

THE FUTURE  
OF MILITARISM

ROLAND

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THE FUTURE OF MILITARISM



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AN EXAMINATION OF F. SCOTT  
OLIVER'S "ORDEAL BY BATTLE"

BY

ROLAND

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ADELPHI TERRACE, W.C.

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CONCERNING PARTIES AND THE  
PARTY TRUCE



# THE FUTURE OF MILITARISM

## CHAPTER I

### CONCERNING PARTIES AND THE PARTY TRUCE

THOSE who, like Mr. F. S. Oliver, are concerned about the power of the Party System, have many grounds for comfort. When leaders of parties agree to a patriotic truce, any half-dozen of their normal adherents can see to it that domestic strife shall continue. You have only to say that you put country above party and you are self-absolved. You can then proceed in war-time to asperse at will the majority of your countrymen, the Party System, the

party you most dislike, its leaders, their policy, Parliamentary institutions, trial by jury, lawyers, logic, labour, payment of members, and things in general, provided only that you balance your praise of German militarism by criticism of the German spy system, which is solidly unpopular ; sniff from time to time at your own leaders, to show you are no partisan ; and establish your patriotism by extolling Lord Roberts, and claiming that Conscription for all eternity must be established at the close of the war, with no nonsense about proper payment.

It would be quite wrong to call this kind of thing unpatriotic. It is for many men the way of being patriotic : they are so constructed. To have their own way verbally if they cannot have it otherwise is for them the first condition of comfort ; only

thus can they feel that they remain free Britons. Fortunately for them, they are usually above the military age, and so cannot be put in the ranks, where the need to have your own way, verbally or otherwise, is so imperfectly recognized.

The Party System has certainly its bad points, like the universe, and like most human institutions ; but it has one advantage, which will for some time insure its continuance : it saves the community from the man who must have his own way. The faculties of self-suppression in time of trial, and of co-operation in difficulty, happen to be more necessary to the weal of nations than Conscription, which has many times failed to save. One nation, and one only, in modern times, has thus far had the fate of national suppression—a fate, it is to be hoped, ere long to be reversed—and this was

not because of lack of fighting power, but because its institutions recognized that every man ought to have his own way. In Mr. F. S. Oliver, and in his kaleidoscopic essay entitled "Ordeal by Battle," we have an interesting survival of the type and the methods of the Polish aristocracy of the eighteenth century. That aristocracy had no Party System; and as it had no other system, it made an end of Poland for about a century and a half. When Poland, as we all trust, is nationally reconstituted, it will probably be unnecessary to provide against the revival of the *Liberum Veto*. The experiment was quite sufficiently tried. If, on the other hand, Turkey should fall from nationhood, it will not be by reason of undue devotion to the Party System or inattention to German military ideals.

Of course, Mr. Oliver, whose mind is



made up about one thing, and one thing only—to wit, the perpetual necessity of Conscription—feels that, with *that* established, there can be no danger of national overthrow. But perhaps some of the friends of Mr. Oliver can realize that, if only everybody is determined to play Mr. Oliver's game in war-time, it will matter very little how the army is recruited. If everybody is to have his own way, vilifying his own nation and its leaders, scouting the prevailing policy, promising disaster if his policy is not adopted, and stirring up all manner of strife for his own gratification, any army—conscript or voluntary—will soon be a broken reed. Mr. Oliver, of course, expects that the army will do as it is told; the joys of the free-lance are not for the trenches, but for those who stay at home. But there will be plenty of us at home, above the military

age, to keep Mr. Oliver company in domestic strife if we are so disposed ; and if only Mr. Oliver's ideals of patriotism become popular in Britain, it seems rather doubtful whether a British army can ever be led anywhere. The Oliverian principle is that in war-time it is *dulce et decorum* to run amok against everything about you that is recalcitrant to your inspired conception of the national needs ; and if your ideal is that an army should be very large, but never fight—which would seem to be Mr. Oliver's—it will be your patriotic business to prevent its fighting.

On this suggestion it may perhaps occur to some of Mr. Oliver's admirers that they have really no case against the Union of Democratic Control or Mr. Bernard Shaw. Mr. Shaw, they may say, plays Germany's game, whereas Mr. Oliver only plays the

German game, denouncing Germany in the lump while extolling its constituent elements and justifying its ideals in detail. But parts of Mr. Oliver's book are quite as gratifying to the Germans as anything written by Mr. Shaw, which is saying a good deal. And if Mr. Oliver cannot simply hold his tongue and help his country, why should Mr. Shaw, who has such a large German public to hold on to ?

In some of his many moods, Mr. Oliver would perhaps admit that the members of the Union of Democratic Control are quite as well-meaning men as he is. They are not all peace-at-any-price men. A few years ago some of them were eager to make an enemy of Russia by getting the British Government to insult the Tsar. Others were even zealous to send an ultimatum to Russia on behalf of Persia. At present they

are deeply impressed by the utilitarian consideration of the importance of stopping bloodshed and freeing Belgium from occupation, at the cost of prostration before Germany. Justice is become for them, in comparison, an empty word. When the alleged offender was Russia, they were willing to face pandemonium for supposed justice' sake. But why should not they, in war-time, proclaim their ideals at any cost of national division, when Mr. Oliver sets them the example ?

In their view—or the view of some of them—Viscount Grey wrought for war. In the view of Mr. Oliver, Viscount Grey is an amiable blunderer who wanted peace, but did not know how to secure it; while Mr. Asquith is a lazy lawyer who does not like action, and is concerned only to avoid it. Mr. Oliver is patriotically anxious to

lay the blame of the war on everybody who did not agree with him and the late Lord Roberts—the one man with whom he avows himself in complete agreement. Surely the Union of Democratic Control, on Mr. Oliver's Old Polish principles, have the same right, or duty, of patriotically condemning everybody who accepted the war, or is resolved to fight to a finish.

Our two types of extremist, really, have a great deal in common. They are all for national unity, if only it be unity with them. Mr. Oliver has an obviously keen sense of that kind of national duty. As he remarks: "A soldier who has enlisted voluntarily, and another who is a conscript or 'pressed' man, have equally to fight their country's enemies when they are ordered to do so."\* And in his preface he explains that "it is not only

\* "Ordeal by Battle," ed. 1915, p. 263.

military duties which the State is entitled to command its citizens to perform unquestioningly in times of danger, but also civil duties. It is not only men between the ages of twenty and thirty-eight to whom the State should have the right to give orders, but men and women of all ages. Under conditions of modern warfare it is not only armies which need to be disciplined, but whole nations." Only not Oliver's. Discipline, mental or political, is not for them. They proceed, as Mr. Oliver tells us he does, upon instinct. And when instinct moves them to asperse their Government, their countrymen in the mass, and all classes but their own, proclaiming the substantial justice of German attacks upon British character, and promoting party strife and class divisions, why, it must just be done.

Once more, if everybody at home were as

much inspired by instinct as Mr. Oliver, with what success would an Oliverian war be conducted? Mr. Oliver's friends are no doubt free to reply that there are few people like Mr. Oliver, though they do their best to confute such a plea by backing him. But it becomes necessary to point out to him and them that if they will not hold their peace they cannot expect other people to do so. Mr. Asquith has appealed for a stoppage of recrimination, and they will not cease. Had the Government suppressed Mr. Oliver's book, as the German Government would have done with any equally factious—or independent—German book, we should have had an interesting light on the sincerity of Mr. Oliver's doctrine that the State has a right to call for unquestioning obedience from all its citizens. For Mr. Oliver, *l'état, c'est moi*. Silence and obedi-

ence are for mere citizens and politicians ; it is his high task, upon instinct, to flagellate them. And as our unhappy institutions, which he sees to be so deplorably lacking in machinery for discipline, leave him free to set the heather on fire at his sweet will, there is nothing for it but to employ in the national defence the feeble instruments of reason and logic, which he so contemns, but which he so weakly consents to try to use. Mr. Oliver is intent upon reforming all the rest of us. He will perhaps admit, then, that the instinct of self-defence, whose vitality he avows, may fitly move us to attempt to reform him, or, if that be impossible, to expose him.

Under the spell of his amiable hallucination that all decent people are bound to think as he does, Mr. Oliver predicts that this war will make an end of parties in Britain. Those of his admirers who have any faculty



for realizing facts might do well to take note of the prediction, as a test of Mr. Oliver's depth of common sense, to say nothing of his prophetic instinct. It would be a fine thing, truly, if after the war men who used to fight factiously over every political issue, from Home Rule to National Insurance, could consent to debate all things dispassionately, like members of a Board of Directors. But when we realize that Mr. Oliver's own conception of non-party Government is just the supremacy of an Oliver party, which is to represent the "true ore," everything else being "dross to cake upon the surface," our optimistic hopes are apt to be dashed. The substitution of unselfish conference and deliberation for the old party spirit will be brought about, if at all, only by the spirit of self-suppression and considerate sympathy, involving the courteous acceptance of the

majority vote for the time being. And when the very prophecy of the disappearance of faction is made in the spirit of sheer faction and the language of primeval arrogance, we realize that "it's lang ere the deil deat the dyke side."

The Conservative leaders who have joined the Coalition have honourably observed their pact. Before the Coalition some of them had not very anxiously observed the truce. But the very conditions of the much criticized Party System secure the loyalty of Ministers to the Government they join; and Mr. Bonar Law, formerly the most virulent of opponents, has done more than be merely loyal: he has admittedly worked in the fullest spirit of unity. Mr. Walter Long, who used to feel so acutely the shortcomings of the War Office, has not only done his own work faithfully, but has risen

to the height of rebuking a former colleague for serving in the War Office in the forenoon and disparaging it in the afternoon.

All this is gain, and it may well be that after the war Ministers and politicians who have amicably co-operated for purposes of war will recognize each other's honesty and abstain from virulent strife in peace. But to proclaim that all past political history is to be cancelled by a cabal of Conscriptionists with the war-cry of "A plague o' both your houses!" is to remind sane men that the Party System arose out of the instinct of strife, and that the instinct of strife cannot possibly supersede it. When Lord Bolingbroke found that, distrusted by his own former comrades, he could not break the party in power, he clutched at the formula of a Patriot Party, which was to supersede all others—as if "party" did not mean

“section.” The device which failed Bolingbroke has appealed to other politicians in our own day, but never to citizens enough to form a perceptible “party.” And so it will ever be. If the kingdom of heaven is not practicable within the parties, it will certainly not come to them from without, whether by war or Conscription. If there is to be reform, we must all, more or less, be in it. And before the Oliverians can help to reform us they will have to reform themselves. Which, they will probably say with Euclid, is absurd.

WHY MR. OLIVER WROTE



## CHAPTER II

### WHY MR. OLIVER WROTE

THERE can be no objection to the criticism that Mr. Oliver's book is a medley, seeing that he avows as much. Two of its Parts, "I fear," he confesses, "diverge to a greater or less extent from the main purpose of the book." And there are only four Parts in all. But it is important to know that there was a "main purpose." Like a certain forgotten party—was it "Young England"?—the book has a little of everything. It discusses Lord Roberts; the futility of Pacifism; the causes of the war; the character of the Germans, of their Kaiser, their Press, their professors; their miscalculations; their hatred

of England ; their past history ; their recent developments ; Treitschke and Nietzsche—especially Nietzsche ; the German virtues ; the British vices ; democracy ; Mr. Asquith ; Viscount Grey ; Lord Haldane's mission ; lawyers ; priests ; professors ; payment of members ; the Labour Party ; the lack of leadership in the Conservative Party ; the Expeditionary Force ; Sir John Simon ; and so back again to Lord Roberts ; then back again to history, the Soudan, South Africa ; the views of Mr. Oliver's typified German, Count Hexenküchen ; President Lincoln ; and yet again back to Lord Roberts and Conscription. In the concluding chapter, after a reminder that the noxious Liberal politician is "no peculiar product of the Liberal party," but "the product of the party system in its corrupt decadence," we learn that "This book has



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been written to establish the *Need* for National Service."

