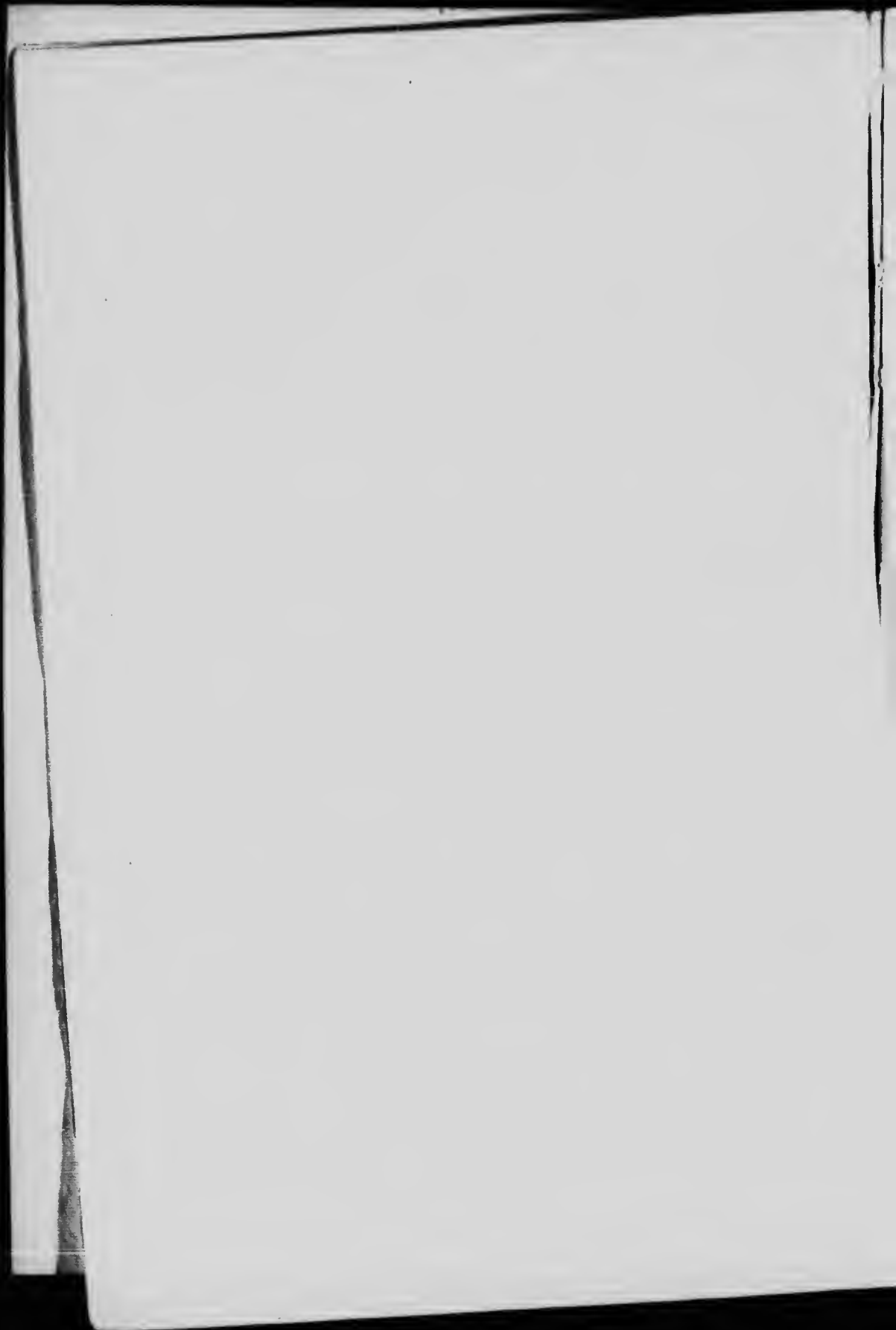
NATIONAL IDEALS

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NATIONAL IDEALS¹

It may seem inopportune at this moment to be discussing such an abstract subject as 'national ideals'. We are continually told, and rightly told, that we must think of nothing but fighting the enemy until we have thoroughly defeated him: that the one thing necessary is 'munitions of war': that we must not consider terms until the enemy is beaten to the ground. I cannot express too strongly my concurrence with this view. Day by day we learn more of the immense organization and the determined spirit of the enemy. Every nerve must be strained to meet the forces—material and moral—which we have to face. And yet even if that be so, what could be more relevant to the situation or indeed more imperiously demanded of us than that we should examine our resources and take stock of our national possession in the spiritual as well as in the material sphere? We believe—the vast majority of us believe—that, whatever the immediate occasion of this war may have been, it is at bottom a conflict of principles, of ideals: and if that be so, it cannot be amiss to consider what the principles are for which as a united people we stand—Mother Country, Dominions, Crown Colonies, and India alike—side by side with our allies, against the military forces, long and carefully prepared, of Central Europe. It cannot indeed be expected that all who are fighting on our side will realize to the full

¹ An address given at University College, Nottingham, on May 5, 1915.

the magnitude and wide bearing of the issue ; but unless from those who are better informed a knowledge of the meaning of the conflict spreads through the rank and file of our army, we shall fail to achieve the concentration, the unity, and the fervour which are naturally to be found in nations schooled to military discipline and service by long training and taught through two generations to 'think to order'. 'Munitions of war,' yes. But we need the weapons of the spirit as well as bread for our soldiers and ammunition for our guns.

