

# THE PSYCHOLOGY OF WAR

BY

J. T. MACCURDY, M.D.

Is the instinct for war so deeply rooted in the soul of man that it can never be eradicated, or is it rather to be considered as a disease of the mind of the race, which can perhaps be prevented like insanity in the individual? This and many other cognate questions are dealt with by Dr. MacCurdy in his book which commends itself to all thoughtful students of the greatest social problem of all time.



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# THE PSYCHOLOGY OF WAR

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To  
H. J.





## PREFACE

THE conduct of modern warfare demands the co-operation of practically every science. Engineering, chemistry, bacteriology and agriculture are all needed. Even the sanctity of home is invaded, and domestic economy regulated. But behind all the sciences stands the human factor, infinitely the most important of all. On the behaviour of the private in the trenches, the officer in his dug-out, the mechanic at his lathe, and the woman in the kitchen depends the victory. What science can explain how and why they act, or in what way their mental attitudes are altered? Again, before hostilities emerge, something must happen; no meteorological or terrestrial event can cause war, it must be a change in the mind of man. Are the forces which make war and decide its issue to lie uninvestigated? Is mankind going to accept this staggering burden, or attempt solution of its problem merely by wishing for peace?

There is a science ambitious enough to hope for an answer to each of these questions. Unfortunately psychology is young amongst the sciences,

and must therefore hope rather than promise. Perhaps, were it older, there might be no wars. It is with the confidence that that day of peace will be hastened by the diffusion of a psychological viewpoint that this essay has been written. There can be little claim for originality made, as its aim is to bring before the lay reader material and methods of investigation that are normally not available to him. With this some tentative formulations are given, which it is hoped may tend to correlate the hypotheses that are reviewed.

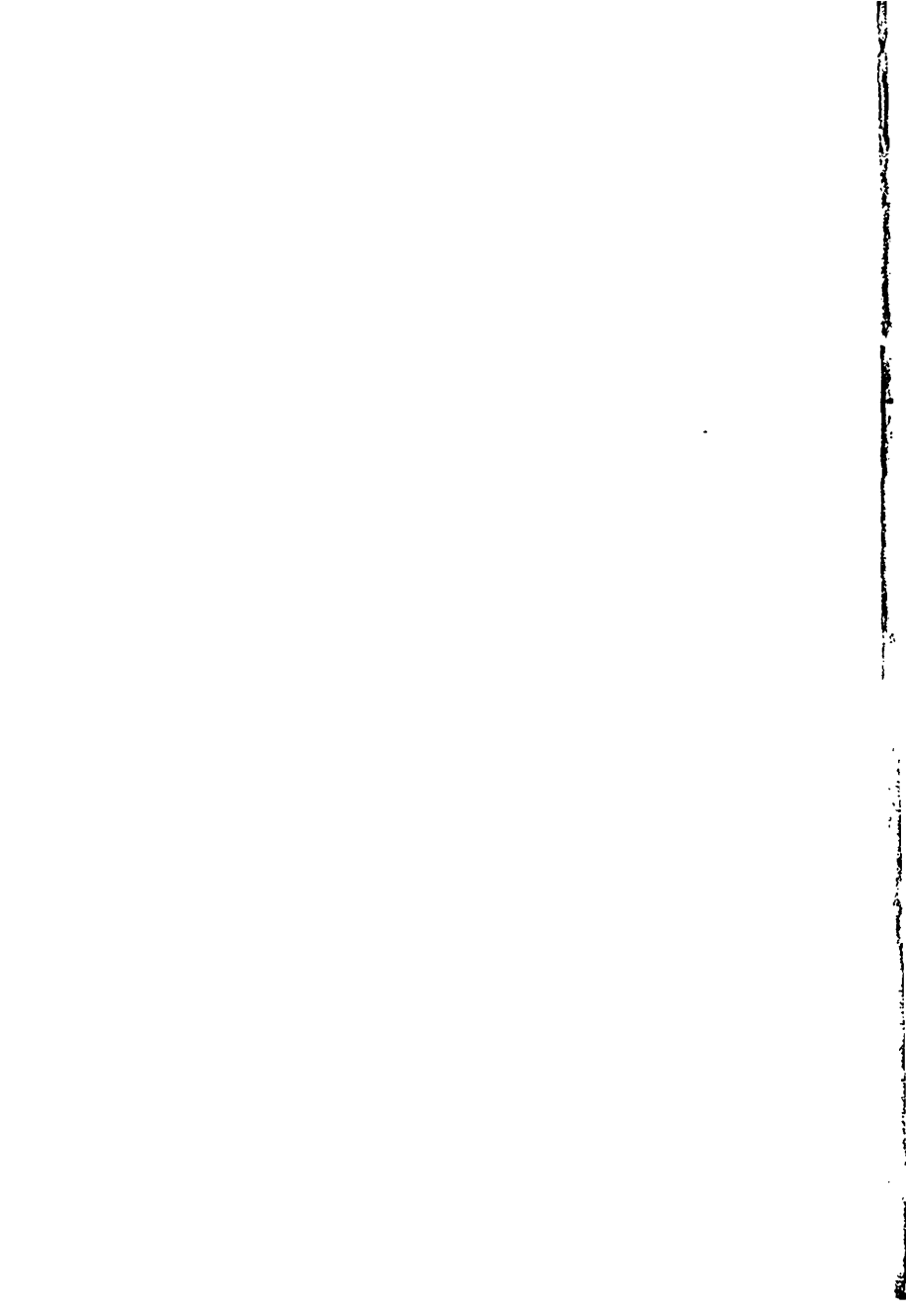
In this essay an analogy between war and mental disease is frankly attempted. No medical treatise is complete without a discussion of treatment for the ailment whose pathology and symptoms are described. Some readers may therefore be lured into perusing the following pages with the hope that, in conclusion, some panacea for war's afflictions may be offered. When one considers, however, that this spirit of strife has always been an intimate part of the soul of man, it will be evident that no simple formula can ever dispel it from his life. Further than that, it is essential to realize that any summary effort to purge the world of war would be pernicious. It is not an isolated phenomenon, but the product of the best and the worst in human kind. It would be a sad day for the race if man lost his hardihood and ideas of loyalty merely for the

sake of peace. His psyche must be transformed, not syncopated. This change can only come from within, and only when he has learned his essential nature. The ambition of the psychologist—a fundamentally practical man—is, therefore, to set men thinking before they act. Whether what is found in this pamphlet be right or wrong, it will have served its purpose if it stimulates a more thoroughgoing study of war on the part of the average citizen, a more rigorous analysis of himself and his martial feelings than he has previously undertaken.

The bulk of this essay was written in America in the summer of 1916. The chapter on America is essentially a postscript, added in London a few weeks after Congress had declared a state of war to exist.

J. T. M.

*London, May 1917.*



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION : THE PROBLEM AND ITS APPROACH

THERE is probably no practice to which man in all his history has clung more tenaciously and irrationally than he has to the pursuit of war. I say irrationally because whatever may have been the incidental benefits to individual tribes or nations, mankind as a whole has surely suffered by war. This statement is really not debatable, since its proof rests on arguments that are truisms. Yet war, with its related issues, remains the greatest problem that man has to solve. In earlier days war was more or less chronic, and was accepted as part of the lot of man ; now, with advance of knowledge and a growing human self-consciousness, its irrationality is better recognized. Perhaps as a result of this there are longer intervals of peace, but warfare when it does come is so much the more bitter. What shall we do about it ? Diplomacy fails to answer ; education refuses to answer, preferring to inculcate the spirit of war ; any religion which tries to answer dies of inanition. Possibly we can turn

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to those who make human behaviour the object of their study, those whose work it is to begin where common sense ends, those whose task it is to teach man what his instincts and tendencies are. With this knowledge it may be that he will see the way his footsteps tend and, seeing, choose or shun that course. By investigating the world around him, man has found that he can largely control his environment. War shows that he cannot control himself. The modern advance of the physical sciences has created the illusion that human safety, human salvation, depends on his clinging to the materialistically obvious. And material science has made of modern war almost a biological suicide. Is it not time to seek aid of psychology, the least material and most practical of the sciences, and study man himself?

As chemistry grew out of alchemy, so psychology has developed from metaphysics. Alchemy consisted largely in the ascription of abstract qualities to material substances, and the combining of these substances in order to produce other abstractions. Chemistry was born when men examined substances to find out what qualities they had—the experimental method. So long as psychology consisted of pasting labels on to subjective mental phenomena it worked in an arid and barren field. However, at the beginning of the present century, roughly speaking, it was

realized that there was an objective method possible: namely, the observation of the mind in disease. It was then discovered that beneath the apparent unity and consistency of consciousness there lay a complicated structure of elements, unrecognized by the subject. One combination of these elements in due proportion makes what we call a normal man, another a neurotic, a third a criminal, a lunatic, and so on. Then there came into being what is practically a new science, *Dynamic Psychology*. Perhaps the most important achievement of this new study is the demonstration that transition from mental normality to abnormality is not occasioned by the addition of something from without, but by a change in combination or relative strengths of the forces that are already operative in "normal" mental life. In war, without the addition of any extramental factor, the behaviour of society and its members is suddenly altered. The fact that this alteration is sometimes a most profound one makes the analogy with the psychosis all the more exact. It becomes evident why psychiatry (using the term in its widest and most correct sense) is the most promising preparation for the psychological study of war. The psychiatrist of the future will be an expert in the affairs of our lives, which are now most notoriously left to chance.