Now, partly because so many men of Mr. Oliver's way of thinking would not work *oyally* for the voluntary system, we actually have Conscription for the period of the war ; and, writing before that was established, Mr. Oliver expressed his confidence that even the "some persons"—a handful, evidently, in his opinion—who believed that we might win the war without it, would "hardly dare to deny that, after a war which ends without a crowning victory, we shall have to accept Conscription at once upon the signature of peace."\* So that the reason for writing the book in 1915 was far from clear ; and the reason for running a cheap edition of it in 1916, after Conscription has been established, is still darker. If we do

\* P. 414.

*not* secure a crowning victory, Conscription, we are told, is secure. If we *do*, we shall at least be safe for the time being; in which case the *need* for Mr. Oliver's running amok at present is not easily to be detected.

The solution would seem to be either that the most keenly felt need was for Mr. Oliver to unburden himself of all his grievances, or that, fearing to see Conscription abandoned when peace comes, he felt it necessary to have all the possible fat in the fire during the war, even to the extent of lampooning in the lump lawyers, priests, professors, and politicians, whose support to his scheme might seem to be of some importance. And the truth would appear to be that both solutions are valid. Mr. Oliver is both sure and unsure about the triumph of his ideal. He has few beliefs that will hold out for two chapters, his mind being notably

hospitable to contradictions ; but, as he tells us, he goes upon his instinct, like Lord Roberts. His admiration for that illustrious soldier is very intelligible, for by his account the Earl “ was a poor arguer : I think argument was painful to him ; also that he regarded it as a sad waste of the short span of human life. It was not difficult to out-argue him.”

Mr. Oliver, conscious of a kindred cast of mind, lets us know that he has an invincible contempt for logic. Like the coster, he is not arguing with us, he is telling us. He and Lord Roberts are not men to be argued with. “ If I were asked,” he writes, “ to name Lord Roberts’s highest *intellectual quality*, I should say unhesitatingly that it was his instinct. And if I were asked to name his highest moral quality, I should say, also unhesitatingly, that it was the un-

shakable confidence with which he trusted his instinct. But the firmness of his trust was not due in the least to self-conceit, or arrogance, or obstinacy. He obeyed his instinct as he obeyed his conscience—humbly and devoutly. The dictates of both proceeded from the same source. *It was not his own cleverness which led him to his conclusions, but the hand of Providence which drew aside a veil, and enabled him to see the truth.*" \*

*De mortuis . . .*; and we shall leave Lord Roberts alone, especially as he is not known to have been guilty of professing to be specially enlightened by Providence as to the principles of army formation. But, at the risk of being logical, it must be pointed out that Mr. Oliver must be conscious of special illumination at the hand of Provi-

\* Preface, p. xxiii.

dence, to validate his revelation to us concerning the late Field-Marshal. From Mr. Oliver's point of view, it is thus idle for anyone to argue against him. As he tells us, ingenuity and eloquence—by which he means arguments—“are a curse at councils of war, and state, and business. Indeed, wherever action of any kind has to be determined upon, they are a curse. It was Lord Roberts's special gift that, out of the medley of unanswerable reasons, he had an instinct for selecting those which really mattered, and keeping his mind close shut against the rest.”

The trouble is that Mr. Oliver's own admirers think *him* eloquent, and consider him to have put the arguments for Conscription most skilfully—in fact, ingeniously! From which it will begin to appear to the reader, without any trouble on the part of

his opponents, that Mr. Oliver is, after all, only a very puzzle-headed person, playing at being a prophet. Like Falstaff—of whose personal charm he is not devoid—he knows the right thing by instinct. In one place he is at pains to explain to us “*how good* the grounds were on which the *best-informed* and most efficient bureaucracy in the world decided that the British Empire would remain neutral in the present war. Looked at from the *strictly intellectual* standpoint, the reasons which satisfied German statesmen with regard to Britain’s neutrality were *overwhelming*. . . . None the less, the judgment of the Kaiser and his Ministers was not only bad, but *inexcusably bad*. We expect more from statesmen than that they should arrive at logical conclusions. Logic in such cases is nothing; all that matters is to be right; but unless

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*instinct rules* and reason serves, right judgment will rarely be arrived at in such matters as these.”

It is worth while to pause for a moment over this Falstaffian exposition. A little while before, it will be remembered, Mr. Oliver had been explaining that Lord Roberts's highest *intellectual* quality was his *instinct*. Now we learn from him that everything concerned with ascertaining the actual trend of events is “strictly intellectual,” and has nothing to do with instinct. Further, the German bureaucracy were the best informed in the world, and they had “overwhelmingly” good “grounds” for their judgment. Still, their judgment was not only bad, but inexcusably bad; and this because—with all their concern to acquire information—they were really logical and lacked instinct. Now, seeing that instinct

was conferred upon Lord Roberts and (by implication) on Mr. Oliver by special miracle, it seems hard to pronounce the Germans inexcusable for not having it. And the rest of us, being left like the Germans to our unaided faculties (though the Germans, having *Gott mit Uns*, of course do not admit any such thing), are driven to ask whether our inspired instructor is not, after all, only a German with a difference — a person convinced that he knows all things when he knows nothing “that matters”; a person who has been at a University and thinks that logic consists in guessing wrong, and that instinct is divine revelation—in short, a puzzle-headed leader of the puzzle-headed.

After all, the rest of us have our instincts, though we lack the courage to call them Providential illuminations. And some of



us had an instinct about Mr. Oliver from his preface onwards; though we still took the trouble to read him. Not being satisfied that the affirmation of one's instinct is a decisive substitute for argument, we are fain to defer avowal of what instinct hinted. But the reader who has noted that disclosure about Providence and Lord Roberts is apt to feel new instinctive stirrings when he reads shortly afterwards that, "Whether the prevailing priesthood wears white robes and fillets, or rich vestments, or cassocks and Geneva bands, or the severer modern garb of the professor or politician, it appears to be equally prone to dogmatic blasphemy. There is no proof that the war was pre-ordained either by a Christian God or by the laws of Pagan Nature." Dogmatic blasphemy, like instinct and political virtue, would seem to be the preserve of the

Oliverian. The proof that the instinct for Conscription comes straight from Providence is clear, of course, to him.

And yet Mr. Oliver, not content with informing us that he has an instinct for which Providence has drawn aside the veil that hampers ordinary instinctive vision, has been at pains to write a bulky book in which, most of the time, he puts on the semblance of a mere reasoner. He offers what his admirers believe to be evidence, and what some of them declare to be convincing arguments. They have even been heard to call him a logical reasoner. Apparently they feel that to order readers to accept what they are told by a writer who has instinct aided by revelation from Providence is not quite a good enough way of subverting the Party System and converting the nation. If the present writer were to say that Mr.

Oliver is an emotionalist devoid of logic and avowedly enlightened by miracle (which in his case would certainly seem to be necessary), they would probably disown the soft impeachment, and challenge antagonists to confute him on the merits of his case.

That is what it is here proposed to do ; but the Oliverians would really do well to settle with Mr. Oliver as to what their case is to be. As Lord Melbourne told his Cabinet, it does not matter much what they say, but they had better say the same thing. Mr. Oliver recognizes the sagacity of Lincoln ; and it was Lincoln who pointed out that you can fool some of the people all the time, and all of the people some of the time, but not all the people all the time.

In this matter, as in others, there is a notable community of feeling between Mr.

Oliver and the extremists at the other pole of "instinct." The conscientious objectors like him, feel that they have an inner light, which outshines all other men's reasoning, and nullifies logic. Their sincere disregard of logic is proved—in a number of cases—by their declaration that they will do nothing which can even indirectly assist war, whereas not one has refused to pay the additional income-tax imposed for war purposes. But, as Mr. Oliver insists, logic does not matter when you have instinct; and most people, on the other hand, seem to feel that the inner light does not matter much, either. In view, then, of the ostensibly general assent to the laws of reason, it seems fitting to deal with Mr. Oliver's case as he in general presents it, dismissing as an irrelevant device his claim to Providential backing.

He has written his book, he tells us, to

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*establish* the Need for Conscription ; and by “establish” he must be held to mean “prove,” or “give reasons for,” unless he wishes to be regarded simply as a British Mahdi, demanding the allegiance of the faithful. At the same time he has avowedly devoted half of his book to topics which diverge from that purpose, because “compression is a difficult and lengthy process.” Further, as he tells us in his preface, “the greater part of this volume has been written in haste.” Mr. Oliver emulates the—perhaps legendary—Irishman who wrote a long letter because he had not time to write a short one. And he has written in haste, and with some fifty per cent. of avowed irrelevance, a book which in all its parts runs to incrimination, recrimination, and aspersion of all who substantially disagree with him, incidentally impugning the honesty of the majority of

politicians and the character or the capacity or the sincerity of the nation's leaders—to say nothing of all lawyer-politicians and most priests and professors. And all this in the name of national unity in war-time, and the principles of personal discipline and unquestioning obedience to the need of the State.

CONSCRIPTION AS PREVENTIVE  
OF WAR





## CHAPTER III

### CONSCRIPTION AS PREVENTIVE OF WAR

IT is quite unnecessary to discuss here the question whether Conscription was needed in order to win the war. That was not and is not Mr. Oliver's objective. If he has any general principle at all, it is this, that Conscription is the way, and the only way, to prevent war; that it must be maintained at all times, to that end; and that if we had had Conscription in Britain we should not have had the war—or need not have had it. This doctrine pervades Mr. Oliver's book from beginning to end, as it always pervaded the propaganda of the National Service League. The fact that some of its leaders—including

Lord Roberts—from time to time preached the older doctrine that war is a beneficent and purifying thing, which saves nations from decadence, does not alter the other fact. As Mr. Oliver insists, logic does not matter when you are a Conscriptionist upon instinct.

Working up to his thesis that British Conscription could have prevented the war, Mr. Oliver makes early play with the proposition put by M. Sazonof, on July 25, 1914, “that if Britain then took her stand firmly with France and Russia there would be no war; but that if we failed them then, rivers of blood would flow, and in the end we should be dragged into war.” Of course Mr. Oliver does not believe the first of these three propositions. His own (later) statement is that “it was clearly absurd to think that our own small force was at all adequate,

in a military sense, to deter Germany from engaging in a war of aggression.”\* But he thinks it good business to make play with M. Sazonof’s utterance in such a way as to suggest that M. Sazonof thinks England is to blame for the war—this by way of promoting the unity of the Allies. He asks: “Was M. Sazonof right?”† and he affects to leave the question open, while believing that M. Sazonof was wrong, in the sense which he by implication gives to M. Sazonof’s words. M. Sazonof held that “unfortunately Germany was convinced that she could count upon the neutrality of England.” All the while Mr. Oliver is convinced that, even if Germany had expected England to fight, our small force was quite inadequate to deter Germany from waging a war of aggression.

\* P. 260.

† P. 32.

What he is oftenest sure of—one must not put the case higher than that—is that “This war was not inevitable ; it could have been avoided, but on one condition—*if England had been prepared*. England was not prepared, either morally or materially.”\* Preparation, for Mr. Oliver, means a conscript army, on the German scale. If any positive meaning can be attached to any of his utterances, he means here that an England with an army on the Continental scale could have deterred Germany from aggression.

This would seem to be clear enough ; yet a little earlier we find Mr. Oliver, commenting on the American Civil War, deciding “how futile is the assurance that economic *and material* considerations will suffice to make war impossible between nations who

\* P. 37.

have not even the tie of a common mother-tongue.”\* Military strength would seem to be a material consideration, even in the elastic terminology of Mr. Oliver. So that in one mood he is sure that neither moral nor material considerations can deter nations from war, and in another mood equally sure that material considerations can have this deterrent effect. Some of Mr. Oliver’s adherents will probably reply that he means “only in certain cases,” that he speaks of this war in particular. But if Mr. Oliver only meant that the establishment of a conscript army would have prevented war with Germany in 1914, while leaving it possible in any future year, he would be trifling rather too grossly with his readers. His argument means, if it is anything more than a piece of Northcliffian journalism, framed for mere

\* P. 11.

momentary aspersion, that Germany would have given up aggression if Britain had adopted compulsory service before 1914, and that all other military dangers could be similarly averted.