As Englishmen we are all at some disadvantage when we are called upon to state our ideals. Our native inclination is to do the right thing and make no fuss. We are shy of using large language, and of claiming to be better than other people. We prefer to justify our action in off-hand language as 'playing the game' or to speak lightly of our responsibilities as 'part of the day's work', and we are perhaps unduly reluctant to go beyond the opportunism of the particular occasion or to appeal to fundamentals. We gain by this, and we lose. We gain something in that cheerful and undefeated spirit which has been so splendidly displayed on many fields in this war, not 'sicklied o'er by the pale cast of thought'; we gain in freshness, in elasticity of mind, in initiative and enterprise. We do not take ourselves too seriously. One result of this is that our enemies call us hypocrites when we do on occasion state a principle, and careless-minded and decadent when we refuse to wear our heart upon our sleeve.

But there is some loss on the other side. We have been too little in the habit of thinking things out. We have often omitted to ask ourselves or to teach our children what our national inheritance means and what England stands for in the world. We have rejoiced in

the wide range of our possessions and the invincible ubiquity of our fleet, but we have given far too little thought to the movements of the world at large and to international politics. That is not likely to happen again for some time after this war. But unless we begin to consider the vital issues before the war is over, we may find ourselves, at the council-table of the nations, weakened and disabled by our want of clear ideas and of a well-defined policy. It is not suggested that we can profitably discuss to-day what should be the terms of peace, but that the more we can make the solid mass of our people understand what principles we are fighting for, the less likely will it be that popular ignorance and prejudice and passion will lead us into error in the day of settlement. It is worth while, then, to consider what is the national ideal that we should put forward when we are called upon to justify our separate existence as a nation, and our position as a Great Power.

When we are discussing national ideals we have to consider them under two main heads, the inward and the outward. There is the inner life of the nation, its growth and development as a body of men and women whose lot is cast to live together within the borders of a single organized State ; and there is the outer life of the nation, its relations to other peoples, and the part it is to play on the stage of the world's history. The two cannot, indeed, be separated : the inner life reacts on the outer, and the outer on the inner. But they can be conveniently discussed apart.

What, then, is our ideal of national life, considered first from within, without reference to the nations who are outside us ? If we are asked to sum up in a few words the qualities which we think most characteristic of our life and existence as a nation, what we aim at

and strive to secure, we should probably answer—Freedom and Justice. Let us analyse these terms. Freedom, the fact and the spirit of individual liberty, is, we all believe, one thing which distinguishes our life from the life of the German people, so efficient and so powerful, but, on the other hand, so wanting in political sense, so dependent on authority. What do we mean by Freedom? Freedom is a noble word, and in our great political traditions, in the facts of English history, with its gradual enfranchisement of classes, that half-conscious process of political development which we believe has achieved national well-being more easily and with less friction than other peoples, this

freedom slowly broadening down
From precedent to precedent

has played a great part. What do we mean by Freedom and the free life? Two or three generations ago, when we in England were dazzled by the wonderful expansion of our manufacture and our commerce, we were too ready to think of freedom as something negative: a removal of barriers, a fair field and no favour, unrestricted competition, and 'the devil take the hindmost': and this merely negative idea of freedom has been a potent influence in our politics. But if we question the great masters of English thought and action we shall find that the freedom for which they fought and which they championed in their writings was something more vital, positive, and inspiring than a mere removal of fetters—whether the fetters be those of class or trade or government. An abstract liberty, a liberty '*in vacuo*', is unmeaning. A brave word like 'freedom' depends for its meaning and its power on the relation in which it stands to a vast background of

association and tradition, to the inarticulate living and striving of the whole nation, in all ranks and classes—in a word, to national character and the mind of the people. There was a time when we pinned our faith on a policy of *laissez-faire*, trusting, in a serene spirit of optimism, to natural forces to produce a beneficent result, until the products of our policy—in ‘sweating’ and slums and all the disorders of unrestricted industrialism—brought us up sharp and reminded us that abstract freedom, unbalanced by discipline, order, and control, unguided by a positive ideal, can lead to nothing but disaster. Experience, then, has taught us to question the gifts that are offered us in the name of freedom, and to test them by the conception of national well-being and of a common good. In a word, we are beginning to learn that freedom must be interpreted in a large sense if it is to satisfy the cravings of the spirit. It is a century since Wordsworth wrote—

It is not to be thought of that the Flood
Of British freedom, which to the open Sea
Of the world's praise from dark antiquity
Hath flowed ‘with pomp of waters unwithstood’,
Roused though it be full often to a mood
Which spurns the check of salutary bands—
That this most famous Stream in Bogs and Sands
Should perish and to evil and to good
Be lost for ever.