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The program of the psychologist is, therefore, to discover, if possible, what tendencies of the normal mind upset the balance which exists apparently in times of peace, and thereby produce war. That he should analyze the problem completely and estimate to a nicety the strength of every instinct involved is to ask too much of a new science. But if his findings give hints to the educator or law-maker his work will not be in vain.

The objection that any present discussion must necessarily be focused on the European struggle now in progress and inevitably be coloured by prejudice is an argument demanding consideration. One must be an emotional ament or dement not to be swayed in his sympathy and thoughts to one side or the other. And history, we frequently hear, will tell us the true story. That she will be free from superficial prejudices is probable ; but are basic prejudices likely to die ? After a lapse of nearly a thousand years we hear one historian call William Wallace a patriot and another a barbarous outlaw. On the other hand, there is an urgent necessity that the problem be faced now. The will to action, to reform, to a change of national attitude is now present when the carnage of Europe is spread before our eyes ; in ten years' time we shall have placidly grouped the War of 1914 with the Napoleonic Wars or the war between the North and the South in the

United States—something that cannot happen again because the world is different and those problems have disappeared. Yet history teaches us that wars do not make war (else they would be continuous), but rather that peace makes war. This unpalatable truth can, perhaps, be put in a less paradoxical form by saying that the forces which lead to war are engendered and nourished in times of peace, to burst out when some trivial accident provides an occasion. To a psychiatrist accustomed to the defective make-up of his patient, the gradual accumulation of difficulties and the final psychotic explosion, the precipitating factor seems of relative insignificance and the idea of preventing the catastrophe by avoidance of the last "cause" or by mandate is preposterous. One who studies war psychologically will probably come to a similar conclusion. An effort to avoid international quarrels and agreements to arbitrate differences would be at best palliative. What we call "peace" is, apparently, a period during which forces both psychic and material are dammed up until their accumulated pressure overpowers the judgment of mankind. Only a rigorous analysis of national or racial psychology could lay bare the factors which make of peace a fool's paradise. If these were found we might have rational hope of modifying these factors until both war and peace were terms of merely historic interest.

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Among the difficulties attending this study (and, properly speaking, part of the problem) are the preconceptions about war. War is a disease; yet we hear jingoes refer to it as a normal human activity or the remedy for any social *malaise*. On the other hand, the professional pacifists talk belligerently about its horrors as if they would wake the public to a realization of evils previously unrecognized, and with it all, never adduce a single essential fact unknown to society for generations. Were it not for the intense gravity of the problem, one would be tempted to laugh at the seriousness with which, for instance, men have solemnly proved by elaborate statistics that war involves economic losses. How would a physician be welcomed who harangued his patient on the discomfort and danger of recurrent chills in malaria? The suspicion seems justified that in these matters we share the belief of the savage in the potency of curses. In fact, we might even think that the savage is slightly more rational than we. He has his theory of disease: an evil spirit possesses the patient; the demon must be exorcised. We, on the contrary, seem to deny that there is a disease. We are asked to realize that the symptoms are unpleasant and avoid them as a child must learn to avoid fire. An attempt to discover the cause of this social malady would doubtless be regarded as mawkish

sentimentality by the militarists, and as immoral by the pacifists. It is not impossible that these passionate irrationalities have their influence in the production of the apparently inevitable cycles of war and peace, and it is psychologically interesting that there is much in common between the two types. Each party tries to solve a delicate situation by a *tour de force*. The militarist sneers at diplomacy of any kind and seeks to adjust every difference by the sword, while the pacifist would change human nature by fiat. The futility of gaining world-wide harmony by such means must be painfully obvious.

Although the student of mental disease may offer a new approach, too much should not be expected of him, for, with the introduction of abnormal mass action, what is practically a new field for psychiatrists is opened up. This is because we have always assumed as a standard of normality for the individual an essential agreement with the average conduct of the community. For this reason the common belief of fifty or a hundred years ago may be a delusion if entertained to-day, when superstitions are dropping out of everyday life and out of religions. Therefore we cannot say that the exhibitions of martial lust, which any person may show, stamp him as insane—his neighbours applaud him. Similarly we cannot be psychiatrically exact if we speak of

a nation becoming mad if it embarks on a career of self-destruction with the lure of some gain trifling in comparison with the inevitable sacrifice. This would be an accurate term if all other peoples instinctively and automatically regarded the nation as suffering from mental disease and took action in accordance with that view. Obviously we are dealing with an analogy—not an identity. Where the cases fail of identity is in the lack of any universal standard for social behaviour. With a problem of the magnitude of war before us, however, we must remember that if analogies were identities the problem would long ago have ceased to exist as such, and that our one ambition is, therefore, to compare war with other normal and abnormal phenomena, remembering always the danger of drawing too rigid inferences and accepting hasty conclusions.

This is a practical age and, particularly in these times of stress, the pragmatic value of any proposition is more apt to be questioned than is its theoretic worth. It is only natural, therefore, that the reader should ask, "What guarantee does the psychiatrist offer that his study of war will prove of more than academic value?"

We are attempting to establish an analogy between the phenomena of war and the symptoms of mental disease. Investigation of the latter field leads inevitably to the conclusion that pre-

vention of insanity depends on education in its truest sense of mind training, and it is being slowly realized that mental hygiene is as important for human welfare as is the care of the body. Psychiatrists are not hopeless of the day coming when, thanks to a sounder knowledge of himself, man may be relatively free from mental infirmities. It is only by education of this type that the race as a whole may hope to rid itself of the pest of war. Expectations of individual and social health are based upon programs equally ambitious and equally practical. The two problems are probably inseparable. Success, in either case, depends no less upon willingness to learn, and zeal in self-reform, than on the investigation which must precede the teaching. Preventive psychiatry is beginning to show its fruits ; it is therefore not illogical to entertain a hope that similar efforts may ultimately prevent war.

## CHAPTER II

### PRIMITIVE INSTINCTS

It may be convenient to consider the phenomena in question as falling into two groups, just as historians speak of remote and immediate causes. In times of peace we have rivalry between nations expressing itself in ways that must appear to any objective view irrational. Individuals of a foreign country are, however, not considered natural enemies—it is only the groups as a whole who are natural rivals. Injury to a foreigner is almost, if not quite, as repugnant as injury to a native citizen. This rivalry becomes more intense until with a trifling precipitating factor a totally new set of forces comes into play. What can be termed nothing less than blood-lust springs apparently out of nowhere, and upsets many normal standards of conduct. The foreigner becomes the scapegoat for his race: he must be killed or injured in any possible way. If there is to be real war it is obvious that this second phase has to develop, for, unless the animosity of the race becomes individual, it would be impossible for a civilized man to deal a lethal blow,

restrained as he is by the inhibitions of generations. Moreover, these inhibitions must be lifted to the point where killing gives satisfaction, else there will be a woeful lack of the enthusiasm necessary to outweigh personal sacrifice and sustain the war. Objectively viewed, the motto of nations in time of peace seems to be, "Live, but do not let live," while in times of war the individual says, "Kill, even if killed." These two factors—tribal rivalry, or more properly speaking, tribal jealousy—and the lust of violence are each held by different schools of dynamic psychology to be the chief cause of war. It may be well to discuss them separately, and then attempt to weigh their relative importance.

Beginning with the blood-lust or cruelty impulse, it must be obvious that this phenomenon is not confined to warfare. It is an everyday observation that the behaviour of an American college student is more brutal in a football game than in his individual activities; he is not ashamed of it, in fact he positively enjoys it. More notorious is the violence of mobs. The statistics of lynching show with what lamentable frequency the innocent suffer, and how the torture inflicted is often totally disproportionate to the gravity of the offence. These men who assume the *role* of judge and executioner are, many of them, of the highest character, respected and loved for their



kindliness and honour. Plainly in mass action an opportunity is given for the development of justice into revenge, and revenge into cruelty, which becomes an end in itself. The lyncher, again, is not ashamed of his deed, but takes a grim, if not blithe satisfaction in it.<sup>1</sup> The greatest inspired psychologist of all time has given a true picture of the lust which a mob can call to life in its members—a lust which has no connection with the original common impulse of the crowd.

*“ Third Citizen :* Your name, sir, truly.

*Cinna :* Truly, my name is Cinna.

*First Cit. :* Tear him to pieces ; he’s a conspirator !