So that, as always in the polemic of Mr. Oliver and the National Service League, we have our choice between two fundamentally frustrative propositions—that war will never cease, and that it can be prevented by universal armament on the largest possible scale. Between these contradictions Mr. Oliver passes his entire mental life. He is “born divided,” as somebody said of ancient Greece; and he solaces himself, as we have seen, with the pronouncement that logic does not matter, and that it is instinct that settles at any given moment what is right, in any calculation as to the future. To admit that neither instinct nor logic can

safely predict the future is far too unpretentious a course for Mr. Oliver, and would, besides, be incompatible with the premiss of Providential revelation.

His method, accordingly, is to advance his contradictions alternately, like the figures in a Swiss clock. And, as he has some aspirations to philosophy, he even puts a sort of philosophic case for the method of Conscription. He leans much to aphorism, and is understood to have given much satisfaction to a select circle of readers by such profundities as these :

Things unmerchable cannot be purchased with the finest of fine gold.

Unfortunately, the inability to think a thing is no more a protection against its occurrence than the inability to see a thing gives security to the *ostrich*.

The *dream of German expansion*, as year by year it took firmer hold upon the popular imagination, *produced, as might have been expected, a desire that it might be realized.*

Intellectually disciplined by such comparatively safe thinking, Mr. Oliver from time to time essays higher flights. As thus:

The British people knew that Germany was talking nonsense; but, unfortunately, they never fully realized that she was sincere, and meant all the things she said (p. 40).

This may be taken as a presentation of what Mr. Oliver later calls the One-ness of Things. But he is not wedded to that way of thinking, any more than to any other. As he tells us:

The mind of the ordinary man, like that of the philosopher, is hypnotized by a basic assumption of the One-ness of Things. He wants to trace all trouble to a single root [in Mr. Oliver's normal manner], as if it were a corn and could be extracted. But in an inquiry like the present we are confronted at every turn with the Two-ness of Things, or, indeed, with the Multiplicity of Things (p. 79).



Therefore we must not at *this* point believe what Mr. Oliver told us on p. 40. At p. 81 we are warned that our "temptation" is "to visualize a single, gross, overbearing, and opinionated type of the Teuton species." When Mr. Oliver is on the tack of Oneness, Germany is "she," meaning all the things "she" says. When he is awake to Two-ness and Multiplicity, his previous vision of "she" is a "temptation" which we must eschew. In the same fashion Mr. Oliver is honestly hostile to "dogmatic blasphemy" when he is not dogmatically blaspheming on his own account.

Thus it comes about that the main purpose of his book is to maintain both terms of a loose contradiction. For a strictly logical reader it would matter little further that both propositions are incapable of proof, and probably both false, one being,

on realization, a kind of delirious absurdity. But, as Mr. Oliver has really some ground for believing (witness the sales of his book), the majority of his public are not strictly logical, and it is accordingly expedient to deal with the two terms of his contradiction separately, on their merits.

First in natural order of discussion comes the theorem that if Britain had had compulsory service before 1914 the present war would not have taken place. It is significant of Mr. Oliver's hazy habit of mind that he never chronologically limits his proposition, or discusses what might have happened at any given stage of a process of preparation. Ostensibly the proposition is: Had England in 1914 possessed a conscript army of (say) three or four millions, Germany would not have entered upon the present war unless

she were assured that England would remain neutral. That is to say, we should not have had the war of 1914-1916, with Germany and Austria and Bulgaria and Turkey arrayed against Russia, Serbia, France, Belgium, Italy, and Britain. Such a proposition, obviously, might be assumed to be true without in the slightest degree making for the larger proposition that British Conscription could prevent war, either for Britain or for any of the present belligerents. For the slightest consideration of the case raises the two alternative questions whether (1) an adoption of a system of Conscription by Britain might not have led to an *earlier* war; and (2) whether, supposing Britain to have established a system of Conscription by 1914, foreign alliances would not by that time have been so rearranged that a war equally vast and much more disadvan-

tageous for England would have been the result.

It will be observed that Mr. Oliver and his party, conscious as they are of their instinctive sagacity, never contemplate the question whether a resort to Conscription in this country, at any time after 1902, would or would not have precipitated German aggression. To omit to take into account such a contingency will by many people be recognized to be a course worthy only of simpletons; and Mr. Oliver and his friends do omit it. There is no simpleton like your ideologue conscious of instinctive insight and Divine guidance. Mr. Oliver does in one passage recognize that Germany's main motive for attacking Russia in 1914 was that "she stood midway in a great military and naval reformation, than which no situation is more deplorable for the purposes of

carrying on a campaign.”\* That is to say, a country changing its military system under the eye of a powerful enemy determined upon aggression puts itself in a very deplorable position. As to Germany’s determination, Mr. Oliver avows his conviction many times over. In so many words he declares “that she deliberately aimed at war, and that when there seemed a chance of her plan miscarrying, she promptly took steps to make peace impossible” (p. 35).

Yet Mr. Oliver always reasons—for he constantly goes through the forms of reasoning—on the assumption that if at *any* time Britain had decided to create a conscript army, avowing (as he and his friends would have taken care to do) that

\* P. 47. This was the view of the German Ambassador at Vienna. Mr. Oliver in effect concurs. Compare pp. 23, 276.

she did so with a special eye to Germany, Germany would have sat quiet and allowed the process to be peacefully completed. Such is the faith of the Conscriptionist ideologue.

There is no time reservation, be it observed, in Mr. Oliver's exposition. He points a series of six "warnings" between 1905 and 1913, plainly implying that at any one of these points Britain would have done well to adopt Conscription. On every assumption upon which Mr. Oliver proceeds, it follows that Germany, being determined to crush England, would have precipitated war precisely at the moment at which it would have meant the maximum of disadvantage to us. To argue otherwise is to negate all Mr. Oliver's premisses as to the deliberate purpose of the enemy. Of course Mr. Oliver can fall back—he probably

will—on the position that we ought to have had Conscription long before 1900; that in *that* case Germany would not have provoked war; and that, even if she had forced it while we were setting up Conscription, we should have been no worse off than we actually were. But even if the last of these propositions were granted, we should have arrived, not at the proof, but at the utter stultification of Mr. Oliver's thesis that a resort to a policy of Conscription between 1905 and 1913 would have prevented *this* war. In the terms of the case, it would just have hastened the war.

As for the alternative thesis that had we had Conscription before 1900 there would have been no war with Germany, and no great European war, it is again a negation of all Mr. Oliver's own premisses. When his immediate aim is to show that pacifists

in general are fools, he insists on the utter incalculableness of the forces which produce wars. They are best to be understood or appreciated (he assures us) by listening to music. Some ideal, some passion, some suddenly touched memory, plays upon a nation's heart-strings, and war ensues. But as soon as the pacifists have been duly disparaged, Mr. Oliver's instinct alters its objective. It is now essential to explain that wars *can* be prevented if only we do what Mr. Oliver wants—which oddly happens to be in effect what militarists have always wanted to do, and have normally done, through ten thousand years of human history, red on every page with battle blood.

Equally positive is his premiss as to the intentions of the German "she." In so many words he tells us that "German dis-



trust of England was based upon the surest of all foundations—upon her own fixed and envious determination to overthrow our Empire and rob us of our property.”\* But as soon as the question becomes one of policy, Mr. Oliver’s accommodating instinct informs him that the fixed and envious determination can be unfixed and put to sleep by the simple device of establishing Conscription in Great Britain. Hatred of our power is to be turned away by making our power at once greater and more obvious. As to German hatred, Mr. Oliver is sufficiently explicit. Of all the forces making for war in Europe, he writes :

By far the most formidable in recent times have been the attitude of public opinion in Germany towards England ; the hatred of England which has been sedulously and systematically inculcated among

\* P. 70.

the people of all ranks; the suspicions of our policy which have been sown broadcast; the envy of our position in the world which has been instilled, without remission, by all and sundry the agencies and individuals subject to the orders and inspiration of Government. An obsession has been created, by these means, which has distorted the whole field of German vision. National ill-will accordingly has refused to yield to any persuasion. Like its contrary, the passion of love, it has burned all the more fiercely, *being unrequited*.

The fatuity of the two last words is notable, even in Mr. Oliver's propaganda. Every one of his readers must be perfectly well aware that they are false. The journalistic faction to which Mr. Oliver belongs has requited German hatred at every step with a hatred to the full as blatant, even if only sectional; and if at any stage stimulation of German hatred could be said to be noticeably lacking in the rest of the British Press, the politicians of Mr. Oliver's way of

thinking have seen to it that the stimulus was given. That, of course, is all in the ordinary way of national life—so obviously so that it would be idle to deplore it. But it might have been supposed that even the smallest modicum of common sense would have revealed to Mr. Oliver and his adherents that such a state of national hatred as he describes in Germany could not possibly be modified by a marked new development of British military power.

If it be answered that the question is not the removal of German hatred, but proper provision against it, we come to the next step in the argument—if, that is, the instinct-illuminated Conscriptionist will condescend to seem to argue. The proposition at this stage will presumably be that with a conscript army as well as a supreme navy Britain could defy German

hatred. But what Mr. Oliver is contending for is that British Conscription would not merely make Britain safe in war, but would *prevent* war. And this is the proposition that raises the fundamental question of the sanity of the Conscriptionist instinct.

Men who possess the normal instincts, but are wont to check them by reflection, can at once realize that a Germany filled with hate and distrust of England would either, as aforesaid, precipitate a war while England was ostensibly getting ready for one, or, if for any reason unable to do so, would re-adjust its whole system of alliances. Mr. Oliver and his faction, in their simple-minded way, now take for granted—that is, when they are putting the thesis of the *prevention* of war—that whatever European war might have taken place in this generation would have been a war with the chief

belligerents placed exactly as they now stand : Russia allied with France, Britain, and presumably Italy, against the Central Powers. But Mr. Oliver's doctrine implies that the policy of Conscription should have been resorted to long ago. Supposing, then, it had been resorted to in view of the " warnings " of the period 1899-1902, what were likely to have been the results in the way of alliances ? At that time, as a result of the happy play of the instincts which guide Mr. Oliver, Britain was in bad odour from St. Petersburg to Rome. Germany, about whose antipathy there could be no doubt, was slightly more correct in her attitude than was France, where the antipathy was certainly vigorous. One result of French manifestations was a gross and open menace to France by Mr. Chamberlain, one of the few statesmen admired and extolled by Mr.

Oliver. Had Britain in 1903—ostensibly the most favourable time—begun to establish Conscription, what would have been the result, as regards international alliances?

Will the most puzzle-headed of the Oliverians pretend that it would have been an alliance with France? We have Mr. Oliver's own reminder that at Leicester, on November 30, 1899, Mr. Chamberlain "had even gone the length of suggesting an alliance [with Germany], and had been denounced immediately by the whole German Press, *although it was understood at the time that he had spoken with the august encouragement of the Kaiser and his Chancellor.*"\* That is to say, Mr. Oliver believes—let us say, knows—that his ideal English statesman was in 1899 perfectly prepared to enter into an alliance with Germany against

\* P. 95.

France and Russia. Add that many people in France were at the same time prepared to enter into an alliance with Germany against England, and we have a broad indication of the possibility of international developments under the sway of "instinct."

Now, that the *whole* German Press would denounce a proposal known to be favoured by the Kaiser and his Chancellor is sufficiently improbable. But even if it were so in 1899, when France was equally hostile, it is fairly obvious that just as French feeling was later modified, so German feeling might have been, provided that Britain had rapidly set up a system of Conscription, and had remained hotly hostile to France, under Mr. Chamberlain's guidance. The Kaiser's own feelings—or at least his policy—had altered after the explosion evoked by his famous message to President Kruger; and German policy in

the matter of alliances has in the historic past been at least as adaptable as that of other countries. If, then, Mr. Oliver could have had his way in 1903, with Mr. Chamberlain in effective command, Europe might very well have had, instead of the present war, a war in which England was the ally of Germany against France, Belgium, and Russia. For Mr. Oliver must be well aware that, given such a fatal alliance to begin with, the military "instinct" in Britain would have accepted the foul invasion of Belgium, just as the military instinct has done in Germany. As he uneasily remembers, it was Lord Roberts who in this country gave the authoritative military certificate to Germanism :

Germany strikes when Germany's hour has struck. That is the time-honoured policy of her Foreign Office. . . . *It is an excel-*



*lent policy. It is, or should be, the policy of every nation prepared to play a great part in history.\**

It will hardly be disputed that Lord Roberts, as a soldier, would in any war have reckoned it no part of his business to discuss the *ethics* of the military action of his country's ally. It would seem then that, whatever else our alleged "unpreparedness" has brought about, it has saved us from that alliance with Germany against the cause of civilization which would probably have come about if in 1903 we had prepared as Mr. Oliver would have liked, with Mr. Chamberlain in effective command of the ship of State.