Wordsworth had seen the triumph and the disappointments of the French Revolution—the overthrow of barriers, but an overthrow which paved the way for the vast uncompromising militarism which in his great poems on Napoleon he was now eloquently combating. Freedom to him was something positive, vital, intolerant of absolute rule, rooted in character. It was the kind of liberty of which Milton says : ‘ Unless your liberty,

which is of such a kind as arms can neither procure nor take away, which alone is the fruit of piety, of justice, of temperance and unadulterated virtue, shall have taken deep root in your minds and hearts, there will not long be wanting one who will snatch from you by treachery what you have acquired by arms.'

We, like Wordsworth, have had our times of disappointment as we watched the movements of enfranchisement in our own country: our Reform Bills have not accomplished all that was sometimes hoped of them; but nevertheless, if a large view be taken of their bearing on national life, we contend that on the whole and in the main they have promoted that atmosphere of free life which is the indispensable condition of national well-being.

Freedom, then, regarded from this point of view, means the securing to each citizen of the opportunity of living a free life; not a life of 'unchartered freedom', but a life which gives scope to his natural powers and which makes wise thinking, honest work, and good conduct possible for his achievement: a life which is not limited to personal well-being, but which recognizes a larger whole that has claims upon it, in return for the free conditions, the vital atmosphere which the State supplies. It is in this sense that Justice, our second principle of national life, is complementary to Freedom. What does Justice mean? It has been suggested by a recent writer that 'Russia symbolizes pity, France reason, and England justice'. We trust that the statement is true of England. Justice certainly is part of our ideal: that justice, of which Elyot wrote, 'The ancient civilians do say justice is a will, perpetual and constant, which giveth to every man his right.' To put it in more modern language—Justice secures

to every member of the State the conditions which make a free life possible. When we say all men should be equal before the law, we mean that all members of the State alike are to count as having equal claims upon the State for the exercise of rights, just as all are to be equally bound to contribute according to their resources to the maintenance of the entire system of rights which is embodied in the State. Rights and duties are correlative, and all members of the State must share in both. Justice does not demand that they are to be equal in property any more than it can give them equality in intellectual and physical endowment—but it does demand that on the one hand they should all have equal treatment from those who administer the laws, and that on the other they should so far have regard to the common good as to observe the laws which are the organized safeguard of social well-being and fulfil the duties of personal service and money contribution, which the State by its organs of government has decided to be necessary for the good of the nation.

Both these great words, Freedom and Justice, are but abstract outlines until we view them in relation to the common life of which, as we believe, they are vital conditions. What, then, is our conception of national well-being? We mean a state of things in which the faculties and activities of all men in every class are used to the best purpose, in the production and distribution of material goods, in the pursuit of learning and science, in the daily tasks of common life, and in the fulfilment of the duties which fall to us as a nation occupying a position with great responsibilities. We like to think of our nation as including a great variety of conditions and of gifts, with inequalities of all sorts, no doubt, but inequalities never so great as to close the door to ability

and character in any class of society. We aim at securing in every class material conditions which exclude no one from sharing in that life of the spirit which gives dignity and value to existence. This, or something like it, is the ideal to which we are more and more striving to direct our political efforts. More and more we are looking away from triumphs of party or church or sect, to the promotion of reasonable conditions of life for all citizens. More and more we are endeavouring to provide, through improved means of education, opportunities for every one to share in all that the higher world of thought and imagination has to give—in religion and philosophy, literature, science, the fine arts. Much has been accomplished, but much still remains to be done. The nation with which we are at war has made great use in this struggle of the word 'Kultur'. The word is not easy to render in English, but the suggestion of the Germans seems to be that they are in the van of civilization, that they have absorbed, as no other people has done, the science, the literature, and the art of past ages, and that their nature and character are thereby so enriched and enlarged, and their material resources so magnificently organized, that they may fairly claim, as Athens claimed to be the school of Hellas, to be themselves the school of Europe and of the world. The claim so urged is grotesquely extravagant, but it is probably true that no nation has devoted itself more completely to the organization of education and of research. In that direction we may well take a lesson from them. As a people we are still disposed to pooh-pooh the value of learning and science. This is not the fault of the scholar or the man of science, but of the man in the street, the manufacturer, the man of business, the nation at large. Their attitude has injured our trade and

injured our manufactures. We are reluctant to spend our money on what does not pay, forgetting that in business, as in all other things, he who ventures nothing will win little. Great achievements in business, as in war, demand faith, self-sacrifice, a looking beyond immediate needs and immediate profits.