*Cin. :* I am Cinna the poet, I am Cinna the poet.

*Fourth Cit. :* Tear him for his bad verses, tear him for his bad verses !

*Cin. :* I am not Cinna the conspirator.

*Fourth Cit. :* It is no matter, his name’s Cinna ; pluck but his name out of his heart, and turn him going.

*Third Cit. :* Tear him, tear him ! Come, brands, ho ! firebrands : to Brutus’, to Cassius’ ; burn all :

<sup>1</sup> This satisfaction is not confined to those taking part in the outrage. The notorious Frank case is an instance in point. After his brutal execution men and women in Georgia eagerly bought photographs of the final scene.

some to Decius' house, and some to Casca's, some to Ligarius' : away, go ! ”

If any one fancies that such bloodthirsty furor is manufactured by the mob and not merely called out of each member by a special stimulus, let him remember that cruelty and bloodshed have some attraction for every one of us. The degrees of dilution or manner of disguise may vary ; it may be open enjoyment of torture, the morbid fascination of melodrama or accidents (perhaps strongly coloured by horror), or merely a love of the swashbuckling novel. But in all of us there exists deep down a savage streak which evidences itself when the proper stimulus is applied. We are never coldly, judiciously neutral in reaction.

Much of contemporary interest in the psychology of the abnormal, and a large share of the impetus recently given to its study, is due to the growth of a school which uses a method termed “psycho-analysis.” The nature of this technique need not be discussed here, but it should be mentioned that those who use it claim to trace all mental abnormalities to unconscious wishes or, more accurately, unconscious tendencies which gain indirect and symbolic expression in neurotic or psychotic symptoms. These tendencies are presumed to be unknown to the consciousness of

the individual because they are repugnant to his personality. It is this repugnance which causes them to be repressed to the limbo of the unconscious, where they can live on away from contact with that part of the mind which is law-abiding, altruistic and social in its aims. Not unnaturally these unconscious tendencies are of a primitive, lawless and individualistic type, and include such impulses of cruelty and violence as are seen in war.

The importance of these tendencies has been emphasized by two psycho-analysts since the beginning of the present conflict. One is an Austrian and one an Englishman, but both scrupulously avoid any partisan discussion of the war now in progress. Under the heading of "The Disillusionment of War," Professor Freud<sup>1</sup> treats this topic without any reference to the causation of warfare, focusing his attention rather on certain of its phenomena. His tone is pessimistic, somewhat cynical, and not out of keeping with the general trend of the Vienna school of psycho-analysis.

He notes first a destruction of the common feeling of humanity; the clearest intellects seem distorted; and we find Science, that should own no country, being prostituted as an argument in

<sup>1</sup> S. Freud: "Zeitgemässes über Krieg und Tod."—*Imago*, Bd. IV, H.I.

favour of one antagonist and to the disparagement of another. We are not surprised when conflicts arise between nations or tribes of widely varying aims, such as those of savages and the civilized peoples ; but had come to believe that between nations with common culture and common morality it was hardly to be expected. He thinks that States have demanded a high standard of honour on the part of their citizens, and that now the States themselves seem to have abolished such standards. Facility of travel has made many citizens of the world ; our literary, artistic and scientific heroes are international. We have also grown to believe in the restriction of war to the destruction of armies and the immunity of non-combatants. Now all these are gone as if they had been illusions, and their place is taken by bitterest hate of one people for another. States, he thinks, have monopolized all the wickedness that they suppress in their citizens. Every license which the government restricts in the individual is made use of in war by the State, which, in the meantime, demands every virtue from the subject. The States cannot be defended on the ground that virtue does not pay, for it does not pay the individual very often, and he receives no reward from society to compensate him for the sacrifice his virtue involves. The loss of international respect is naturally reflected in individual conduct,

for our inhibitions are largely occasioned by fear of society rather than "conscience." When this ban is removed individuals perform unthinkable acts. The disillusionments, then, fall into two groups: first, the slight decency we see exhibited by nations in their reciprocal relations in contrast to the vigour of the demands they make on their citizens; and, second, the general brutality of the soldier, who is such a gentleman in times of peace.

He discusses the second first, and to account for it recapitulates the development of the individual. Man begins with primitive, egoistic tendencies, which are neither good nor bad except in so far as their exhibitions affect society. In the process of development these assume socialized forms often appearing in the opposite form from the original, as when the unusually cruel child becomes an unduly sympathetic man. Such metamorphoses are the work of two factors. The first is the desire to be loved, which puts a premium on self-sacrifice and makes an altruistic act pleasurable. Beginning as love for others in the family, this spreads out to society in general and forms a genuine basis for virtuous character. The second is the artificial warping of native tendencies by education, laws, and conventions, which is natural and genuine only in so far as there is an hereditary predisposition to such adaptation. Conduct artificially determined may be

superficially identical with the more genuine type but is never as stable. The person who has been affected only by education and environment is naturally good only when it pays to be, and the number of such people is probably much larger than is generally supposed. This forced virtue really amounts to a kind of hypocrisy, although it is not fully conscious. Freud suggests that a certain amount of hypocrisy may be necessary for the maintenance of our cultural level, which is probably higher than the average individual capacity. The shattered illusion, he therefore concludes, is the belief that the bulk of mankind ever had any true civilization. As soon as governments relax their reciprocal responsibilities, the governed get an outlet for their original impulses on the bodies of the foe, while the inhibitions proceed relatively uninterrupted within the State.

As to the hate existing between nations, he can only say that it seems that common world interests are not strong enough to hold national passions in check. There is apparently no "fear of society" in this case. He admits frankly that he can offer no explanation of the phenomenon, merely remarking that it seems as if the aggregation of men simply multiplied their primitive impulses.

It is evident from the above that Freud views the atrocities of war as more natural than the civilized behaviour of man. Although accounting

for war phenomena alone, it would perhaps not be doing him an injustice to suggest that he would view violence as the native instinctive method of settling any quarrel, a tendency that is lost only between individuals of the same state where society has put a ban on such methods. This is equivalent to saying that the mystery to be solved is the behaviour of peace rather than the incidents of war. In passing it may be remarked that in this we have an example of a frequent type of reasoning encountered in many psycho-analytic writings. A symptom is traced to some unconscious instinct, which, because it is deeply rooted and long lived, is stated to be part of the "real" individual. A somewhat similar argument would say that because gill breathing is the most primitive type of respiration, because every foetus has gills, traces of which persist to adult life, and because these traces may have pathological development, therefore gill breathing is the normal respiration for man. What the individual is in the bulk of his life should constitute his true nature. In the present instance we should not forget that, no matter what man may have been prehistorically, and no matter what character the infant may have, the contemporary adult is by constitution a unit of society, and any purely individualistic acts he may perform must be regarded as abnormal.

It is important to note, however, that Freud correlates the atrocities of war with the lifting of national ambitions.

Using somewhat the same material, another psycho-analyst, Ernest Jones,<sup>1</sup> of London, gives a wider scope to his speculation. "The aim of this essay is to raise the question whether the science of Psychology can ever show us how to abolish war." He makes no claim that psychology can do so, but insists that its methods are essential to the study of the problem because it deals with the mental factors that determine all decisions. His chief argument is the claim that unconscious wishes distort rational judgment. This phenomenon is part, perhaps, of the essence of war, as an example of which he cites the difficulty of ascertaining the facts in such an apparently simple inquiry as the immediate cause of the present war. The unconscious, he claims, can only be studied by individual psychology. This term he uses to differentiate the study of the mental phenomena of a group from that of separate persons. After a discussion of the different fields he dismisses social psychology as a superfluous science, accepting Trotter's<sup>2</sup> view that the reactions of the mass are the sum of the reactions of the

<sup>1</sup> "War and Individual Psychology," *The Sociological Review*, July 1915.

<sup>2</sup> "Herd Instinct," *The Sociological Review*, 1908.



units in the mass, and that man invariably reacts as a herd animal whether in a crowd or alone. All this may undoubtedly be true and still leave room for a psychology that is broader than the "Individual Psychology" developed in Jones' paper, for this is concerned only with impulses that arise within the individual, whereas there must surely be other forces, or at least stimuli, that are external to him in their origin. The importance of this objection will be discussed later.

He begins his argument in favour of there being deep-lying mental causes for war by suggesting that man may not be able to live for more than a certain period without war, and that he possibly prefers that form of settling disputes to peaceful means. This would be analogous to the phenomenon recognized by many novelists that an unconscious wish of the individual may be objectively obvious but subjectively unrecognized. His suspicion of man's bias for fighting is based on the history of great wars recurring after a lapse of several generations, which are marked by a revulsion towards war. This last statement should not pass without comment. Such a psychic factor as this revulsion could never pass from one generation to the next if it were a force springing up within the individual and not something handed on from man to man. Here is an admission of

the existence of what is essentially a social factor, and if such a powerful inhibitive force can have its origin previous to a complete generation, may there not similarly be social tendencies working to produce war, as well as those of the unconscious individual type of which Jones speaks ?