Of course that was not the only possibility. Mr. Oliver can see and say when it suits him that the risks of misunderstanding

\* Speech at Manchester, October 22, 1912, quoted by Mr. Oliver, pp. 333, 334.

and war between nations are numerous. We have had many occasions of friction with Russia in Asia ; and it is one of the claims of Viscount Grey to national gratitude that he has always saved us from that fatal growth of animosity towards Russia which the Conscriptionist type of politician was at all times so ready to foster, sometimes with the assistance of the professed pacifists, whose dislike of Russian autocracy made them ready to face war with Russia in the supposed interests of humanity. The "unprepared" policy, so called, in the hands of Liberal statesmen, has kept us on the side of civilization against its worst enemy, when the Oliverian policy would either have landed us in alliance with German militarism, or—what would have been as disastrous materially as that would have been morally—brought about a Russo-German alliance

in opposition to which we might or might not have had the support of the Western Powers now fighting by our side.

If it be asked why these possibilities are here discussed, now that the Fates have happily ranked us on the right side, the answer is simple. It is Mr. Oliver and his faction who, by unscrupulously arguing that the war is *due* to British "unpreparedness," force a true statement of the case. Their object is not merely to insure a continuance of Conscription after the war. They are bent above all things on discrediting those who resisted their short-sighted and forethoughtless policy. And it is their malice that exposes them. Men bent simply on securing Conscription, as being in their opinion the only adequate means of national defence, would have been content to put the positive reasons as they saw them. If they

really believed they had good reasons to show, and put any reliance on the process of rational persuasion, they would not have resorted to the quackery of claiming that Lord Roberts had Divine illumination from Providence, and at the same time that right instinct was all that was required, the right instinct being their specialty. Above all, if they had possessed what other people are content to call common sense, they would never have put forward the worse than empty pretence that any form of military preparation by Britain would have precluded the possibility of war with an enemy whom they themselves represented to be unalterably determined on aggrandizement at Britain's expense.

Bent above all things on stirring up domestic strife in war-time, they blindly argue that the adoption of Conscription by

Britain at any time in the past would have resulted in our having the present alliances and no others; though they avow that in 1899 Mr. Chamberlain, with the assent of the Kaiser and his Chancellor, was anxious for a German alliance. Blind to the implications of their own theory, they assume at the same time that our adoption of Conscription at any time after 1906 would have led to no precipitation of war by Germany; when, on Lord Roberts's avowed view, that would have been precisely the time for Germany to strike, catching us at the moment of maximum confusion in our military system. And, capping all their absurdities by a supreme absurdity, they all along gravely parade the theory that peace on earth is to be secured by all the nations of the earth being at all times armed to the utmost of their power—this while

positing for the very purpose of the thesis the fundamental and immutable character of the war spirit, the war instinct, and the thousand and one incalculable motives and incitements to war. On this supreme absurdity it is necessary to concentrate our thoughts.

THE CHIMERA OF GREAT  
ARMIES WITHOUT WAR





## CHAPTER IV

### THE CHIMERA OF GREAT ARMIES WITHOUT WAR

IN his interesting prefatory account of the late General Gough, Mr. Oliver tells how that brilliant soldier believed that the war "might have been avoided upon one condition, and one only—if England had been prepared." "I don't think," he continues—

"I don't think I have ever known anyone—certainly never any anti-militarist—whose hatred and horror of war gave the same impression of intensity and reality as his. Not metaphorically, but as a bare fact, his feelings with regard to it were too deep for words; he would suddenly break off speaking about things which had occurred in his own experience—in particular, about loss of friends and comrades. He was an Irishman,

and had not the impassive coldness of some of the great soldiers. But most of all he hated war when it was not inevitable—when with foresight and courage it might have been averted, as in his opinion this war might have been.”

Elsewhere Mr. Oliver expresses a doubt whether any war was ever inevitable; and he well may. The philosophic problem of the meaning of the word “inevitable” is not one for Mr. Oliver’s intellect to sound; but, taking him on his own ground, we have only to point out that in terms of his own doctrine all wars may in future be prevented by the simple device of universal Conscription, followed up by constant lavish expenditure upon armaments. This view, of course, he holds along with his other doctrine that neither moral nor material considerations can prevent war, even between people of the same race, when cause for war is felt

to exist, and his avowed conviction that permanent cause for war with England exists in the German consciousness. But, then, that is Mr. Oliver's way—his way of exemplifying "the Two-ness of things."

Some of his readers must have instinctively, if not logically, shunned this ever-present contradiction of his book by simply adopting the more alluring of the two formulas of the National Service League—the formula that preparedness can prevent all war. It appears to be quite certain that thousands of that faction cherish that incomparable chimera. It is implicit in the conviction of General Gough that *this* war would have been avoided if Britain had been prepared with a conscript army. If this war, why not every war? By common consent, Germany is as determined an enemy as we are ever likely to have; and

in the terms of the Conscriptionist argument she will remain a determined enemy. Yet we are told that there need never be any war if we have a conscript army and are always ready to fight. If this is true as between Britain and Germany, it must be equally true as between any other two or more countries. Neither Russia nor France, neither Italy nor Spain, need fear war if only they keep armed to the eyes, on Mr. Oliver's principles.

It will perhaps be suggested that the small States, however fully armed, can never be safe from aggression. What, then, is the prescription for them? Apparently Mr. Oliver holds that they should be safeguarded by larger States; though there is something suspicious about his assent to the doctrine of Lord Roberts that riches insufficiently defended are "provocative." At

least he professes to desire to maintain things as they were. We have, he insists, a preponderant interest in the Balance of Power in Europe; and British preparedness, he equally insists, is the great security against European war. Then, the smaller States have only to do their best and trust to the protection of the larger States. Thus, all round, the theory maintains that universal Conscription will secure universal peace.

We have now to try to conceive the state of mind of men who count upon the maintenance of perpetual peace by perpetual armaments on the largest scale that the world has yet seen. Generation after generation, century after century, the flower of the manhood of the world is to be zealously trained to war, and is never to fight. Every device for defence and attack, every possibility in munitions, in destructive invention,

is to be anxiously developed in perpetuity, and is never to be employed. The aeroplanes are to be multiplied by the thousand, and the battleships and submarines by the hundred; the new types are perpetually to supersede the old, in order that the military power of each State may remain "efficient"; the study of the art of war is to be sleeplessly pursued; new guns are always to be on trial; twenty or more millions of men are always to be in active training throughout Europe, under skilled officers; and none of them is ever to kill or be killed. And this universal training of the manhood of the world for a function that is never to be exercised is to constitute a perpetual school of character, discipline, patriotism, and all the manly virtues—such an education of the human race, in short, as will be worth the billions it will annually cost.

The men who grind out this moonshine are in the habit of labelling as sentimentalists the professed pacifists who avow the hope of attaining perpetual peace by other paths; and doubtless many pacifists are sentimentalists. But it is inconceivable that any of them have ever attained to such hallucination as is thus solemnly formulated by the Oliverians. Sentimentalism consists in the trick or habit of keeping a sentiment between yourself and realities, thus manufacturing self-illusion. Few of us, probably, wholly escape it; and it is the part of average wisdom to be on guard against it. Where the pacifist is apt to fail is in letting the radiance of his ideal blind him to the strength of the contrary forces of the contrary ideal. In war-time he is apt to lose his sense of actuality still more completely. But at least the typical or the average pacifist hopes to

attain peace by cultivating political sanity in that direction. He hopes so to convince men of the moral and material evils of war as to persuade them to set up a machinery of arbitration and international law which can settle all national quarrels; and often he proposes to back that legal machinery with international force enough to give effect to its findings. He may or may not be over-optimistic, but he is proceeding on comparatively rational lines. He in effect maintains that, when all or most men really want to preserve the peace, they will make peace-like arrangements. But the Oliverians, claiming also to be lovers of peace and haters of war, solemnly propose to attain universal peace by eternal and strenuous preparation everywhere, at enormous cost, for the war that is never to take place.

Sentimentalism seems too mild a name



for such solemn lunacy ; but perhaps sentimentalism is the right diagnosis after all. What has happened is the total exclusion of critical reason from a propaganda which begins by avowing its reliance upon instinct *plus* supernatural revelation, but seeks all the while to use terms of persuasion, which belong to the procedure of reason. The difficulty is to decide whether all the men who thus ecstatically propound the crassest absurdity are speaking with their tongues in their cheeks or have real faith in the folly they propound. It is very hard to decide. Some are probably dishonest ; many, surely, are sincere. General Gough, we are told, profoundly hated war, and would have liked to go through life as a soldier without ever fighting ; yet no one doubts his fighting faculty. Whether he would have thought this war avoidable if it had occurred under

the auspices of his own political party is an interesting topic for speculation. All that is clear is that men with the militarist bias are capable of a dividedness of soul which points to the primitive and tells of a total failure to think out the problems of actual life. Mr. Oliver's failure in that kind is something stupendous, if he is sincere. And if he is sincere his failure is inevitable, for his mind is on that view simply divided against itself—a Two-ness constantly collapsing into Multiplicity, and parading all the while as a One-ness of Instinct.

But as against his organized absurdity, it is necessary to point out the certainties of things. Universal militarism simply cannot promote peace, because supreme fitness for war inevitably promotes the spirit of war. It might have been supposed that this much was made clear by the modern

evolution of Germany. Mr. Oliver, whose admiration for the German fighting machine and the German devotion to Conscription shines through all his polemic, nevertheless declares that in the pursuit of their ideal the Germans have become the enemies of the human race. "The phantasmagoria of the German nightmare" is his phrase for the German state of mind after Bismarck.\* "Self-confidence and ambition were the original stuff—the warp and the weft—of which the German dream was made; but these *admirable and healthy qualities* rapidly underwent a morbid deterioration. Ambition degenerated into groundless suspicion, and self-confidence into arrogance." Yes; and why? It admittedly was not through unpreparedness. Were not the suspicion and the arrogance the due outcome of the religion of preparedness?

\* P. 96.

People who are concerned to put instinct under the check of reason, and are not conscious of acting daily under Divine revelation, are bound to face that problem and think it out. All are agreed that German arrogance and aggressiveness grew up in the atmosphere of supreme preparedness, and that nowhere else in the contemporary world have they so flourished. The Oliverians exhort us to attain to the same supreme preparedness, and so create the same atmosphere. And how, pray, are we to escape the malady which that atmosphere is seen to generate? The Oliverians not only do not answer the question: they do not even see it. Their simple assumption is that, when all States are as consummately prepared as were the Germans, nobody will be arrogant, and nobody morbidly suspicious; though they also affirm that in all nations

the potentialities of the war spirit are infinite and incalculable.

We are dealing with a propaganda in which folly worthy of children is formulated with the malice of passion-ruled men. The plain historical truth about the development of modern Europe since 1850 is that ever-widening militarism has generated alike ambition and suspicion up to the point of universal explosion in the most terrific war of all history. Bismarckism grew up side by side with the French Cæsarism of the Third Empire, and the folly of Napoleon III. gave Bismarckism its supreme opportunity. A regenerating France found itself, after defeat, menaced again and again by German insolence, after letting itself be tempted by Bismarck into flouting Italy; and a Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria, and Italy, long confronted the Dual Alliance forced

upon France and Russia. Always there was more and more "preparedness"; and finally the war flashes out when Britain was better prepared for defence than ever before in her history. And Mr. Oliver mellifluously explains that if we had only been much more prepared there need never have been any war at all. Conscription through nine-tenths of Europe makes potentially for pure peace; but lack of Conscription in the remaining tenth makes a World War.