It is indeed possible to exaggerate the superiority of Germany in research. Those who are inclined to put it too high would do well to read the pamphlet on 'British and German Steel Metallurgy', by Professor Arnold,¹ in which he shows that Germany is far behind in discovery, within the range of this particular branch of applied science. 'There are', he says, '29 constituents or sub-constituents of steel and iron. Of these 26 have been discovered in Sheffield, 3 in Middlesbrough: and the record of Charlottenburg in this branch of research is an absolute blank.' Where the Germans have the advantage of us is not so much in their actual scientific or educational methods as in their readiness to apply scientific ideas to practical purposes, and in their widespread belief in the value and importance of education and science in themselves. The awakening of England to the claims of higher education, which has found expression in the renewal of the older Universities, in the foundation of new Universities, and in such movements as University Extension, and the Workers' Educational Association, is an augury of better days. We may well look forward to a time when as a nation we shall have a profounder sense of the greatness of the things of the mind and a deeper enjoyment of the noble inheritance we possess in the works of our own masters of thought and art. Meantime we may claim one characteristic for our education and our

¹ Oxford Pamphlets, 72.

learning. It is not pedantic or priggish. We do not speak of our 'culture' or our 'civilization', but when the testing moment comes we show that our ideals have somehow worked into our character—*studia abeunt in mores*—and that through every class has penetrated that sense of honour, fair play, and gentleness to women and children which the Germans, who make such large professions of 'Kultur', have failed to embody in their army orders, and which individual Germans have grossly violated in this war. The English soldier has been educated in a society where civil rights are supreme. He knows that he may be held responsible for his acts by the civil authority in time of peace, and his breeding has taught him that in war-time he has a duty towards the weak and defenceless. We are amazed that German education has produced some of the results that we have seen in the war. There are, indeed, some features which we can only admire and emulate—intense patriotism and marvellous organization prepared against every material emergency. If we ask why we find coupled with these qualities such appalling lapses into brutality and such incapacity to estimate moral and psychological factors, the reason is to be found in the fact that the two great principles which have been mentioned, Freedom and Justice as we understand them, have no vital meaning in Germany. Where the press is inspired or throttled by a highly centralized government with no effective parliamentary control, there is not only no real criticism of policy, but there is a blank ignorance of the truth. What fraction of the sixty millions of Germany have any notion of the facts embodied in our White Paper? With the exception of the bold words in the *Vorwärts*, the organ of the Socialist party, there is no attempt to get outside a narrow nationalism. The

professorial class, paid servants of the State, who accept the word of their Government as final, would seem to be hypnotized by a false idea of the absolute value of the German State in the abstract, and have consented to follow blindly the lead of their military class. All classes indifferently appear to acquiesce cheerfully in any brutalities that the War Office or Admiralty demand of them : acts which the instinct of the British soldier or sailor would reject as impossible. The Germans have accepted an ideal—success in war—as justifying all possible means. Having eyes, they see not, neither do they understand. To us, with our free atmosphere of criticism, this triumph of militarism would seem ridiculous if it were not so deplorable and disastrous. Since the failure of the democratic movement in Germany sixty years ago, there has been order and discipline in plenty, but no real political freedom nor ‘civil sense’. If you ask ‘Has there been justice?’ the answer is that the apparatus of justice is there, but that if justice means security of rights for all classes, then it is not realized in Germany. The brutal supremacy of the military class is its open negation. No country has more complete education for its officials than Germany in the details of legal and bureaucratic work : its lawyers have written learnedly and exhaustively on Roman, Mediaeval, and Modern Law : its elaboration of rules and instructions and by-laws is marvellous. You cannot dismount from a tramcar or cross a railway-line without being duly instructed in print how to do it. But when it comes to dealing fairly as between classes, between great landlords and the consumers of their produce, between soldiers and civilians, the bureaucrat and the ordinary citizen, we see at once what gross inequality and injustice may exist side by side with this elaborate machinery. The Zabern

incident was a glaring instance of the spirit which such social conditions produce, as shown towards a German subject. We have had a more recent illustration of the same spirit as shown to a foreigner. On August 3 an Englishman, Mr. Hadley, travelling in a German train, unfortunately fell into an altercation with a Prussian lieutenant, and was shot by him and died of his wounds. The German Government refused to prosecute. The Englishman may possibly have behaved unwisely (though the German official account makes his conduct harmless enough), but what are we to say of the lieutenant and his Government? No nation with any claim to real 'culture' could tolerate such an offence. Though Mr. Hadley, no doubt, suffered partly as an Englishman, his murder throws a lurid light on the German tradition as to treatment of civilians in general. The glorification of war has become a mania. This is not the place to enlarge on the outrages inflicted in Belgium. When the report of our Governmental Committee appears, it may be predicted that there will be found in it an appalling body of well-authenticated facts which will prove that not isolated outbursts only, but deliberate army orders, have been directly responsible for acts which no civilized State should countenance. It is the natural outcome of unbridled militarism, which recognizes no law of humanity or international law to control its own commands.¹

These great principles, which are the vital springs of sound political life, Freedom and Justice, are valuable only if they afford the basis of a sound national character.

¹ Since these words were written the poisoning of the wells in South Africa has added one more crime to the black record of the German Army, and the sinking of the *Lusitania* has illustrated on a larger scale the savage principles of an Admiralty which knows no law.

Have we anything in our national character that we can set against this militarism run mad, this claim to world-supremacy, this pretension to a culture which is above criticism, and which is its own sole judge ?