He proceeds to argue that although men act abnormally in certain "social situations," where normal standards seem to be relaxed (*e. g.* in mob activities), there is a certain unity of aim in both his normal and abnormal behaviour. In normal development a primitive tendency, when denied direct expression by the repressive side of one's nature, gains outlet in a social or altruistic form which is somehow symbolic of the latent, more individualistic craving. For example, one might take the case of an unmarried woman in whom the maternal instinct can gain no direct outlet without involving anti-social behaviour, who gets a substitutive outlet through nursing, charitable work, etc. In such a case the object of her attention receives her "maternal" care, and may stand in the unconscious level of her mind for a child. Such an outlet is termed a sublimation. The analysis of the development of so many activities has shown a similar mechanism that psycho-analysts believe all pursuits are of this type which are not obviously actuated by primitive instincts. These sublimations giving only

indirect expression to the deeper forces are never absolutely stable, and tend to break down with a return to the more primitive form at all times. When such a lapse occurs the conduct of the individual is totally different from that of his everyday life, but as the sublimation is being replaced by directer expression of its more primitive driving impulse there is still the unity between the two of which Jones speaks. It is the same unconscious wish that is gratified in each case. The more normal activity is an indirect, distorted, symbolic outlet, its successor is crude and direct. This accounts for the appalling changes of character often seen in senility or other states conducive to mental enfeeblement.

He does not pretend to give any final explanation of the highly frequent phenomenon (of which many examples will occur to the reader) of mass action favouring cruder expressions of primitive cravings. He does make a clever suggestion, however. Sublimations, he says, are largely individual developments. That is, each person works out his particular way of socializing his individualistic tendencies, while the unconscious wishes, being primitive, are common to all the units in a given group. The mass action proceeding, therefore, as a sum of all the individual tendencies present, is made up of over-determined "unconscious" forces, while the sublimations,

being individual, tend to neutralize one another, because they are individual and may be widely different from each other. Resultant action springs from the wishes that are common to all. This argument is plausible ; and it seems reasonable to suppose that this may well operate as a contributing factor in mob suggestion ; but, as we shall see presently, there are probably other and more important explanations of these phenomena.

Jones says, then, as does Freud, that we should not consider the atrocities of war as due to war itself, but rather that it is one of a number of conditions which favour the unleashing of tendencies always latent in civilized men.

But Jones goes further still, suggesting that the impulse to release these tendencies may be one of the important causes of war itself. "The essence of war surely consists in an abrogation of standards of conduct approved of by the ethical sense of communities. By this is meant that in war an attempt is made to achieve a given purpose by means which are otherwise regarded as reprehensible." An individual in such a situation is ashamed, and attempts to excuse himself with all sorts of tenuous proofs of the justifiability of his actions. This is, he thinks, true of the nations now at war. Although each insists that the war was inevitable, each is unwilling to assume responsibility for its actual inception. It is generally

held that in war the ends justify the means, while Jones boldly suggests that perhaps it is really the means which are primary and that the ends are found to justify them. He quotes Nietzsche quite aptly for his argument: "Ye say that it is the good cause which halloweth every war? I say unto you: It is the good war which halloweth every cause." It is interesting that each nation imputes such motives to its foes. It is easier for an enemy to see a disagreeable characteristic than it is for the possessor of it.

The problem may then be stated, he proceeds, as the determination of the relative importance of the conscious and unconscious motives in the initiation of war. As conscious motives may be all grouped under the term patriotism, he analyzes this complex of feelings. The relation of the individual to his country is an outgrowth of the relationships existing in childhood in the home. These centre around three affective complexes: the relationships of the child to his mother, his father and himself. Generally the country wins in adult life the devotion originally given the mother, more rarely the state stands in a paternal position (such as in patriarchal governments). The opportunities for unconscious reinforcement of patriotic impulses with this history is obvious to any one familiar with psycho-analysis and is well shown in the "self" relationship, where the in-

dividual identifies the country with himself, is personally inflated or depleted with its success or failure. The development of those unconscious forces has, probably, a great deal to do with one's attitude towards war, whether one is a pacifist or a firebrand, just as other characteristics have their unconscious derivation and history. But to urge that all patriotic impulses may be thus disposed of is too sweeping a generality. This is well shown by Jones' suggestion that national make-up may be the outcome of the type of family life existing in the nation. If there is a similarity in homes, it is surely self-evident that this is due to conformity to a national standard of domestic life or else the product of a stupendous coincidence of identical, independent development. In his endeavour to make unconscious motives responsible for everything he has succeeded in putting the cart before the horse. It is only fair to add, however, that a uniformity of home life may well act, secondarily, in reinforcing a homogeneity of national conduct and thought. But primary it can never be.

Many of the conscious motives are, then, according to Jones, essentially unconscious if their history be traced far enough back. The undoubtedly unconscious motives which find an outlet in war centre around the passions for cruelty, destruction, lust and loot. He claims

that no army has ever been without one or more of these, which is probably true. He cites the orgies of destruction indulged in by Cromwell's Puritan army. That the innate desire for outlet of these secret passions is mainly responsible for war he merely suggests; that, at least, they constantly reinforce the more conscious patriotic motives he confidently asserts.

As to the future, he is wise enough not to offer any panacea. The few generalities offered are worthy of attention. In the first place he deprecates any attempts to abolish war by forcible repression of primitive instincts. Psycho-analysis tends to show that repression leads only to a temporary damming up of such forces, with later explosions, unless the opportunities for sublimated outlets be favourable. He suggests that it may be possible that the sublimating capacity of man is now at its greatest height, which, if true, would certainly mean that civilization is maintained only by virtue of the safety-valve of war, although, strange to say, he does not put forward this hypothesis as such. What he recommends is a more intelligent treatment of primitive instincts, the substitution of open-eyed study and control of social problems rather than blind legal negotiations which tend to increase social unrest. As an example of what such a policy can do in preventing unrest he cites the success of the modern

British colonial policy. As a corollary of this he mentions the granting of outlet to these instincts in a less harmful form than war. Naturally he gives credit here to William James, who first made this suggestion in his essay on "The Moral Equivalents of War."

In conclusion, with a few striking sentences he gives a picture of the benefits of war as a national and individual stimulus and an agency bringing man closer to the essential realities of life. He does not suggest that these benefits have any causal relation to war. On the whole, therefore, we can sum up Jones' contribution as an effort to establish the violent, primitive instincts of man, usually unconscious, as an important, if not the primary, cause of war.

It is striking that in this able paper no mention is made of the phenomena of international hostility, the jealousy which is exhibited in times of peace. Yet it is a fact which historians constantly impress upon their readers that prior to a war there is always a tension gradually increasing between rival nations, which finally culminates in the outbreak of hostilities. If the forces Jones speaks of were the only ones at work, the increasing tension would always be an internal one, an unrest from the pent-up lawless energies of the citizens which would finally seek an outlet in indiscriminate violence, not necessarily focused



on one particular foe. In other words, who the enemy should be would be a matter of accident. Such unconscious motives as Freud and Jones discuss could easily account for the choice of war in time of crisis, for clinical experience teaches us that in any occasion of mental stress the primitive tendency is most apt to be followed. We might, therefore, leave this type of psychological approach with the suggestion that unconscious impulses may more than any other influences be responsible for the actual initiation of war and the abnormal behaviour of the antagonists. There remain to be discussed the psychological factors which engender the international animosities and antagonisms in times of peace.

## CHAPTER III

### GREGARIOUSNESS

INTERNATIONAL rivalry is, apparently, never friendly ; in fact, it seems to be invariably characterized by jealousy, often by bitterness. Community of interest is only a phrase, and never sought in practice. If nation A develops trade in some commercially isolated district, the citizens of nation B do not see in this a gain for their own merchants in the opening up of a new outlet for business, but view the growth with alarm and bend their energies towards blocking the foreigner's efforts as much or more than they extend their own. Similarly a new warship or new military program is regarded with an almost paranoid suspicion by all possible military rivals. All this is obviously irrational, and is certainly a problem to be studied by psychopathologists. If the average citizen is asked why this situation exists, he gives one of two answers : either, " It is silly, and we shouldn't do it any more ; " or, " History teaches us that the nation which is not suspicious is destroyed." The first reply is a form of the pacifist's fiat that human nature be changed. The

second makes a pretence of rationality. But does man listen to History? Have the yoking of force and suspicion ever led to anything but disaster, even after a short triumph? Surely here, as elsewhere, man learns what he wishes to learn; some powerful instinct urges him the way he goes.