Americans will please note the corollary. All the world, we are often told, is now interdependent; and if all Europe in future sticks to Conscription, and yet contrives to get up a war, it will be solely *their* fault—and China's. When China and the United States raise their conscript armies of twenty millions apiece, with guns and Zeppelins and aeroplanes and submarines and battle-

ships in proportion—*then* there can be no war, and mankind will go on zealously training to the uttermost for the war that will never come, “preparing” till the Happy Day of Judgment, when Lord Roberts and Providence will look down beatifically upon a perfect world, which will nevertheless pass away, in fulfilment of the Providential scheme.

One thing seems to be certain. If perfect peace is to be the outcome of a general attainment of wisdom, it is not likely to come in our time. There is still folly enough in England, at least, to promise plenty of trouble for the future. The German madness will long have Englishmen to keep it in countenance. And it will not be an easy task for the saner people to keep the upper hand. But one thing perhaps is already clear. Mr. Oliver, going

about his congenial task of mischief-making, repeatedly tells us that it is a fatal course to tell the people half-truths. That being so, it is presumably still more fatal to give them a minus quantity. And that, as we have seen and shall see further, is the total effect of Mr. Oliver's propaganda.



THE DREAM OF MILITARISM  
WITHOUT DISTRUST



## CHAPTER V

### THE DREAM OF MILITARISM WITHOUT DISTRUST

MR. OLIVER and his friends will probably meet the foregoing criticism—if they think it worth while to argue against the wrong instinct—by pointing out that Britons are incapable of degenerating in any atmosphere as the Germans have done. Such confidence seems hardly compatible with Mr. Oliver's keen sense of the unworthiness of all his political opponents; but it happens to be implicit in his case. In this happy land, he feels, self-confidence and ambition can never degenerate into arrogance and morbid distrust—not even with Mr. Kipling to play

Poet Laureate. One of the quaintest exhibitions of that essential ignorance of militarism which inspires so many lay militarists is Mr. Oliver's warm vituperation of spying. Thus he delivers himself:

Spying has always been practised since the beginning of time; but it has rarely been conducted in such a manner as to produce general uneasiness, or any sensible restraint upon private relations. Logically, it would be unfair to condemn recent German enterprises in this direction, seeing that she has only extended an accepted nuisance on to a much vaster scale. But here again logic is a misleading guide. There is something in the very scale of German espionage which has changed the nature of this institution. It has grown into a huge organized industry for the debauching of vain, weak, and greedy natures; for training such men—for the most part of it—into German agents. The result of Teutonic thoroughness in this instance is a domestic intrusion which is odious, as well as a national menace which cannot be disregarded. Many of these hostile agencies

may surely be termed treacherous, seeing that they have aimed, under the guise of friendly intercourse, at forwarding schemes of invasion and conquest.\*

Then we have one of Mr. Oliver's feline tirades against the "vulgar, purse-proud fellows" who, having chanced to meet the Kaiser, have thenceforth regarded it as their mission in life to promote friendship between Germany and Britain. This seems rather hard on Mr. Chamberlain, who tried so courageously to set up an Anglo-German alliance, on the Kaiser's urging. For this sort of thing, as Mr. Oliver assures us, we must blame ourselves. But it is different, he explains,

when we come to the wholesale corruption of friendly nations. . . . The whole of this procedure has been justified in advance and advocated in detail by Bernhardt and the [German professorial] priesthood. . . . If

\* P. 141.

we may use such an old-fashioned term, it appears to us to be wrong.

If methods such as these are henceforth to be practised by the world in general, must not all international communion become impossible as much in time of peace as during a war? Indeed, must not human existence itself become intolerable? Friendliness, hospitality, courtesies of every sort, between men and women of one country and those of another, must cease absolutely, if the world should become a convert to these German doctrines. Travel must cease; for no one likes to be stripped naked and searched at every frontier. Trade and financial operations must also be restricted, one would imagine, to such an extent that ultimately they will wither and die.

To that pathetic allocution what can we say but, *Vous l'avez voulu, George Dandin?* Our idealist, with his Janus-mind, is bent on having universal militarism on the German scale—doubtless with German tariffs to boot—yet without any spying, and therefore without any searching at frontiers. No

extremity of simpletonism seems impossible to Mr. Oliver in his pacifist mood ; and as he is avowedly impenetrable to logic, there is nothing for it but to put in the witness-box against him his esteemed German friend, the Freiherr von Hexenküchen, whom he manipulates from time to time in a way that sometimes recalls Carlyle (whose “gilded farthings of style” Mr. Oliver so loves to mint), sometimes (not often) Arnold, and sometimes the terrier at the gramophone listening to “his master’s voice.” Thus writes the Freiherr, in a despatch dropped by Zeppelin, in successful evasion of the Censor, but, as usual, in the wrong back-garden :

“ Can you learn *nothing*, my dear Oliver, from my disinterested efforts to enlighten you ? After I have so painfully hammered it into you that the national Will to Power is the Will to Conquer, can you not realize that the Will to Conquer means the will to

use the means necessary for conquest? You have confessed that your nation has been guilty of self-righteous boastings about its voluntary military system. Do you really suppose that you make amends for these by new self-righteous boastings about the unorganized character of your Spy system? Posing as a militarist after the German model, you in effect profess to believe that the purpose of a National Army is mere self-defence. I do not wish to be rude, but you compel me to point out that you do not believe anything of the kind: at least you also profess a totally different belief. You and your National Service League have all along used this formula 'for national defence,' while you had up your sleeve the other formula that a defensive force which will not cross the frontier 'is only a laughing-stock'! None of your opponents, I believe, has ever prevaricated to your people like that. I confess it is hard to make out what are the real beliefs of any man who seriously asserts that the universal establishment of efficient armaments will mean the universal decision that they are never to be used. It is only in England, I believe, that that sort of insanity can find its way into print; and I despair of



adequately indicating my estimate of it. What on earth do you suppose military efficiency to mean?

“But on the question of defence and offence it is perhaps possible to bring the truth home to you, at least with the aid of the miracle which you say Providence performed for Lord Roberts. If you can assimilate any military ideas at all, as distinguished from patriotic sentiments, you must be aware that Lord Roberts, like every other competent soldier, accepted the German doctrine that offence is the true defence. It is indeed only by way of figure of speech that I call that the German doctrine. It is the doctrine of all soldiers. Do you suppose that, if Lord Roberts had been in the command of the British and French forces when this war broke out, he would have planned to stay on the defensive in Flanders instead of invading Germany?

“I cannot deem you such an insane visionary. You yourself have avowed the contrary, as I have just pointed out. You are well aware that, just as the German staff always contemplated a rapid advance into France in any war, the British and French staffs desired as soon as possible to get into German territory. But you actually do

seem to believe that they would take no pains in advance to find how the land lay, humanly speaking; that the French did no spying in Alsace; and that a British staff would never under any circumstances try to corrupt Germans who might help them to victory. Again, I can only explain your folly by supposing that you actually believe the end and aim and the due effect of military preparation by everybody is the cessation of war in perpetuity. But if you believe that, no European soldier does. Professional soldiers know that an efficient Spy system is the necessary consummation of an efficient army, turning the army's effort to the best possible account.

“You show (I regret to have to say) extreme ignorance in asserting that a highly developed Spy system is a recent invention of Germany. In antiquity, certainly, there was no corresponding development, because under ancient conditions it was not possible. But Frederick had a strong Spy system, and Napoleon had a still stronger. Both employed many secret agents in foreign countries. Bismarck and Von Roon simply organized that branch as they organized all others; and the invasion of France in 1870 was prepared by a splendid Spying organi-

zation, worthy of the German genius for war. If Britain and France had no comparable organization, that was simply part of their general unpreparedness. But your attempt to discredit the great German nation because it developed equally all the necessary elements of military preparedness outgoes in Pharisaism all the other aspersions that your contemptible nation has cast upon us. Your great Lord Roberts, who as you confess was incapable of Pharisaical criticism, not only did not, but never would, pretend that modern armaments can be efficiently used without Spying. If you seriously believe that your Navy Department never tried to find out our naval strength and dispositions, you can have paid small attention to your own newspapers. That your Spy system is poor compared with ours I freely admit. But when your nation (should it survive the present war) attains the preparedness to which you aspire, you will discover that your professional soldiers will insist upon efficiency in this as in other departments, knowing as they will that otherwise their staff would go into action partially blind. And depend upon it *they* will not run your army on the principle that it is never to be used.

“ In short, my poor Oliver, your amateur rhetoric about Spying is only an illustration of the general absurdity of your rose-water militarism. You remain, as you began, a sentimentalist. You cherish a dream of friendly and cordial intercourse with the nations against which you are to be armed to the teeth. It is perfectly true that we Germans officially professed benevolent feelings towards the rest of the civilized world while we were scientifically spying upon them. But that was a plain necessity of the circumstances. Had we proclaimed our designs we could not have done much Spying. Now that the great explosion has come, you have your choice between submitting to the just ascendancy of Germany (which has earned that right by its unparalleled devotion to the national cause, its sacrifice of *everything* to Power), and accepting our ideal to the extent of imposing the same sacrifice on yourselves.

“ You agree with me as to everything bar Spying. *Mein lieber Oliver*, we Germans have imposed poison gas upon warfare; and we propose to impose the Spy system upon the life of peace. We are determined to beat you at any cost. If we cannot defeat you in the field, we will drive you to despair

afterwards. You announce that life will become insupportable if universal Conscription is to be followed by universal Spying. Well, you confess that we have driven you to Conscription; and we mean to drive you to a Spy system that will make your life a burden to you. You see the penalty of resisting German aspirations. But do not flatter yourself that you will have the chance of planning a universal militarism without Spies. We have not yet shot our last bolt. It is true that some of our doctors ran away from the typhus germ in a prisoners' camp. But we may yet contrive to employ the typhus germ as we have employed poison gas. Our mighty and magnificent Zeppelins may—but I will not write what I know your Censorship will not allow you to print. I will write but one word more—T-r-remble !”

Thus the amiable Freiherr, who is about as delirious on his own lines as Mr. Oliver on his. But he is at least coherent in his militarism. And what has Mr. Oliver to say in reply to his Guide, Philosopher, and Friend ?



**THE WAY OUT OF MILITARISM**





## CHAPTER VI

### THE WAY OUT OF MILITARISM

ONE can see why Mr. Oliver and his faction quite spontaneously clutch anew at the doctrine that universal Conscription will make an end of war, whether or not they believed it before. The notion that this terrific struggle with organized militarism is to be followed by still more consummately organized militarism all round, with the prospect of a still more tremendous struggle later on, is so desolating to the human soul that even the sentimental militarist recoils from it. He declines, of course, to assent categorically to the postulate that for the Allies the moral objective of the present

war is "to put down militarism." Mr. Oliver decorously avers that "there are few of us who do not wish that this aim may be crowned with success; but," he adds, "militarism is a tough weed to kill, and something more than the mere mowing of it down by some outside scythesman will be necessary, one imagines, in order to get rid of it." That is to say, the destruction of the military power of Germany will not alone achieve the end. This happens to be quite true so far as it goes; though to say this much and no more is to bring the proposition within the category of the half-truths which Mr. Oliver affects to condemn. But as it happens he has, as usual, achieved a falsity. For it is not true that he and his friends really desire to see militarism put down by this war. They want, and they expect, a continuance of militarism. What

is true is that for the time being they do not look forward with any complacency to another war.

Now, if Europe should at the close of the present war, with Germany beaten, simply settle down to the old state of things, "only more so," preparing armaments on a vaster scale than ever, and fatuously clinging to the Militarist - Pacifist chimera that the bigger the armaments the greater is the security that they will not be used, it will not merely not have "put down militarism," it will have endowed it with new life. Anyone who has any sane "instinct," to say nothing of power of reflection, must see that the only way to get rid of the incubus of militarism, and consequently of the menace of war, is carefully to *reverse*, with a new plan and purpose, the course that things international have taken in the past

hundred years. As the progress towards maximum militarism has meant simply progress through a series of wars to the most devastating of all wars, the course to safety must be through a progressive curtailment of militarism with a safeguarding machinery which contemplates the possibility of a war to stop a war. And that machinery will have in the first instance to be set up by the present Alliance of the Eight Nations, into which will be welcomed every Neutral that is willing to enter.