The eighty years since the Reform Bill have seen such vast social changes that the English world of to-day is immensely different from that of Peel and Palmerston : and yet throughout that period it would be true to say that a certain type of English character remains. Independence, a love of fair play, gentleness to the weak and helpless and wronged, a power of tough resistance to oppression or tyranny, a loathing of intrigue, a love of plain dealing—these are the qualities we associate with the Englishman of our choice. It is not asserted that we all rise to the height of this ideal ; that is not the question. Our quarrel with the German ideal is not that few Germans realize it (it is, alas ! only too widely realized), but that it is a false ideal. It is rooted in inequality and a perverted sense of justice. The German scholars in times past, the great Mommsen and others, have scoffed at our English University education as mere ‘Gentleman-bildung’. We may admit that there was a long period of English University life when scholarship, learning, and science—the purely intellectual side of things—had too little attention : but we have some compensation, as we believe, in the type of character which our education, such as it is, has produced. The word ‘gentleman’ has often been narrowed and abused ; but rightly understood it stands for certain qualities, which we believe are essentially admirable and are characteristic of our national education, both higher and lower. They are qualities which belong to no class, but to the nation : a readiness to take men on their merits, a sense of honour and of the duties of social

position, a love of truth and honesty, a considerateness for the poor and weak, and that spirit of comradeship in danger and difficulty, which to-day, as in many past struggles, has been the vital strength of the British Navy and Army. We may not always rise to this level, but that is our ideal, and it is for this, among other things, that we are fighting. 'I have the highest respect', writes a young subaltern at the front, 'for the British soldier as a fighting man *and a gentleman*.' The experience of all our officers confirms his opinion. And what is true of the Army is true also of the officers and men of the Navy. These qualities are, indeed, often masked by a degree of shyness and reserve which makes the typical Englishman misunderstood by those who do not know him. He is silent and sometimes unsociable, and he is not always very quick to pick up his neighbour's language or point of view. To some, indeed, this reserve may appear a quality of strength. An American writer in *The Times* of March 22 says, 'No race, not even the Chinese, shows less what is going on inside than the English. Some of the world success of the English is due no doubt to their "front". Your Briton is continually fooling the alien races by an appearance of blank stupidity which hides talent or even genius.'

But, whether our reserve, our surliness as some call it, is strength or not, it is happily quick to fall away so soon as men come to close quarters. We see this in the trenches, in the conferences between working men and their professorial teachers, in the difficult negotiations between trade unions and employers, where 'civil sense', the atmosphere of give-and-take and compromise, the readiness to see one another's point of view, and to be reasonable, is the prevailing feature. Again it may be said that we do not always achieve

this ideal—sectarianism, class-feeling, submission to unwise and unreasonableness in labour questions or in church politics, may drive us astray into disunion; but it is this reasonable temper which we all aim at in our public life, and which we believe gives it on the whole a firmer foundation and a happier spirit than is found in any State where autocracy or bureaucracy is the dominant fact.

We admit the admirable qualities of industry and organization in the Germans: we may well take a lesson from them in these. We have often been indolent when we should have been energetic; our powers of organization, great as they are, are apt to be too late in the field. We have often to improvise in the stress of danger machinery which might have been thought out in days of peace. But nevertheless we hold that this perfection of German organization has been bought at too heavy a price, at the price of humanity, tact, and understanding of men.

'Erkenn' dich selbst, leb' mit der Welt in Frieden,' Goethe wrote a hundred years ago in one of his noblest poems: 'Learn to know thyself and live at peace with the world.' How would Goethe think that his countrymen had learnt this lesson, if he were to see them to-day?

The Germans are indeed self-conscious, but self-consciousness is not self-knowledge. They cannot criticize themselves, and they have never quite forgiven Heine for criticizing them. Take one glaring illustration. They have poured out money like water to saturate their enemies' countries with spies (one of the least lovely features of their military method), but they have hopelessly failed to read the mind of the peoples whose safety they were trying to undermine. They misread

the signs of the times: in England they could find only decadence and division; they could not believe that we should stir hand or foot to save the civilization of France or to fulfil our international pledges: they fondly believed that the Belgians would waive their treaty rights and obligations, and for the sake of personal security would stand aside and let them pass: they underestimated the stern determination and the fighting spirit of France, and they believed that Russia would once more be awed into impotence by the spectacle of a War Lord 'in shining armour'. It is not a question of the general policy which determined their action—it may have been fear of the Slavs, or it may have been, as many of us believe, an overmastering ambition to exercise an absolute sway in Central Europe and over the world: what we are concerned with for the moment is the fact that their social and political conditions have trained them badly for reading the character and sentiments of other nations. The militarized State, as many Germans now dolefully admit, is a blunderer in diplomacy. It has no civil sense, and it is mendacious on principle. If we admire the wonderful cohesion of all classes in Germany at this great crisis, it is well to remember that it has been purchased at a frightful cost. Where the Press is subservient to Government and the professoriate is controlled by the Prussian bureaucracy, there is little room for the free formation of opinion by the public, and no chance for honesty and truth in relations with other Powers, for the General Staff overrides the pledges and sworn words of the diplomatist. Only a social system organized to exalt the claims of Germany as something divine and different in kind from those of the rest of the world could have tolerated the 'Hymn of Hate'. To us it is more ridiculous than

appalling, because of its curious want of proportion. Most of us do not hate the Germans as a people—but we hate and abominate their methods, both in diplomacy and war, and we are profoundly indignant at the grievous wound which their Government has inflicted on humanity and international law.