War is never far from consciousness when such suspicious rivalry is in the air. What is the attitude of any nation towards war in time of peace? War, of course, is damnable, all readily agree. But this is war as an abstraction. What do the citizens of any given country think of their own wars? All are excusable, some justifiable and some glorious. Every thinking man will admit at least these differences, and here there emerges a not unimportant fact. The wars that fire the national imagination are those in which the nation's existence was threatened. The same is true of national heroes: no heterogeneous English gathering ever waxed enthusiastic over the name of Darwin, nor did a German crowd applaud Goethe to the skies.<sup>1</sup> It is the military hero who is the

<sup>1</sup> It is true that a few years ago a large plebiscite, instituted by a Parisian newspaper, placed Pasteur first in answer to the question, "Who was the greatest Frenchman?" But the form of this question naturally calls for an objective, intellectual judgment. The voter probably put himself in the place of a foreigner, trying to decide what Frenchman had done most for the world. Had the question been, "As a Frenchman,

national hero, and here again a discrimination can be made. It is not the genius who fought in some small campaign that stirs the blood, but the man of force who saved the country or founded the empire. The point of these observations is this: The attitude of a people towards its wars is not a glorification of war, but rather an enthusiasm for itself as a nation. War marks the highest level of national consciousness that is ever reached. In earlier days, when primitive man had not known the advantages of herd life for very long, friction with other tribes over hunting grounds or other coveted possessions must have made strangers appear like those of another species in the struggle for existence. Advance of knowledge has taught that all the members of the species *Homo sapiens* are men, but it is doubtful whether that knowledge is a vital part of our automatic mental life. It is one thing for us to recognize in an animal identity of anatomical structure, and another to *feel* that he is like ourselves. Without this instinctive bond, every stranger, every member of every other group, must to a greater or less extent arouse in us the

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whom do you admire most?" the vote would probably have placed Napoleon first, as a similar plebiscite had some years before. Emotional feelings are more dynamic than intellectual judgments, as every observer knows. It is safe to guess that many more Frenchmen to-day visit the tomb of Napoleon than the grave of Pasteur.

biological reaction appropriate towards a different species. We have sympathy for a dog, an animal useful to us, but we kill wolves, snakes and insects without any revulsion of feeling for the act. International relationships are probably largely traceable to this feeling of specific differences and to the deep-lying instinct for preservation of the species, distorted in this case to the preservation of what is at most only a variety.

This phenomenon of group allegiance is, of course, a commonplace to sociologists. One might hazard the generality that without it there would be no large political or social problems. It is this instinct which cements the labour unions, maintains religious factions. Here we have what is, perhaps, the greatest paradox of human nature. The forgetting of self in devotion to others, altruism or loyalty, is the essence of virtue. At the same time, precisely the same type of loyalty that makes of a man a benefactor to all mankind can become the direst menace to mankind when focused on a small group. The bigot can with all sincerity and consciousness of high motive enslave thought and retard science for centuries. Similarly the labour leader, in his zeal to better the condition of his fellow unionists, will shake the foundations of industry. The reader will call to mind countless examples having this in common, that the small group calls forth a loyalty

which is inimical to larger groups. In the case of war we have national loyalty destroying the civilization of all mankind.

There is but one psychologist who has seen the potentiality of man's gregariousness. This is Wilfrid Trotter.<sup>1</sup> The substance of his claims is that one can understand many anomalies of man's conduct only by regarding him as a herd animal : that is, not only an animal who lives gregariously, but one whose instinct it is to react with the herd. He is deaf to the voice of one without the herd, but infinitely suggestible to influences coming from within it. In this way herd traditions and herd thoughts are superior in their influence to individual reason, and the struggle between these two he assigns as the cause for most human ills that are not frankly physical in origin.

He says that there are three great types of development in herd life : that of the animals who unite for aggression as do wolves ; that of the species like sheep, whose cohesion gives protection ; and finally, the highest degree of gregariousness, which he terms the socialized type, exemplified in the society of ants, or better still by bees. Each kind of specialization is represented in man, and has its peculiar mental make-up exhibited both in the reactions of the mass and

<sup>1</sup> *Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War*. Fisher Unwin & Co., London.

the individual. Each tends in human development to exclude the others and produce a type that is almost a specific variation biologically. This leads to lack of sympathy and, if the interests of two "herds" come into collision, a deep hostility.

In his original papers,<sup>1</sup> he showed how gregariousness leads inevitably to unquestioning acceptance of the herd dogma, and that this works strongly against that sensitiveness to experience—open-mindedness—which is necessary for progress. In biological terms, the aggregation of units in the herd, which ought to facilitate variation, actually inhibits variation. He concluded, therefore, that the human race was doomed to extinction unless some new factor should come into play. Hints as to the nature of this force were extremely vague. He now states that this must be an understanding of man's psychology in the biological sense, and a conscious guidance along the path of evolution on which he has entered only to halt long before the goal is reached. Both of these definite additions to his theory appear prominently in his discussion of war.

In this book there are no statements as to the causation of warfare in general, but only arguments about the present conflict. The author frankly admits that prejudice is unavoidable, and

<sup>1</sup> *The Sociological Review*, 1908 and 1909.

claims no immunity from that vice in his discussion. He places entire responsibility for the war on Germany, giving no suggestion as to how England could have had a hand in producing the situation which made war inevitable. Such criticisms as he directs against England concern only her internal politics and social constitution. If there be a neutral bloodless enough to qualify as an impartial critic, and if he dispute the validity of such claims, he could still profit from Trotter's work. One does not need to sympathize with his antagonism to Germany to get helpful material from his essay. It is only necessary to agree that forces such as he alleges to be operative there would probably produce war, to gain a hint as to what underlies warlike impulses in general. Similarly whether English society has the inherent virtue he ascribes to it or not, is for our present purposes immaterial. In the type of herd he describes as British would certainly be found a people whose power could only be a blessing to the world.

In 1908 Trotter wrote as follows :

“The solutions [of the problem of reconciling individual desires or experience with herd suggestion] by indifference and by rationalization, or by a mixture of these two processes, are characteristic of the great class of normal, sensible, reliable middle age, with its definite views, its resiliency



to the depressing influence of facts, and its gift for forming the backbone of the State. In them herd suggestion shows its capacity to triumph over experience, to delay the evolution of altruism, and to obscure the existence and falsify the results of the contest between personal and social desires. That it is able to do so has the advantage of establishing society with great firmness, but it has also the consequence of entrusting the conduct of the State and the attitude of it towards life to a class which their very stability shows to possess a certain relative incapacity to take experience seriously, a certain relative insensibility to the value of feeling and to suffering, and a decided preference for herd tradition over all other sources of conduct.

“Early in history the bulk of mankind must have been of this type, because experience, being still relatively simple, would have but little suggestive force, and would therefore readily be suppressed by herd suggestion. There would be little or no mental conflict, and such as there was would be readily stilled by comparatively simple rationalizations. The average man would then be happy, active, and possessed of an inexhaustible fund of motive and energy, capable of intense patriotism and even of self-immolation for the herd. The nation consequently, in an appropriate environment, would be an expanding one and

rendered ruthless and formidable by an intense, unshakable conviction of its divine mission. Its blindness towards the new in experience would keep its patriots narrow and fierce, its priests bigoted and bloodthirsty, its rulers arrogant, reactionary and over-confident. Should chance ordain that there arose no great environmental change, rendering necessary great modifications, such a nation would have a brilliant career of conquest, as has been so often demonstrated by history.

“Among the first-class Powers to-day the mentally stable are still the directing class, and their characteristic tone is discernible in national attitudes towards experience, in national ideals and religions, and in national morality. It is this possession of the power of directing national opinion by a class which is in essence relatively insensitive towards new combinations of experience; this persistence of a mental type, which may have been adequate in the simpler past, into a world where environments are daily becoming more complex—it is this survival, so to say, of the waggoner upon the footplate of the express engine, which has made the modern history of nations a series of such breathless adventures and hairbreadth escapes. To those who are able to view national affairs from an objective standpoint, it is obvious that each of these escapes might very

easily have been a disaster, and that sooner or later one of them must be such."

In his later work Trotter ascribes these primitive characteristics more specifically to the aggressive or wolf gregariousness and, needless to say, he finds them highly developed in the Germans. This race, he thinks, demonstrate the validity of his claim that great development can be obtained by conscious direction of what is the evolutionary tendency, although, of course, he looks on lupine gregariousness as inimical to civilization as a whole, and therefore bound to fail in the end. It may seem grotesque to attempt an analogy between the society of the wolf and that of any group of men, and it would probably be impossible to present Trotter's arguments sympathetically without quotation *in extenso*. Assuming this risk, however, what he considers to be the lupine characteristics in man may be enumerated.