The first problem, obviously, is to guard against the future criminal designs of the Central Powers, even after they are thoroughly defeated. Without marking time by discussing "Terms of Peace" in the middle of the war, we may take it as common ground that they will include provisions for the curtailment of the Germanic

machinery for war. And it would be folly to believe that any such curtailment would long be recognized by the Central Powers unless they knew that there was a machinery to put down any new policy of "preparedness." The mad dog of Europe must be kept on the chain for many a day.

But the very policy of provision against new German menace implies a reduction of armaments on the part of the Allies. Even Mr. Oliver recognizes that it is "folly" to do more than keep armaments abreast of the "national endeavour."\* And the "national endeavour," for all nations who want peace, must just be to keep the peace. "Armaments," writes Mr. Oliver, "are mere waste of money unless they conform to policy;"† and again we can agree with him. When he adds in his rotatory manner

\* P. 225.

† P. 233.

that "policy in the last resort must depend on armaments," he is of course thinking of the policy he proposed before the war, in terms of his doctrine that a great British army was the way to secure peace for Europe. But for Britain to follow up a pre-war military Budget of £80,000,000 with a post-war military Budget of £200,000,000 or more is a kind of folly to which Mr. Oliver will certainly not persuade the British people if they and their Allies win the war; and the present argument assumes that the war will not end save on that footing.

It is significant of the amount of political judgment behind the Oliverian crusade that never once in "Ordeal by Battle" is there an attempt to face the problem of what is *possible* in the way of armaments to a nation loaded with a National Debt of £3,000,000,000

or more. Finance never enters into Mr. Oliver's calculations. He apparently believes that France, whose debt will perhaps be still greater than ours, counts on maintaining her pre-war military system by way of future "security." The end of the World War, in his forecast, appears to be simply a renewal of the old state of armed *insecurity*, with Britain in up to the neck, financially and otherwise. He writes, indeed, that we need Conscription in order to "impose terms of lasting peace"; but if he be asked what he means by lasting peace, he will be compelled by his own book to answer that it is a peace safeguarded by a British conscript army. He does not even profess to contemplate the possibility of imposing any limit upon future German militarism; and one can see why. To postulate such a limitation would be to postulate a corre-

sponding limit to the military burdens of the Allies, and that would be contrary to the "main purpose" of his book.

That our Allies will insist upon a chaining of German militarism after the war is tolerably certain. *They* will not consent to contemplate a repetition of the present war as soon as Germany can recuperate; and *they* will not in that event propose to carry the same load of militarism as before. And if we in this country should then propose to remain at once a first-rate military Power and the supreme naval Power, that Alliance of which Mr. Oliver recognizes the necessity will be in a parlous state. The outcome of the World War cannot conceivably be the emergence of a new pre-eminent military State, *able* to terrorize Europe, and *therefore* likely sooner or later to do so. As Mr. Oliver, for other purposes, contends,



policy depends upon armaments. Germany's did, with a vengeance.

Those who consent to reckon with finance will further be able to recognize, what the Oliverian school have never had a glimpse of, that for *any* Power to seek to maintain the highest status at once on land and sea is simply the surest road to national bankruptcy. No Power that has ever tried it in modern times has escaped collapse. Spain tried it under Philip II., and so broke the power of Spain for ever; France tried it under Louis XIV. and under Napoleon, in both cases with ruinous results; and Germany, before the war, was in such financial straits from this very cause that the strain counted for much in her precipitation of the land war, which she hoped would not involve a sea-war with Britain. Even as the second naval Power in Europe, bent at the same

time on maintaining supremacy on land, she had so waterlogged her whole financial system that at last the mercantile and financial classes, long averse to new warlike ventures, were fain to acquiesce in the deadliest venture of all, in the hope that by extorted indemnities they might rectify their balance-sheets. And Mr. Oliver and his upper-class mob would have us set out on the same road to ruin.

What self-preservation imperatively forbids is equally forbidden by every rational consideration of international politics. What the Allies must seek for in and after their Peace Settlement is the securing of the confidence of all the Neutrals in Europe. Every non-belligerent State is profoundly interested in the securing of peace for all. Coercion there must not and cannot be; but if Holland and Norway and Sweden and Switzer-

land and Spain and Greece and Roumania will enter into a common pact with the Allies for the maintenance of the peace of Europe by a machinery of arbitration which shall veto all aggression, they will secure their own safety no less than that of the rest of the world. Let all the Allies bind themselves not only to make no aggression upon any Allied or Neutral Power, but to join in resisting any aggression upon any one of them, and not only will the spectre of war be laid, but the solid incubus of militarism will be enormously lightened for all. An Allied force sufficient to repress future German militarism can be maintained at a tenth of the cost represented by the present systems of Conscription; and the safety of Britain will be secured, even as regards her sea-borne food-supply, *not* by establishing in peace a conscript army which will be no

less a menace to Neutrals than a ruinous burden to herself, but by a European concert which could and would crush on land any new German attempt to assail her by sea.

If some such arrangement as this be *not* made, if a Europe exhausted by war is again to assume the burdens of militarism on the old scale, European civilization will simply be at the beginning of the end. Even with the strictest economy of labour power, not for twenty years can the belligerent Powers recover from the drain that this war has made upon them. To turn vast masses of labour power to the old treadmill of preparedness would be a madness which even Germany might not care to contemplate, even if she were left at liberty to try it. But for the Allies to leave her such freedom would be folly ; and having bound

her down, they cannot be guilty of the folly of maintaining forces far in excess of what is needed to enforce, if need be, the bond. To rebuild their shattered world they have need of all their mental and material resources for generations to come. At the best, nothing that men now adult can attain to will make adequate amends for the inferno that German militarism has brought upon the belligerents. The fighting Powers have lost in sheer manhood, in sacrificed life, in slain faculty, something beyond all computation. Posterity *may* one day be able to say, when the hideous scars of the living generation have passed away, that the war was worth its awful cost to humanity. But that will never be if the old militarism is to subsist. And to prevent that, it is the task of all good men to see to it that our Fools do not have their way.

That the nature of the situation is beginning to be realized among men of affairs is made even surprisingly clear while these lines are being written. Two years ago few people would have counted on finding Lord Cromer among the first to realize the danger of a persistence in militarism in Europe after the present war. But just after the foregoing pages had been penned, there appeared in a newspaper not suspected of anti-militarism this paragraph :

That something in the nature of a general disarmament should take place after the war is not merely desirable ; it is absolutely necessary in order to permit of the financial recuperation of the world.—*Lord Cromer.*

In the same newspaper it is announced that three members of the French Chamber have tabled the proposal that after the war all French boys shall be subjected to a Spartan military training from the age of

twelve onwards. We are thus reminded that absolute unwisdom is not a specialty of the British or even of the German people. But common sense, on the other hand, is not scarce in France ; and it is among the few certainties of the future that after this war the French people will neither lower the standard of education for their youth nor waste in militarism their sorely depleted substance. The course proposed is simply impossible for France. It could be rationally contemplated only by men who expect France to be defeated ; and the sufficient answer is to ask the schemers in question whether that is their expectation.





**THE PSYCHOLOGY OF  
MILITARISM**



## CHAPTER VII

### THE PSYCHOLOGY OF MILITARISM

IT hardly needed Mr. Oliver's express statement to reveal to us that he is conscious of knowing the truth by instinct ; and though he somewhat obscures the issue by claiming revelation, we shall best understand him by taking him at his first word. He is spontaneously sure that it is the whole truth that his instinct yields him ; and he has copious backing. As some society ladies put it, " all the nice people " believe in permanent Conscription ; and Mr. Oliver has given deep satisfaction by his profound theorem that it is instinct that counts. Using our instinct in turn, with a little critical reflection, the rest of us recognize

in him the mouthpiece of the people who cannot think.

In his chapters on "Political Lawyers," Mr. Oliver informs us that "the country gentlemen and the men of business" are "two classes of humanity who are constantly in touch with, and drawing strength from, our mother-earth of hard fact."\* Nevertheless they "fought out their differences during two generations," being somehow at sixes and sevens in respect of their contact with the mother-earth of actuality; and the country gentlemen would seem to have been all along pretty completely in the wrong. To-day they have joined hands with those men of business who have put them in the way of making money, and who conform to their simple ideals; and, of course, they are more sure than ever that

P. 200.

their instincts are the right ones. Some generations ago, Carlyle, who seems to stand fairly high in Mr. Oliver's esteem, pronounced their chief function to be that of preserving game, and their line of political faculty to be that which the function in question tended to evolve. To-day their practice and their qualifications are not greatly different, and they are naturally loyal to Mr. Oliver, as he to them.

Towards lawyers, on the other hand, Mr. Oliver is very severe; not that the class in general is recalcitrant to his ideals, but because Mr. Asquith and Lord Haldane and Sir John Simon are lawyers, and they have not played his game. Perhaps his most general ground of political hostility to lawyers, whom he pronounces "the worst enemies of representative institutions,"\* is

\* P. 201

that they fight shy of claiming to settle debated questions by instinct. They have undergone some amount of mental discipline ; and Mr. Oliver's tastes do not lie in that direction. It is to be feared that this is also his reason for contemning what he calls "priesthoods," by which he does not mean the Anglican clergy, but Dissenters, Catholics, and professors. "Clericalism," he somewhat imprudently announces, "is the enemy" ; but he explains that this is so "whether the priesthood be that of Rome or John Calvin, of economic professors expounding Adam Smith in the interests of Manchester, or history professors improving upon Treitschke in the interests of the Hohenzollern dynasty."\* So that the Church of England is all right, being in fact, of all Churches, the least given to dialectic.

\* P. 136.

The professors, obviously the most dangerous people, having some training in the business of thinking, are Mr. Oliver's chief aversion. "If any country is so foolish as to follow such guides, there is a probability of mischief in national, still more in international, affairs. For they are as innocent as the lawyers themselves of any knowledge of the real insides of things." That is only to be obtained by instinct and the intervention of Providence.

It will be seen that Mr. Oliver's habit of trading on his personal dislikes, joined with his constitutional puzzle-headedness, puts him rather at odds with the intelligence of his country. In his chapter on "Personal Responsibility," in which he reveals to us the causation of the war on the German side, he explains that the "men of learning and letters, professors of every variety—a class

which has been christened 'the Pedantocracy' by unfriendly critics—may be all struck off the charge-sheet."\* True, "their responsibility is no light one, and it will be dealt with later"; but "they are innocent at all events of complicity in this particular exploit of fire-raising." Later the matter does not become much clearer. In this chapter: "This is a people's war surely enough, but just as surely the [German] people had no hand in bringing it about." Later we learn that: "German distrust of England was based upon the surest of all foundations—upon her own fixed and envious determination to overthrow our Empire and rob us of our property."† The people would seem to be a constituent part of "her"; and two pages farther on we have it that "to regard it as a Kaiser's war

\* P. 44.

† P. 71.



or a bureaucrat's war is merely to deceive ourselves. It is a people's war if ever there was one." And so we puzzle along to the revelation of "the Two-ness of things."

Finally, however, Mr. Oliver gets in at the German professors, avowing that he is "tempted to personify the whole corporation of German pedants" under Emerson's phrase of "little Sir." Having thus and otherwise castigated them, he ascribes to them collectively the formula, "God has ordained war." Seeing that that long-established doctrine was at times adumbrated by Lord Roberts, this seems imprudent, as is the further postulate that "the making of war is the Lord's own business and not the 'little Sir's.'" It is the Lord's as vengeance is, and earthquakes, floods and droughts; not an office to be under-

taken by mortals.”\* It is to be feared that even the Anglican clergy will be perturbed by the proposition that the Lord is the true and only originator of the war: for that is what Mr. Oliver’s theological digression amounts to; unless he means to suggest that earthquakes are within human competence. It might have been better to leave the professors alone, if they are thus finally to be relieved of responsibility; and the later fling at all the professors on the planet does not exactly mend matters. Whether Mr. Oliver loathes the German professors because he loathes the English, or *vice versa*, is a problem which none but he can solve.