Let us return to our two guiding principles. We have to look at Freedom as something more than a mere loosening of bonds, and at Justice as a living force and not a law-book or a series of orders drafted by a cynical and militarist officialism.

Freedom embodies the conditions that make possible the full exercise of all the resources of the State for a common good. Justice is to be found not in bureaucratic regulations nor mere severity of discipline or punishment, but in the provision of fair conditions of life for men, women, and children of all classes. A large proportion of the labour disputes of the last ten years are concerned with the fulfilment of this ideal. They have got a bad name, because of bad leading on both sides, but in themselves they are legitimate and an expression of a wholesome tendency—the striving of the body politic to adjust itself to the industrial and physical conditions of the time. The last word has not yet been said in this field. We have not yet learnt two great lessons—(1) That in the adjustment of industrial conditions, as of all human relations, we need to apply the highest capacity of mind and character. This is all the more necessary because the invention of limited liability companies has removed some of the more human relations between employer and employed, which naturally arose when all businesses were under private management. (2) That no business can succeed without vital co-operation among all who take part in it. This is

one among the problems which await us in time of peace. In the meantime, all of us have to think of nothing but how we can provide what is needed for the life-and-death struggle in which we are engaged.

Freedom, as I have said, has been imperfectly understood by us in the past. The Germans tell us that we have no sense of discipline. It may, indeed, be argued that our belief in personal freedom has often led to selfishness, and that our individualism has tended to weaken our regard for the claims that our country and its ideals make upon us.

We have looked at freedom too much on its negative side. That was what prevented that great man John Bright from seeing that, human nature being what it is, factory laws are desirable. It was the same negative view of freedom which delayed for many years our law on compulsory education. It has prevented us also hitherto from insisting that our children should have those elements of military training which should enable every citizen,

if he be called upon to face
Some awful moment, to which Heaven has joined
Great issues, good or bad for human kind,

to enter upon the supreme service of his country with a rudimentary acquaintance with the discipline and order of war. We protest, and rightly protest, against a militarized nation; but many of us think that the rudimentary training here spoken of would be not only a valuable discipline for character, but in all probability in the long run an insurance against war.

A nation, like every organism, has, indeed, to achieve the union of opposites. It must be strong, it must have unity and discipline, but it must also be free. Freedom of life, freedom of speech, freedom of opportunity.

Parliamentary government is, we all feel, at this moment on its trial, and many of us are ready to criticize it. The problem of the second, revising, Chamber is still but half solved, and the House of Commons, under pressure of business, seems to some of us to have lost its old character as a real arena for debate and the formation of opinion. Meantime, the claims of those free peoples who are associated with us in the British Empire are but imperfectly represented in our institutions. In a word, we are waiting for some constructive genius to find for us a solution of the great imperial problem which shall at the same time simplify our government and the business of the House of Commons. But with all the defects which it is easy to find in our machinery of government, it still remains true that more than most governments in Europe it combines the two indispensable qualities of stability and elasticity—elasticity in its power of adapting itself to new needs and new conditions, stability in a certain fundamental good sense, which prefers compromise and the spirit of give and take, founded on old traditions of free discussion, to the doctrinaire decisions of extreme partisanship. We believe that we have a government which ensures that on the whole, with all the defects of the party-system and its mechanism, the decisions of Parliament are in reasonably close correspondence with the wishes of the majority of the people.

We complain freely of our Government and its doings, and then we criticize trade unions of working men who become critical also, forgetting that it is this very power of complaint which makes our country what it is. We cannot have it both ways. Our power as a people depends on this free atmosphere of discussion, on this liberty of criticism. On the other hand we must guard

against its weakening effect in face of a common danger, and we must be ready, every man of us, to sacrifice personal comfort for the sake of success in a great cause. What is more, we must not merely learn to meet each occasion as it arises : magnificent as may be our power of improvisation, it cannot in the long run take the place of foresight and considered preparation. We must face our tasks with clearer vision ; we must be less wasteful of our resources, material and moral, less hand-to-mouth in our policy, and more deliberately devote ourselves to strengthening and deepening our national character and training our people of all classes to understand our national ideal and to be able to defend it from attack.