Wolves band themselves together purely for the sake of the advantages the pack enjoys over the individual in hunting. Wolf gregariousness is, therefore, founded on aggression. Trotter notes that the Germans are constantly taking as their ideal the civilizations which in the past were built on aggression. Not unnaturally he points to the fact that peoples of the "socialized" (the bee) type, such as Italians and Americans, have not been impressed by German propaganda, while

the bloodthirsty Turks and Bulgarians have espoused the Teutonic cause. He finds as a national characteristic, pervading all classes, a naïve arrogance usually displayed in florid and banal metaphors. The simple, honest conviction of being God's chosen people furnishes a great stimulus in attack. He claims they are incapable of grasping the idea that other people may be differently constituted from themselves; that they are incredulous of altruism ever being a real motive, and rely on intimidation rather than understanding in their relations with other nations. It is to these tendencies that he ascribes the series of diplomatic blunders which resulted in Germany facing a coalition of tremendous strength. Not unusually he views the apparent determination of the General Staff to keep constantly on the offensive as an evidence of aggression being the keynote of their union. He even risks the prediction that there will be a collapse so soon as offence is no longer possible. There are certain traits shown in their internal relationships which Trotter regards as distinctive of the lupine type. He speaks first of the flagrant cruelty and harshness exhibited by the individual German in times of peace as well as in war. The same habit he observes in the treatment of their colonies. As a corollary to this the individual German shows a subserviency to his superior and a favourable

reaction to rigorous, even physical discipline, that would to other peoples be intolerable. This is likened to the behaviour of the dog, who reacts so much more satisfactorily to a whipping than does a horse, for instance. Finally, Trotter makes much of the German tendency to adopt war cries and shibboleths (*e. g.* "Gott strafe England"), any attempt to implant which on the English meets with failure. This successful bolstering up of the national morale with catch phrases he considers directly analogous to the howl of the wolf pack, which inspirits and unites it in hunting.

From a scientific rather than a national standpoint it is regrettable that Trotter writes with this partisanship, for it tends, *a priori*, to prejudice the validity of his arguments. Before speaking of England and Germany explicitly, he mentions that it is open to man to develop his gregariousness along either the wolf, the sheep, or the bee plan. Man, then, is potentially capable of all three types and, it is safe to assume, has all three latent in him. We can get much from Trotter if we accept his aggressive type as expressing those elements in the gregariousness of man which tend towards war. Sheep never fight, bees sting merely to repel attacks. It is only in the development of the bee type that mankind can progress. The swarm has the focus of the hive, in which all interest is centred, and the co-ordination of function

is such that no individualism is possible. What Trotter terms "intercommunication" among the units is developed to its highest point. This he aptly compares to the cell colony that develops into the metazoic type of animal. No one thinks of the welfare of the individual cell in a multicellular animal. The advance of the bee-hive is not determined by subjugation of other hives or species, but by more effective industry. This would make an ideal national type.

It is now a fairly well recognized fact that in the study of psychopathic states the observation of the conduct and utterances of the patient will betray much of his innate mental constitution, and also show what was the underlying personal significance of the events which disturbed his balance. Our material on the psychology of war is, therefore, not complete until we have made more of a survey of the phenomena of war. These are, of course, legion, and only a few can be considered here and, at that, in generalities. The external changes in the life of the mass and of the individual do not demand comment—that is the sphere of the economist. Our problem is to discover the mental changes of the nation and the citizen.

Of the national changes the added cohesiveness and unity is a commonplace. What has been a vague conception of flag or king becomes a living

entity. The herd crowds closer together. All the departments of Government become more co-ordinate; the claims of smaller groups, such as labour, capital, and political parties, are allowed to lapse in the presence of the need of the large groups. A much-needed reform, long blocked by the obstinacy of some small class, can be instituted without opposition. In short, internal problems almost cease to exist, not merely in relation to the magnitude of the external problems, but absolutely. The factors of sectional rivalry and jealousy have disappeared, or, at least, tend to do so. National conscience is both quickened and perverted. The action of the enemy or of individual enemy citizens is judged to be wicked regardless of the merits of the case, while individual frivolities and indiscretions of fellow-citizens come to be looked on almost as treason. The people press a debt of the individual whose payment is never expected in times of peace. Trotter observed in England some less obvious signs of a quickening of the herd instinct. The first reaction was of vague fear. This did not necessarily confine itself to fears for the safety of the country as a whole, but was transferred to ridiculous, petty anxieties. With this was an intolerance of isolation. Men could not bear to be alone, and, following the instinct for members of the herd to be in actual contact, class barriers were broken

down. Most interesting was the wildfire spread and credibility of rumours, that form of mental contagion which owes its existence to herd suggestion. Finally, every foreign-looking person was looked on with suspicion. This last, coupled with the open hatred of individual foes, gives us a beautiful analogy with the psychosis. The unconscious idea that the foreigner belongs to a rival species becomes a conscious belief that he is a pestiferous type of animal.

All the above, with the exception of rumour, fear, and senseless suspicion, are gains for the nation as such. National consciousness is a large part of that vision without which the people perish, and it is quite possible that the essential victory rests with that people whose national morale emerges intact from the war. I once had occasion to meet one of the most noteworthy of the Boer generals, and took the opportunity to ask him why the Boers had not yielded to the British demands instead of attempting the impossible. He replied that they all knew their relative impotence, but that to have capitulated would have meant the forfeiture of their national self-respect, so they chose to fight against impossible odds. We can now begin to see the result of this decision. Their individual losses were enormous, but nationally they are probably better off. They have as good a Government or



better ; they are part of a larger civilization (to which they owe ready allegiance) ; they are not a subject race in fact or feeling. One thing is altered : the Vierkleur is replaced by the Union Jack. But that of which the flag was a symbol has not been destroyed. In fact, it has probably grown. Had the two States capitulated a Boer would not now, in the eyes of Europe and America, be a citizen of the world, but only a semi-savage frontiersman. Did the Boers really lose the war ?

The effects of war on the nation as a whole have still more interesting results on the mental reactions of the individual. We are accustomed to think of energy being largely a product of personal ambition. The individual in war time couples self-abnegation with unwonted energy. His interests change : his pride tends to be centred less on the eminence of himself and family, but more on what he and they can do for the country. A man no longer strives to outwit his neighbour in business, but rather to outdo him in patriotism. An exhibition of generosity or altruism that merits a sneer from many quarters in times of peace becomes an incentive, an example to copy. Herd suggestion constantly reinforces the spirit of self-sacrifice in the interests of the herd. These statements must not, of course, be taken as indicating constant results. If all the citizens of any country

responded to the full along these lines, the concerted energy of that herd would probably make it infinitely stronger than any other nation. As in all psychological matters, we can only consider tendencies. It is frequently stated that war awakens a feeling for the essential realities of life. In the face of the astounding perversions of truth which characterize every war, this statement must be delimited. More accurately one could say that a vaguely felt standard of conduct—to act in the best interests of the herd—becomes a vital, conscious rule of life, and keener criticism is directed by each individual to see if his conduct follows this rule. As a corollary to this, self-deceptions may tend to disappear. The more or less conscious delusions of grandeur which actuate so many people are apt to fail in the emergency of war. Probably the more fundamental of such ideas—the importance of one's individual life—is the one that is most conspicuously shattered. In the article by Freud, already quoted, there is considerable discussion of our attitude towards death. He shows that normally we are continually handicapped by our insincerities about death and fears of it in ourselves and others. There is no more beautiful proof that a nation at war acts as a species struggling for existence than the fact that individual deaths do not matter either to the mass or to the individual himself. Trotter's comparison

to the multicellular animal is peculiarly apt in this connection. If we find ourselves in a situation of danger we are not conscious of any fear for hand or eye or body, but for ourselves as a whole. Neither the wolf in the pack nor the bee in the swarm has thought for its own safety. As Trotter points out, mass formation gains psychologically perhaps more than it loses tactically. It seems to me not impossible that the success of military training consists essentially in the acquisition of the herd spirit, the gain of a feeling that the herd is always present, even if it be only in imagination. When this is accomplished the prodigies of devotion and self-immolation, which are a commonplace of mass formation, can become possible individually. The essential victory in war rests with that nation which has the largest number of citizens unconsciously and constantly aware of the presence of the herd, fighting or travelling alone, perhaps, but hearing always the voice of their choir invisible.

## CHAPTER IV

### CORRELATION OF PRIMITIVE INSTINCTS WITH GREGARIOUSNESS

WE are now in a position to recapitulate. In so far as one can generalize about such a protean affair as war, there are two great groups of phenomena. In the first come violence in the form of killing fellow-beings, purposeful destruction of property, injury to the rival trade and deception of the enemy. These are all "legitimate" in war. With these there always occur "atrocities" in the form of wanton destruction, loot, and the indulgence of brutal passion on the bodies of the enemy combatant and non-combatant alike, phenomena more apt to preponderate in one country but probably present in all armies. The latter are openly or tacitly encouraged or, at least, condoned by each belligerent. On the other hand, there is a group of phenomena evidencing a stimulus to the nation at war, causing greater cohesiveness, greater energy, marvellous self-abnegation on the part of individuals, extinction of all that is a sham in life, but with it all a loss of capacity to

sympathize with a foreign view-point that amounts to an intellectual stultification.