As regards the problem of the Divine ordination of war, Mr. Oliver might get into trouble with part of his public if its mental cast were not as bifrontal as his own.

\* Pp. 176-178.

There seem to be few propositions which it will not accept in one mood or other. Recently Mr. Hughes has informed us that "before the war we were sinking into the abyss of degeneration with accelerating speed." That being so, the war has saved us, and the Germans are the workers of our salvation. But a large section of the public applaud the announcement, and go on denouncing the Germans as earnestly, if not as eloquently, as Mr. Hughes, who is probably quite unconscious of having given the Germans credit for anything. And if Mr. Oliver were boldly to come round, as Lord Roberts at least once did, to the creed that "God has ordained war," it would probably do him no harm with the country gentlemen, or even with the average of the Anglican clergy, who, like him, are given to condemning dogmatic blasphemy on the

part of others, and practising it on their own.

But of course it would be a little difficult even for Mr. Oliver to combine the doctrine of the Divine ordination of war with the doctrine that all war will be prevented by large armies, if only they are large enough. A dilemma of blasphemies seems to face him fixedly; and, even apart from blasphemy, it is uncomfortable to have your contradictions within view at one moment. Mr. Oliver's method is to keep them a little apart; and it would be unjust to say that he is wholly unskilful in making the best of both sides of a contradiction, given an audience not disposed to analysis. As he says, the world is "illogical, and needs humouring;"\* to which we may assent, with a query as to why Mr. Oliver should

\* P. 136.

count it a weakness in the world to be illogical, after his scathing attack on logic.

At all events he does a good deal of humouring. The sections of his book are playfully prefaced with extracts from "The Pilgrim's Progress," with the effect of assuring the general reader that the author is a good Christian. Then the country gentlemen are won by squirts of venom at Mr. Asquith and Lord Haldane; and nobody outside the Bar demurs to flings at the lawyers. Even the freethinkers are catered for in passing, by the before-cited proclamation that "Clericalism is the enemy," though it is somewhat watered down by the furtive elimination of the Church of England.

But Mr. Oliver's great stroke is his device of gratifying the moneyed classes by suggesting that payment of members of Parliament is a proof of the corruption of Liberal

and Labour politicians in general, they having carried this measure after insisting that the House of Lords should have no control over finance. Here we are getting fairly close to the centres of militarist psychology. That "democratic" politicians are mainly concerned to fill their own pockets, and that the House of Lords ought to have its powers extended rather than curtailed, are two main items in the simple philosophy of the "nice people." A century or two ago even the country gentlemen realized that for the Upper Chamber to possess control of finance as well as veto-power on legislation would be to make an end of all pretence of "balance of power" between the two Chambers. In our day the country gentlemen, trained to practicality by fox-hunting, had come to believe that their party, while in Opposition, could actually

add control over finance to the veto-power. Discomfited in that attempt, they are naturally infuriated by the institution of payment of members of Parliament, which so endangers the other institution of the representation of wealth and status.

In the view of Mr. Oliver and his country gentlemen, the possession of wealth inherited or acquired by marriage is in itself a certificate of political superiority. That view constantly came out in the discussions on Payment of Members. It was not argued that it was merely expedient to have men of wealth in Parliament instead of men dependent on salary for their services. The assumption was that the kind of member supplied by younger sons of rich men, country gentlemen, retired officers, retired men of business, or men of business able to leave their business partly to others, had

in themselves natural qualifications in virtue of their wealth ; and it was visibly held by the men whose unearned wealth was either inherited or acquired by marriage that their qualifications and political merits are the highest of all. The reversion to the ancient practice of public payment, being designed to widen the area of choice and secure truer representation for the mass of the people, is anathema to the "nice people," who feel that their wealth is in itself a merit, outweighing all forms of capacity.

Such people are naturally on the side of universal militarism. It makes, in their opinion, for the proper subordination of the masses ; and they have fairly good grounds for the opinion. They have seen the German Socialists in the mass, with a forlorn handful of exceptions, act as the docile tools of the military machine ; massacring unarmed



Belgians ; inviting Belgian Socialists to submit and leave the future to those of Germany ; helping to wreck Europe in the name of Germandom ; and turning to black shame all their previous propaganda of the international fraternity of Labour. Naturally our moneyed militarists hope to bring about a similar " discipline " among the workers in this country, who are so apt to be troublesome in insisting on their rights and needs. Of course the financial instinct of the moneyed Tory class responds to the suggestion that organized militarism will mean, not war, but the prevention of war. They see that war on a large scale interferes with their comforts and their incomes. What they want is the subordination of the workers without the costs and discomforts of war.

As for the cost of Conscription, even with-

out war, they are naturally determined to "have no nonsense" about proper payment. It is the worker's plain duty to be trained to defend his country, and the upper classes will proudly share it with him. If the workman's surrender of three of the best years of his life to drill is a confiscation of his labour power, which is his sole capital, while for the rich man's son there is no sacrifice at all, why, that cannot be helped. There must be no attempt to rectify the situation by paying for defence as we unfortunately have to pay for labour. Mr. Oliver is quite explicit on this point :

The pay of the French private soldier is, I understand, about a sou, a halfpenny. In his eyes the British soldier in the next trench, who receives from a shilling to eighteenpence a day—and in the case of married men a separation allowance as well—must appear as a kind of millionaire. During the South African War the pay of certain volunteer

regiments reached the preposterous figure of five shillings a day for privates. Men serving with our army as motor drivers—in comparative safety—receive something like six shillings or seven and sixpence a day.\*

Feeling thus about the preposterousness of good pay even in war-time for labour and for life, Mr. Oliver naturally does not contemplate paying men for life or labour when they are in training for simple “preparedness.” His conscript army is to be a cheap one. On the other hand, he asks us to think what the Germans were saying about us when we employed only a “hired” army, which they called “mercenary.” It is interesting to note how much weight Mr. Oliver attaches to the opinion of the nation which did its best to murder Belgium by way of gaining a military advantage over France. Its ethic seems to appeal to him.

\* P. 389, note.

It is true that he plucks up courage to reply that the German charge is "the other kind of cant—the cant of militarism. For if ours is a mercenary army, so is their own, in so far as the officers and non-commissioned officers are concerned." But he saves the situation by finding that the British nation "are the true mercenaries; because we pay others to do for us what other nations do for themselves."\* And Mr. Oliver hopes to prove that he and his backers are not mercenary by taking care that soldiers in the field and conscripts in camp are paid as little as possible. For the purpose of his argument they become part of "us"; and they clearly must not talk or think of good pay for themselves, because that would be like members of Parliament voting for the Payment of Members. It is their duty to

\* Pp. 388, 389.

leave the present distribution of incomes substantially unchanged. To keep things pleasant and fraternal all round, there must be a large rich and idle class, with plenty of country gentlemen at leisure for fox-hunting.

Unluckily for Mr. Oliver, working folk are in contact with "the mother-earth of hard fact" in a way in which he and his country gentlemen never have been. They realize that, if they are collectively to defend their country as they produce the wealth of their country, they are entitled to decent subsistence on both counts. They know very well that the officers will be more or less well paid. It is perfectly true that down to the other day many British officers were not paid at a rate sufficient to meet the standard of living they were expected to maintain. But that situation was, first

and last, the fault of the class to which they mainly belonged. The country gentlemen were in old days the great upholders of purchased commissions, and they have always stood in the way of promotion from the ranks. So long as the officers of the moneyed class insisted on a luxurious standard of living at mess, they made promotion from the ranks nearly impracticable; and while that was so it was idle to ask the nation to pay its officers on the scale called for by the rich officers' mess.

It was the rich officers who stood in the way of the others. Brave fighters they were, beyond all controversy; and most of them have laid down their lives in this war, thus ending all recrimination. But whatever army we maintain after this war, it ought not to be the army dreamt of by the country gentlemen. A conscript army

on the French scale of pay will *not* be accepted by the British workers. They have their instincts, like Mr. Oliver. They even have an intuition that the next generation of the German workers will not consent to help to wreck Europe at the behest of the German country gentlemen, the bureaucracy, the plutocracy, and the "pedantocracy," all making play with "the cant of militarism." They are still more sure that the French workers will not consent to have their sons trained as Spartan warriors from the age of twelve onwards. They know that national comfort means national production, national labour, not the wholesale turning of labour to unproductive "preparedness." In point of economic "horse-sense" they are far ahead of Mr. Oliver and the country gentlemen.

They know, besides, that nothing can

make permanent Conscription really equitable, even with decent pay. It means that the man physically defective is never called upon to risk his life ; that the risking of life will always be a matter of age ; that the man of a given age is called upon to give up his business, great or small, with some small guarantee of his immediate liabilities, while the man next door, happening to be a year older, stays at home, safe. The "mercenary" system, so called, they know to be a progressive attempt at a rational method of national defence. Year by year, of late, it has been improved by raising the pay and the standard of comfort of the soldier ; and the immediate ideal was to make it sufficiently attractive to be recruitable without difficulty. The navy has always been on the same footing ; and when, a number of years ago, there was



difficulty about recruiting that, the difficulty was solved by increasing the pay and the attractions.

Even the militarists had the sense to acquiesce in that. But they have never had the sense to care above all things for getting a good army. What they always want is just a big one. Never was this more apparent than in the outcry against the "conscientious objector." After a year of scurrilities against the so-called "slacker"—a label applied by blatant journalists indiscriminately to all of military age who were at home, though they were known to include tens of thousands of brave men who had offered themselves and been rejected, and thousands more who were toiling in their country's service—the militarists began screaming anew against the small minority of visionary extremists who either refused

to serve in a military capacity or refused to do anything that would even indirectly "help war," though all the while they were helping war in their own despite by paying war taxes, or war postage, or war prices for tea and sugar. With difficulty would the other extremists consent to exempting Quakers who were loyally willing to help in ambulance work, pleading their religious scruples against killing. Scruples not grounded on supernaturalist beliefs the militarists would not listen to at all.

The ruling principle had become simple fury against all recalcitrants. Unable to see—refusing to see—that the profoundly unwilling soldier is a bad soldier, a danger rather than a help, the militarists positively thirsted to have him in the trenches as soon as possible, hoping he might there "stop a bullet." It was not a matter of getting

good soldiers, it was one of punishing anyhow the recalcitrants for acting on *their* "instinct," *their* belief in Divine light. Divine light was for Lord Roberts, not for poor laymen, whose only duty was to do as they were ordered. And while the War Office has honourably set its face against the brutalities inflicted on some objectors by ill-disciplined officers, the Tory militarists in the House of Commons openly rejoice in them, and try to shout down all questioners who raise the subject. That is the true militarist temper, the temper of too many of Mr. Oliver's country gentlemen. And it is the temper which, if this country were to become systematically militarist, would infallibly develop in this country all the foul characteristics of the militarism of Germany.

Mr. Oliver, in his patriotic vein, expatiates on the vulgarity of a recruiting system under

which lads who were in trouble were wheedled by recruiting sergeants into enlisting. This was one of the things which drove the mere pacifists of Mr. Oliver's contempt into scheming earnestly for a system of international peace. But the militarist pacifist will never move a finger for peace save by his own preposterous plan ; and never from him came the suggestion that army pay should be still further increased to make recruiting easy.

Equally eloquent is Mr. Oliver on the vulgarity of the official recruiting posters during the first eighteen months of the war. Many of us have suffered from the blatancy of the official advertiser, who seems to be the incarnation of the ordinary sky-line advertiser of commerce, and who has so often seemed to misconceive the difference between the commercial and the national

mode of appeal. His patriotism has been unchallengeable, but his judgment less so. It seems to be one of the penalties we have to pay for a commercial system in which advertising plays a main part. But it was not dislike of vulgarity that moved the Northcliffe Press to refuse to insert non-flamboyant official advertisements for recruits. It was the kind of patriotism which consists in being determined at any cost to have your own way. Advertising yourself is not one of the vulgarities to which Lord Northcliffe objects.