If we turn now from our inner life as a nation to our outward relations, we find, as we might expect, that the very spirit of independence which our free institutions have fostered has made us at times indifferent to the ideals of other nations : but if we have paid too little attention to the feelings of other nations it cannot be fairly contended that as a people we have wantonly disregarded the rights of our neighbours. The picture of England as the 'robber State' is the creation of German professors trying to find in our past history an excuse for the policy of conquest they have been taught to admire. It is of a piece with the policy by which, before carrying into act some brutality in warfare, sinking merchant vessels at sight, use of poisonous gases or the like, they deliberately prepare the way by accusing the Allies of some similar offence. Our ideal has been, abroad as at home, to 'live and let live'. In the past our island position enabled us to stand aloof from many of the struggles of the Continent : if we intervened, it was in the interests of the world at large, to prevent the

domination of a single man or a single State to the detriment of the free life of the peoples of Europe. Our struggles with Louis XIV and with Napoleon, like the present war, were life-and-death struggles to preserve our national existence and the existence of other nations. We read a great deal in German journals of England's 'sea-tyranny', but when we ask for explanation the complaint seems to resolve itself into the fact that British possessions are not German, or the contention that Great Britain has no claim to the Dominions or to India or Egypt, because she has not the will or the power to impose on them a ready-made culture. Generalizing from a very imperfect knowledge of the Irish question, the Germans have been ready to imagine that our kinsmen of the Dominions and the subject-peoples under our rule would be ready to turn and rend us if only we were sufficiently hard pressed. They find it convenient to ignore the other side of the shield. They overlooked the cardinal facts of the situation. What has been the significance of our widespread possessions? They have meant that over a large part of the earth's surface there has been free access for the trade and intercourse of all nations: that by gradual stages our colonies have received ever new instalments of political power, until our Dominions stand by our side as self-governing peoples in close alliance with ourselves. They are not indeed stamped with one pattern, they produce each its own type of life and character, but they retain everywhere, as a hall-mark of their origin, the qualities of freedom and justice which we love to think characterize our State. The true spirit of our relations with the Dominions and India is to be read in the lives of scores of great Englishmen who have built up the greatness of our Empire by just and humane dealing, wise

insight, and courageous independence of character : such men as (not to mention the living) the Lawrences and Sir Charles Napier in India, Lord Durham in Canada, David Livingstone in Africa, and Sir George Grey in New Zealand.¹ Happily we can point, in the present as in the past, to a faithful succession of devoted men, some of them servants of the State, others independent explorers and missionaries, whose lives have contributed to make our Empire what it is, the home of free government and just administration. The result is to be found in the splendid patriotism of the Dominions and of India in the present war. Our Empire is indeed not an empire in the old sense, it implies no sovereign rule of an alien power over subject-peoples : except for India and Egypt, what we call our Empire is an alliance or confederation of kindred peoples, bound together by loose ties of political connexion, but closely and intimately united by common ideals and a common belief in the wholesome rule of freedom and justice. In India and Egypt we have something more nearly like what the ancient world called empire, but here again we have stood for freedom against slavery, for personal security against the tyranny of vicious kings or customs, for education and enlightenment as against obscurantism and cruelty. In these countries we have never, like the Germans, made it our mission to remake men in our own image. Just as in our great Dominion of Canada, ' French-Canadian nationality has been preserved in full vigour ', so in Egypt we have announced that ' the strengthening and progress of Mohammedan institutions is naturally a matter in which His Majesty's Government takes the deepest interest '.¹

¹ See Sir C. Lucas, *The British Empire*, which admirably expresses the spirit and ideals of British imperial rule.

We have made mistakes, we are still making them ; but still our 'civil sense' and (I dare to say) our generosity, have carried us through, and though there have been voices from time to time which have bidden us let India and Egypt go, they have not been the voice of the nation. Again it may be admitted that we have not always risen to the height of our great task. We have often taken our responsibilities too lightly. We have given too little time and thought to these things. But there are signs that this will no longer be so. Readers of the *Round Table* (the wisest and most unbiased review of imperial politics which this or any country has produced) are aware that the process of educating our Dominions in world-politics and of educating England in the politics and affairs of the Dominions is making steady progress. In this time of united effort we ought not to forget the great debt we owe to the writers in that periodical, who have been strengthening the bonds of our union by the spread of knowledge, and preparing the way for a wider British Commonwealth, which shall give fuller expression to the political genius of our race and to its characteristic qualities.

If we turn again from our own Empire to our relations with other nations, our main policy is, as it always has been, to promote freedom and free life, to prevent any world-tyranny, to encourage and support that national development in all countries which makes for the spiritual riches of the world. On the same principle we desire to preserve the smaller nations in their separate existence. To understand other nations ; to live at peace with them ; to promote by common pursuits, by co-operation in enterprises of learning and science, and by religious sympathy, the friendly relations between them ; and to strengthen, so far as may be, the peaceful

means of settling disputes between nations—these are among the objects which we should aim at in our foreign relations. These are objects which we have, as we believe, honestly striven to promote. If we have failed, it was rather from an indolent ignoring of the workings of the German mind and from a good-natured desire to think well of all men than from any disregard of international obligations.

It has been suggested in some quarters since the war began that the war is the product of secret diplomacy and that if we had had what is called 'democratic control' of foreign affairs in England war might have been averted. There is no foundation for this suggestion. Our diplomatists have acted honestly and straightforwardly. As Lord Cromer has told us (*The Times*, April 19) :

'In the great majority of cases the conduct of the individual diplomatist merely reflects as in a mirror the public opinion and standard of national morality of the people whom he represents, and there cannot be any greater mistake than to confound Continental, especially German, and British diplomacy in one general anathema.'