There are, also, two schools of dynamic psychology that attempt answers to this riddle. One says that primitive, anti-social human instincts still exist unconsciously in the make-up of all "civilized" beings, that they are constantly striving for an outlet which the conditions of war allow. The second school say that man is by instinct a herd animal, and that as such he forms groups to which he owes a blind allegiance, more complete than is generally thought and always including an instinctive hostility to that which is outside the national group. When the group develops an aggressive type of gregariousness war is imminent. Significantly, each school in its argument leaves one set of phenomena severely alone. As far as each goes, the argument seems sound; can they be reconciled, or are they mutually exclusive?

To answer this we must leave the question of war for a moment and turn to a consideration of the fundamentals of dynamic psychology. Freud and Trotter are probably the only two psychologists who have initiated hypotheses that are not essentially tautological, so only psycho-analysis and herd instinct need be seriously considered. The teaching of Freud is that civilization has forced upon man a "repression" of primitive instincts whose operation is unconscious but

always the dominant, dynamic principle of life. Trotter, on the other hand, insists that man is by nature gregarious, and impelled by instinct to serve the herd and assimilate his conduct and thought with that of his fellows. The irrationalities and mental disabilities of man he ascribes to the conflict between his actual experience and what the herd bids him believe. In short, one may say that psycho-analysis deals with individualistic motivation, while herd instinct is a study of social instinct. From our studies of the psychoses and the wealth of psycho-analytic material that appears therein it has become increasingly plain that what psycho-analysis terms "repression" is the work of an instinct (or group of instincts) only part of whose work is repression. The other task of this instinctive force is to augment the individualistic unconscious instinct when it is symbolized in a form that is socially acceptable. This is the essence of the dynamic structure of a "sublimation." The proof of this cannot be given here, but I might mention that the elation and energy of the manic state seem to be regularly accompanied by ideas that represent a fusion of individualistic and social tendencies. As I pointed out in reviewing Trotter's original papers,<sup>1</sup> his herd instinct is probably nothing more nor less than the force behind the psycho-analytic "repressions."

<sup>1</sup> *Psychiatric Bulletin*, vol. i, No. 1.

Trotter, in a sympathetic critique of psychoanalysis in his book, comes to the same conclusion. Presumably, therefore, the two theories supplement one another. Psycho-analysts (at least the Vienna school) have always seen in convention and education the influences that cause repression, but have denied any dynamic value to them. Trotter shows conclusively, however, that man accepts tradition, convention and ethical education because he is instinctively forced so to do by his gregarious nature. There are, perhaps, some moral repugnances that are common to all mankind, but the majority of them are essentially tribal in origin. As Stevenson says: "The canting moralist tells us of right and wrong; and we look abroad, even on the face of our small earth, and find them change with every climate, and no country where some action is not honoured as a virtue and none where it is not branded as a vice; and we look in our experience and find no vital congruity in the wisest rules, but at the best a municipal fitness." This "municipal fitness" determines (with all its accidents) the moral standard. It may be a law at which our intellect rebels, but we obey it, because obedience to its mandates is what keeps the herd together. What there is of the "brotherhood of man" in us determines the fundamental consistency of moral standards the civilized world over. One's ad-

herence to the standard of conduct of ideal civilization, national advantage, or union expedience will depend on the relative appeal each makes to the gregariousness in the man. One's conscience is, then, not a stable thing, but as variable as the exigencies of the group to which allegiance is automatically given. It is hardly necessary to state that the man of real moral greatness is he who is loyal to mankind as a whole, rather than to some smaller group.

We are finally in a position to summarize what suggestions can be made as to the psychology of war. It is the natural outcome of fundamental human tendencies. Man by his gregarious nature is doomed to split up into groups, and these groups behave biologically as if they were separate species struggling for existence. Thanks to his herd instinct, which makes man accept the opinions of those immediately around him — herd, or "mob," suggestion—only that seems to be right which is done by his group, and an abnormal suspicion of the acts of other groups develops. Thus a state of antagonism develops which is much augmented by the aggressive tendency latent in human gregariousness. The antagonism is cumulative, so that sooner or later a state of extreme tension is reached. At this point, when action of some sort seems imperative, the primitive, unconscious instincts of man assert them-



selves (as they constantly tend to do), and the herd, finding in this a ready weapon, relaxes its ban, making of blood lust a virtue. Suddenly the individualistic and social tendencies find themselves working hand in hand—essentially a sublimation—and war with its tremendous energy is unleashed. The behaviour of both the mass and the individual then demonstrates that the herd is playing the rôle of a species struggling for existence. It cannot be objected that war is merely the business of soldiers. Every citizen, male or female, has a share in the spirit of war. All suffer a diminution of egoism, with an added consciousness of the state, and all feel the satisfaction of a blood lust, whether it be gained by jabbing a bayonet or devouring descriptions of carnage in the enemy's trenches. It must not be thought that the repression of these primitive tendencies is easily lifted. There is a feeling of horror quite different from fear when a nation is on the brink of war, although with it, some thoughtful introspectionists admit, can be detected a "something" which seems to hope that war will come. This "something," like the fascination of a horrible spectacle, is, of course, the unconscious wish. When it has come as close to consciousness as this, its shadow, as it were, being seen, war is truly imminent, for now the herd antagonism is mightily augmented by the primitive pas-

sion for violence. The repressing force which colours war with horror, makes it difficult to kill the first man, and keeps the citizen at home from relishing the tales of carnage until he is "used to it"—this force can probably be related to that loyalty we have to the larger herd, all mankind. At such a time as this, with almost the whole world weltering in blood, it seems hard to believe in the strength of this wider allegiance. Yet it asserts itself with greater strength at the close of every great war, as the revulsion from bloodshed lasting through generations bears witness.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> An application of this principle of "sublimation" in war may turn out to be of prime importance from a military standpoint. It is a psycho-analytic truism that before every neurosis develops some sublimation is broken down or its outlet denied by external circumstance. The intense strain of modern warfare is an ideal agency for wearing down the natural stability of a man, and so favouring the development of a neurosis. To counteract this strain there must be a satisfaction in the work to act as a stimulus. The sensitive individual who cannot develop pleasure in killing—to put the matter brutally—is bound to be the victim of a double strain, and quickly develops an unconquerable hatred of his task that will soon lead to fear. Once fear appears, surrender or illness is the only escape. Before either refuge is sought, however, the soldier is not only inefficient himself, but serves as a focus of contagion, infecting his fellows with fear and breaking down the morale of his group. A comparatively brief examination by a competent psychiatrist of any soldier complaining of initial difficulties would often be sufficient to discover the measure of adaptability of the man to his task. If that were thought to be limited, frequent reliefs from active duty would enable him to continue as a soldier indefinitely. It is a much easier matter

What of the future? As this essay shows, psychology can give only suggestions as to what seem to be the factors underlying the phenomena of war, and these only in generalities. Naturally, then, more caution is necessary in discussing remedies, and they can only be given in vague hints.

It is a doctrine of psychology, as it is of common sense, that things exist for the good there is in them, not for the bad. Therapeutics must always take this into consideration. Rational treatment aims at establishing stability by satisfying with substitutes the need to which the baneful disturbance was an answer. As far as man's primitive cravings are concerned, the suggestions of James, made more specific by Jones, seem excellent. Our social constitutions must be made more elastic, so as to give more outlet to individualistic impulses, in order that the latter may not be dammed up and form a reservoir of potential violence always ready to burst its floodgates. In times of peace we revert to the illusions that hold individual lives to be supremely valuable, and it is not impossible that hazard is too far removed from us for permanent national health. A national conscription for the undertaking of

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to prevent a neurosis of this type than to cure it. By such means as these a psychologist can be of inestimable value to an army, for there is nothing more vital than its morale.

dangerous engineering feats would probably never be instituted by any democracy, yet the scores of lives lost in such a way would be cheap in comparison with the devastations of war.

In approaching the question of the future of international relationships apart from actual war, certain possibilities must be kept in mind. If war is a struggle for existence between what are essentially rival species, the preservation of what is most vital to a nation—national morale—is the correct criterion of success or failure in the war. In comparison with the loss of this, physical impoverishment may be almost disregarded. Much antagonism to war on the part of fervid "patriots" is the individual fear or horror of personal loss or injury, and, of course, in this case the imagination of the horror is the potent factor. From the standpoint of the nation, as such, war is possibly often a good thing. Some nations, *e.g.* the German Empire, or the United States, were born of war. We certainly know of no other stimulus which can so vivify and cement a nation. From the standpoint of common humanity, however, war is an unmitigated scourge. The question, then, should, perhaps, be put: "Do we want nations?" rather than, "Do we want to abolish war?" It could be well argued that there is little cohesiveness in any large modern nation beyond its wars both present, potential and in

tradition. In the face of man's inveterate tendency to form into herds it seems folly to talk of a reconstruction of human society without national divisions. A working conception of common humanity to which loyalty could be devoted is certainly too ambitious a program for the human mind at its present development. If nations were abolished by common consent they would reappear with another name, just as, if armaments were abolished, people would probably fight with clubs and stones. If nations are, then, to exist, and not be a menace to all mankind, some substitute for war must be found which will give cohesiveness to the herd, but at the same time not detract from the loyalty of its citizens to that larger group, the human race.

It must be obvious from all that has been said that war is an outcome of the deepest lying of human forces, and therefore something which cannot be altered by legislation nor agreement any more than a man can be kept sane either by force or by promise. Instinct is stronger than reason. And war is not an isolated phenomenon unrelated to other human tendencies. It is the habit of amateur statesmen to offer, by preference, remedies for the largest problems. When lynch law, class hatred, strikes with violence and lock-outs with starvation are things of the past, then, and then only, may we hope that man is becoming

a peace-loving animal. In the meantime, psychology can offer one ray of hope. Instincts triumph over reason, but largely because instincts act unconsciously. When man is so educated as to know himself and recognize the forces that are within him, he will be in a position to see the way his footsteps lead, and change his path—if he wills.



**AMERICA AT WAR**





## AMERICA AT WAR

THE behaviour of the citizens of the United States of America—that nation in *statu nascenai*—offers during the present war an interesting field for observation and speculation. What vagaries of gregariousness will a people show who are gathered suddenly together from the four quarters of the globe on the promise of individual liberty and opportunity, a State conceived with noble, humanitarian ideals, equipped with an academic constitution, and ruled largely by “machine” politicians. We know that in times of peace effective loyalty has been given eagerly to small groups—the labour union, the corporation, the political party—but only grudgingly to the abstraction “the United States.” When the European war broke out in 1914, no national crisis had occurred to prove the people’s loyalty for more than a generation, while material abundance gave full scope to individualism. In the midst of this peaceful disharmony came the news of a struggle so momentous as to rivet attention on something outside of America. The Republic was not immediately threatened, and men’s minds

and hearts were free to choose sides and lend the grace of their favour to one or the other group of belligerents.

Naturally those who had immediate family relationships with either of the opposing parties felt drawn to that side. This, however, was not a very large number. The method of choice of the rest is worthy of attention, and can only be understood by remembering a most important principle. The sphere of one's loyalty is roughly commensurate to the range of one's intelligence. The man with meagre intellectual endowment recognizes a group composed of his family, neighbours and fellow employees. One a little higher in the scale feels in harmony with the labour union or the municipality, and so on up. Men of greater capacity than the average can feel a loyalty to such an abstraction as a science, a dogma, or the ideals of a party or race. The bearing of this loyalty to conduct is well shown among the feeble-minded. These unfortunates can only grasp their immediate environment, and are so exclusively affected by it as a result that they are criminals when chance places them among the vicious, while the same individuals may become docile, faithful and virtuous in the environment of a good home or good institution. As America was not directly attacked, primarily emotional factors moved the bulk of the population very little. Among these the more intelli-

gent quickly saw that Germanic ideals were diametrically opposed to those of democracy, and that they therefore threatened the United States, no matter how remotely. A proof of this claim of primary intellectual rather than emotional choice is seen in the reactions of those who had studied in Germany and established many more personal contacts with that country than with any other in Europe. These constituted by far the greater majority of all who had left their native soil to pursue their education, and, almost to a man, they were "pro-Ally" in sentiment. A further proof of this contention is seen in the geographic distribution of partisanship. Every large city containing naturally the keener thinkers was preponderantly favourable to the Entente. The recognized intellectual centre of the Republic—the New England States—was anti-German to the point of openly avowed belligerency. From these foci—groups of native Germans and of intellectuals—partisanship spread by the process of herd suggestion, gradually dwindling in intensity until throughout the rural districts profound indifference was to be encountered.

Naturally, the stronger the loyalty to one European party or the other became, the less binding became the allegiance to the United States. Pro-Ally and Pro-German alike felt consciously or unconsciously that America should give her support to one or the other belligerent. The

Administration's neutrality was questioned with equal bitterness by both groups, and many whose emotions were deeply stirred felt shame for the supineness of their country. As I have said, war is the greatest stimulus we know for the increase of cohesion in any nation, but here was a war strengthening tenuous foreign bonds and disintegrating national unity.

The curious results of the 1916 Presidential election give a striking psychological demonstration of this. It is a commonplace that democracies choose their representatives more on emotional than intellectual grounds, a fact which makes the nonsense of a political campaign expedient. The emotional bias which sways a mass of electors gives an exquisite example of the unconscious operation of herd instinct. The fact that the keenest political observers may be unable to forecast the result of a ballot, although the returns will show a landslide for one party or the other, proves that the force which operates does so unconsciously. The election in Canada which put the present Government in power is an instance in point. The Liberal party advocated trade reciprocity with the United States. Their opponents raised the cry that this would mean the end of Canada's independence. Many of the voters believed that it would and said so openly. There was, however, so little declaration of sentiment that political workers were willing to wager even

money when the polls were closed. Within a few hours, however, it was evident that a landslide had taken place ; and Liberal candidates who up till then had been secure in their seats, not only were defeated but even lost their deposits. Apparently the fear of losing national independence had passed from voter to voter without there being anything like a proportionate expression of opinion. This phenomenon is of such regular occurrence that in the United States the returns from certain "pivotal" states are generally assumed to be a certain criterion of the total vote.

When the 1916 Presidential election drew near the future policy in relation to the European war was the only real question in the minds of the voters. Each party talked "Americanism," each accused the other of angling for the German vote, but neither candidate had the courage to espouse openly either group of European belligerents. As a matter of fact, the electors were not so much interested in "Americanism" as they were in narrow selfish issues, or in the war. Consequently there was no steady drift of feeling and no unity of purpose animating the electorate; the pivotal states voted for Hughes and he was generally thought to be elected ; further returns came in and this result was doubted. After several days of feverish indecision it became clear that Wilson was re-elected. It is not impossible that the defeat of Hughes was due to his slight

error in tact when touring one of the Pacific states. And this in the face of the momentous problems which confronted the nation !

Now that America has become a belligerent the question which interests the whole world is, "How far will she go ?" Psychology, as I have said, is a new science, and can hardly pretend to offer a complete answer to the problems presented by war. This makes prediction a risky enterprise, yet a few speculations as to the share which the new ally will take in the struggle may be justified in that their accuracy or error will prove the completeness of the foregoing formulations.

In his stirring address to Congress, asking for a declaration of war, President Wilson was superficially illogical in that he declared two antithetic reasons for his request. One urged the country to stand by their altruistic ideals, another demanded what was essentially the avenging of insults—a selfish motive. As a matter of fact this was a logical appeal to the intelligent and to the unintelligent. It takes two to make a quarrel and two nations (at least) to make a war. A nation with no ideals of human rights and capable of accepting insults will never fight. The history of the American people shows beyond question that they are not an aggressive group, so the only possible incentive to war must come from one or the other or both of these factors, and each or both must

lead to a strong emotional reaction. As to the first : as has been pointed out, the educated and intelligent classes have felt strongly, even belligerently, about the issues at stake in the great war. In America this class is largely represented by the capitalists. We may therefore look to see a strong financial and executive support given to the Entente Allies. But the mass of the people are not to be moved by any such remote abstractions : their lesser intelligence demands the stimulus of a more direct and more nearly personal danger. The Zeppelin raids did much for recruiting in Britain. The far-seeing statesman, realizing the necessity or inevitableness of war, seizes the moment when the people are aroused and launches his armies. Had more decisive action been taken immediately after the sinking of the *Lusitania* there would have been a ready response. That occasion was allowed to slip by, a series of lesser affronts dulled the sensibilities of the unthinking citizen, and now it is possible that nothing short of an invasion will rouse the people from their lethargy and their unwonted prosperity.

There are two factors, however, which may operate emotionally and stir a war spirit : conscription and the inconvenience of food regulation. If the danger or loss of brothers, sons, or friends kindles animosity against Germany, and if the



enemy is held to be responsible for the food shortage, the people will rise, fight and be unified. But it is by no means certain that antagonism may not be directed against the Government and the capitalistic class. The great problem of the Government is to adjust these burdens gradually, and with their imposition to educate their citizens. Fortunately for this end the capitalists have already set the example of self-abnegation, which makes the task of the administration so much the easier.

The cream of the colonizing, dominant races is in America, but with them is the scum of dependent, inferior, downtrodden people. Whether the melting-pot produces dross or gold may soon be seen, for the fate of the United States probably depends on the rôle they play in the World War. They may emerge a real nation or a mere agglomeration of self-seeking individualists, whose society has no higher or more permanent cohesion than that of common opportunity for material prosperity. Not entangled by precedents of alliances of the Machiavellian or Bismarckian type, America has entered world politics. The opportunity is hers to aid in the erection of new standards of international honour, but to make these a living force she must first become a united people.

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