There has been no concealment of British views ; our main principles of foreign policy have been before the world, and we have openly exercised our influence for peace between the nations. This has been admitted by Germany herself. If for the moment our efforts for peace have broken down, it is because there are certain things more precious than peace ; freedom and justice laid inexorable demands upon us. We were bound to defend the pledged neutrality of Belgium and the independent existence of France, and to save Europe from a threatening military tyranny.

It would seem, then, that both within and without what we seek to secure as the fundamental principles of our State life are freedom and justice, and that on this foundation our ideal is to build a common life, strong and various, rich in the interplay and co-operation of all sorts and conditions of men, with adequate material resources and the possibility for all men of some share in the higher life of thought and imagination. How is this great enterprise to be confirmed and inspired? Many forces must co-operate. For many of us the strongest motive will be religious. They will find their impulse in the spirit of social service, and the personal sense of co-operation with a divine Master in a society of kindred spirits strengthened and inspired by common faith and worship. It is not necessary to dwell upon this. But if the religious motive appeals to most of us, it will appeal in various forms, and it rests with each man to see to it that his religious sympathies stretch beyond the bounds of his own church and society, and that his religion may never be used to divide or to disperse the forces which work for the character and well-being of the nation.

Let us turn to other influences. The English character is rooted in history and tradition; it is rooted also in local associations—the beauty of English fields, the glories of sea and sky, and the charm of ancient buildings. Let us remember that it lies with us to guard these beauties: not to be Huns in our own country—to defend it from outward dishonour and disfigurement. But deeper and stronger even than these incalculable influences which pass into our very substance through the associations of the senses, are those forces of imagination which for many of us control the deepest springs of our being. We have seen in the last six months

countless attempts to express the nation's hopes and fears and aspirations in poetry. Some of these have caught the best spirit of the time, and a few have touched the imagination, such as those prophetic lines of Rupert Brooke, whose death in the Aegean we all deplore :

If I should die, think only this of me :
That there 's some corner of a foreign field
That is for ever England.

But the poetry of to-day does not stand alone. In the master-poets of England¹—in the rich pageantry and noble passion of Shakespeare, in the austere organ-voice of Milton, in the national sonnets of Wordsworth, in Tennyson's great 'Ode on the Duke of Wellington'—you will find inspiration for the principles of which you have been reminded to-day. You will find in them what all true Englishmen cherish as part of their ideal—a sense of the dignity of human life and of the gravity of its issues, a passionate love of our country and of all the subtle associations that its history and landscape call up, a conviction that no nation can thrive on tyranny, and an abiding belief in the invincible spirit of man—

Thy friends are exultations, agonies
And love and Man's unconquerable mind.

One word in conclusion. This war has brought home to us, as nothing ever did before, a sense of the value of our own spiritual possessions. As we have seen our young men go forth, radiant in the glory of willing service, to do battle for our great cause, as our hearts have thrilled with mingled sorrow and pride at their death, we have gained a deeper sense of all that England stands for. And we have learnt to respect the ideals of other nations. It will be long before England will

¹ See Professor E. de Sélincourt's interesting lectures on *English Poets and the National Ideal*, to which I owe the quotation from Milton on p. 7.

forget the fortitude and the patience of Belgium, the buoyant courage of the men and the noble devotion of the women of France, the gallant and invincible bravery of the Serbs, the inexhaustible energy and elasticity of that great Russian people, whom we are only beginning to understand, and whose religion and art and science are destined to give new and precious elements to the life of Europe. And we shall always think with gratitude of the valiant, generous, and admirably organized charity of the United States, which has saved the lives of our starving allies and done something to mitigate the horrors of German invasion.

In the great *Commedia* of Dante, a poem of mingled morals and politics, where the virulence of hate and scorn would become intolerable but for the glorious visions of his imagination, each of the great divisions of the poem finds its close in the beauty of the stars of heaven, the guiding influences of the spiritual life. We may find our consolation to-day, amid the anguish of loss and the sorrow for friendships parted and ideals shattered, in fixing our eyes on the guiding principles of our national ideal, seeking in the dangers and distresses of the moment new strength to carry into effect the principles by which our nation—or shall we not say our great Commonwealth of nations?—lives and has its being, new incentives to enrich our national life and character. We have to make it worthy both of the opportunities and of the privileged position that have been given us and of the great and glorious examples that we have inherited from those who have made England what it is.

Winds blow and Waters roll
Strength to the brave and Power and Deity,
Yet in themselves are nothing! One decree
Spake laws to *them*, and said that by the Soul
Only, the Nations shall be great and free.

It is in this spirit that as a united people we must maintain that concentrated and organized effort—with all our powers—which alone can establish our victory; and our victory, we are convinced, is the victory of freedom.

No easy hopes or lies
Shall bring us to our goal,
But iron sacrifice
Of body, will and soul;
There is but one task for all,
For each one life to give,
Who stands if Freedom fall?
Who dies if England live?¹

¹ Rudyard Kipling. *For All We Have and Are.*

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