Vulgarity in State procedure is indeed a trying phenomenon. But there are worse things than vulgarity in an imperfectly cultured nation; and German *Kultur* and German militarism, in addition to fostering on the vastest scale the vulgarity of daily boasting, have sufficiently exemplified the

worse things for all time. Mr. Oliver gives unstinted praise to Germany for her militarism, which he finds so honourable in contrast to the British system of paying soldiers at a comparatively decent rate. But the German ideal has materialized in the infernal machine which hewed Belgium as a carcass for hounds; the system under which Nurse Cavell was slain at the hands of officers and gentlemen; while the Turkish ally, with German official endorsement, slaughtered half the population of Armenia, young and old. It is some comfort to reflect that our vulgarity has at least saved us from the possibility of such deeds and such alliances as these. Mr. Oliver does not tell us what the Freiherr von Hexenküchen thinks of such exploits. He is concerned chiefly to assure us that in the Hexenküchen view we have as a nation "a

bad conscience." And yet even Mr. Oliver must feel that it is a little better than the rival conscience, so notably evolved by a century of Conscription.

On the whole, however, Mr. Oliver is a dubious authority on matters of conscience. The National Service League, of which he is the zealous coadjutor, has all along recommended its plan by assuring the British people that that plan was framed solely for national defence. All the while the moving spirits held a view of international policy in which "national defence" meant a decisive power in the affairs of the Continent. The rest of us knew as well as they that national defence may involve the sending of an army abroad. In this war it obviously did so from the first, and the Expeditionary Force had been honestly created to meet that contingency. But the heads of the National

Service League knew perfectly well, when conducting their propaganda, that the mass of the people understood by national defence the resistance of invasion, and they all the while expressly proposed to guarantee the conscript, if he wished, against having to go abroad. And now their coadjutor sublimely lectures us on the folly of telling the people half-truths, and informs us that, in the opinion of the Freiherr von Hexenküchen, we as a nation have a bad conscience.

Doubtless all national consciences are open to improvement; but, as aforesaid, ours has escaped some of the deadlier forms of demoralization. The British people a century ago were just as capable as the German—perhaps more so—of an ideal of national defence which meant arrogant aggression. It was the long drain and



strain of the Napoleonic wars that withheld them from developing their former possibilities. But there have been plenty of British publicists, poets, and prosists, who in our own time have ministered to the instinct of "supremacy." Only a few years ago, Lord Cromer, who had not then been educated by the World War, ostensibly vindicated the Imperialism of ancient Rome by contending that all the steps by which it progressively ate out its own heart and wrecked the entire civilization of the ancient world were in turn measures of national defence.\* If this could be argued by a statesman who actually realized that Roman Imperialism had meant the wrecking of civilization for a thousand years, what would have been the historical philosophy of British militarists who, getting their own way,

\* "Ancient and Modern Imperialism," 1910, pp. 19, 20.

neither knew nor cared to know the lessons of history ?

One source of illusion as to modern possibilities under militarism lies in the peaceful achievements of German *Kultur*. Not only in industrialism, but in all the applications of science, modern Germany had admittedly made great strides. This development, which in the main took place in spite of militarism, is by many regarded as a by-product thereof. It is supposed to have been promoted by the "discipline" and "organization" which militarism involves. In reality it is the industrial analogue of the culture-evolution of non-industrial antiquity. Modern militarism is perforce favourable to industrialism because it needs great revenues, and relies absolutely on scientific processes for its munitions. It is pure delusion to suppose, as Mr. Oliver apparently does, that the German workman

has been improved by military training. He not only does not work better than the American workman: he does not work better than the British workman. Neither German resources in the way of iron ore, nor German scientific economy in industry—the two real sources of German industrial progress—is a product of military experience.

On the other hand, the enthusiastic acceptance of the war—invasion of Belgium and all—by the German people, is plain evidence of the effect of militarism on the *mind* of a nation. It is no answer to say that France has not been so demoralized. France was consciously arming for defence against a growing menace, with no dream of aggression, no purpose of being the supreme factor in European politics. The question is, What is the effect of a militarism cultivated in a spirit of domination, and using national

defence as a name for a policy of aggression? Britain, supreme at sea, was not tempted to aggression; because her food-supply is mainly imported, and mercantile prosperity depends largely on good-will. But a Britain with an army which (were that possible) made her the supreme factor in the politics of Western Europe would be in a very different case.

It is part of the cant of racialism to assume that nations are what they are in respect of an original bias, innate in national character. A few years ago, and for generations past, it had been the English custom to glorify the whole Teutonic stock. It is British institutions, not hereditary British character, that have caused the difference between German and British political developments. Militarism in Germany has tarred all mental life with its brush. Yet a few years ago amateurs in philosophy in

this country were extolling the ethical philosophy of Professor Eucken—Eucken, who has been one of the loudest of the German *literati* in his vindication of the war at every step: breach of treaty; massacre of a people that stood neutral; systematic murder of non-combatants. If good people in this country had such affinities with him in his ethical philosophy—which is of the “instinctive” type—they were capable, in his circumstances, of his moral development. According to Mr. Oliver, “the modern spirit of Germany is materialism in the crudest form—the undistracted pursuit of wealth, and of power as a means to wealth.”\* What, then, does he think would be evoked by adding German militarism to British commercialism? Spiritualism? As valid as Eucken’s?

\* P. 183.



CONCERNING DISCIPLINE





## CHAPTER VIII

### CONCERNING DISCIPLINE

It is far more true than Mr. Oliver can know that nations in general are in need of discipline. The truth simply cannot be known by men who worship their instincts, and see the type and mainspring of all discipline in that of an army. Yet from the age of Achilles (or of Homer) onwards, men have been faced by the paradox that the typical discipline tends to be the generator of indiscipline. It is not merely that all armies tend to army factions. In the Boer War there were three in the British army; and quiet officers commented that their feuds were "beyond belief." Since then we

have seen British Admirals fighting out their personal feuds in the Press—a spectacle happily unknown in the Great War, but one that ought to be impossible in time of peace. The trouble is that so many fighting men know no other discipline than that of the graded subordination of the fighting machine.

What we most lack, and most need to cultivate, is the spirit of discipline in all things, the temper of self-repression, adaptation, adjustment of means to ends, quiet compromise, tolerant collaboration—above all, intellectual comprehension. And these things are possible only through discipline of the mind—an inward process, not to be generated by drill or by exercise of the function of drilling, still less by a vehement conviction that everybody ought to be drilled. Army discipline secures necessary

order for the army's purposes ; and when the nation's fate is at stake, all men civically worth their salt accept it whole-heartedly. Only the egoists of the inner light, whose proper course would be to found elsewhere a community of their own, decline to help to prevent a pirate community from bludgeoning others. And, as we have seen, they are logically kept in countenance by the All-Drillers, who teach that only instinct counts, and that the right guidance for action comes by miracle from Providence. Were the Tolstoyans in the majority, the nation in this conflict would as such be destroyed. But in peace-time their indiscipline is a less disruptive force than the indiscipline of those who yearn to see them shot.

Indiscipline, as we have seen, stamps Mr. Oliver's book. Faults of style, as he assures us, are small matters ; but he has avowedly

digressed through half his book from his main purpose. And the digression is inspired by his craving to attack in war-time the large mass of his fellow-countrymen who did not agree with his policy before the war, but whom he yet frequently professes to regard as an insignificant minority. It is obvious that he hates them a great deal more than he does the German incendiaries whom he typifies in Hexenküchen. That he has undergone no discipline in logical thinking is sufficiently apparent, apart from his puerile way of speaking about logic. After making the perfectly nugatory postulate that right views depend upon right instinct, he discursively goes about to convince his readers that the course he proposes is absolutely necessary in terms of national safety, and that any other course will be ruinous. No man capable of sound reason-

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ing would thus have prefaced a process of argument with a declaration that argument does not matter.

In issuing the cheap edition of his book after the establishment of War Conscription, he has simply given fuller rein to his animosities. The arraignment of all the statesmen who rejected as impossible his scheme of Peace Conscription is his supreme purpose and inspiration. In such minds, patriotism can subsist only as a form of faction. The very principle of subordination which they parade would justify the forcible suppression of their propaganda, and their personal punishment; and what saves them is precisely that national aversion from State control of life which has been preserved by the voluntary system which they denounce.

Mr. Oliver would evidently have liked to

make Lord Roberts dictator, on the strength of his Divinely enlightened instinct; and Lord Esher apparently had a similar feeling about Earl Kitchener, though, like Mr. Oliver, he avows that his hero had no faculty for reasoning. Or shall we say *because* instead of *though*? One thing is certain: there would be small scope for criticism if the militarists were in political power.

It may well be that, given the permanent establishment of Conscription, Mr. Oliver and his backers would not care greatly about the suppression of any other sort of attack upon the Government in war-time; but what right have they to expect other people to show a better sense of discipline than they do?

Very remarkable is the prevalence of the spirit of indiscipline among the men who specially affect military interests. Lord

Esher is known as an amiable gentleman with a great concern for what used to be called "the Imperial ideal." But Lord Esher, writing as a friend and admirer of the late Lord Kitchener, has published an obituary article on that distinguished soldier and War Minister the effect of which is to make the very worst of his weaknesses. The article is intelligible only as an attempt to strike at all the other Ministers and Generals who are supposed to have shown Lord Kitchener insufficient sympathy, especially Ministers. Lord Esher thinks fit to say that after a Cabinet meeting the Earl was as "garrulous and inconsequent" as any front-bencher. It would be hard for any front-bencher to outgo Lord Esher in that direction. If there is one thing generally certain about the late Earl, it is that he would have hated to think of his country-

men being told that he had tears in his eyes when he recounted to a friend his feelings about the unsympathetic attitude of anyone towards him. That he would have shown any such feeling in speaking of the clamour of the Northcliffe Press for his dismissal is not to be credited. It was not the Northcliffe Press, then, that Lord Esher desired to strike at; he pronounces, in fact, that it attacked Lord Kitchener "not without justice." But if anybody had published stories about tears in the eyes of officers who felt they had been unkindly treated by Lord Kitchener, it may be doubted whether Lord Esher would have applauded.

Broadly speaking, it is from the militarists on the one hand and the Tolstoyans on the other that the chief displays of indiscipline have come. Both stand for egoism, calling it inner light. From first to last the Con-



scriptionist Press has been turbulent, undignified, and unscrupulous. It was that section of the Press which, carrying on an iniquitous campaign against Lord Haldane, blatantly demanded Lord Kitchener's appointment, without waiting to ascertain whether the Government had not decided upon it. It was the same Press that screamed for his dismissal on a charge which there is good reason to believe was false—that of refusal to fulfil the demands from the front for high explosives. And the agitation proceeded upon the textually absurd assertion that certain successes would have been secured had the army been in immediate possession of an "unlimited" supply of high explosives—a thing never attained or attainable by any army.

It used to be charged against Frenchmen that upon the occurrence of any serious

reverse they began to fulminate charges of treason. No such hysteria is chargeable upon Frenchmen in the mass in the course of the present war ; but if foreign nations were to form their opinion of British character from the outcries of our lay amateurs of militarism within the past two years, they would have grounds to offer for the view that the British are the most hysterical of all the belligerents. Happily, the bulk of the nation gives no grounds for any such estimate. It is noteworthy that the resistance to Army Conscription in the House of Commons was on the whole conducted with moderation and dignity, and that the resisting minority vote was finally only about a tenth of the majority. Since then we have had the spectacle of the capitalist protest in the House of Commons against the arrangement by which the "controlled" firms making

munitions are put upon an equality with all other firms as to the tax on excess profits. The protesters were to a man supporters of Conscription. But whereas the conscription of life had been assented to, on the ground of the nation's emergency, by many who disliked it, the conscription of mere profits was bitterly resented and denounced by the Conscriptionist capitalists; and the vote of the protesting minority was nearly one-half of the majority vote which supported the Government. They talked of the "unfairness" of conscription of excess profits, as if conscription of men could ever be made theoretically fair. It was a deplorable display of egoism and indiscipline, and it will not be forgotten by the mass of the nation.

What constitutes the strength of Britain in this war is precisely that general spirit of discipline which has been created by ages

of self-government. The great mass are steadfast and unclamorous. It is the noisy minority who discredit the nation—the people who are always clamouring, vapouring, and advertising. Even the workers who dreaded the consequences of the suspension of their trade rules have made no such factious fight in Parliament as has been put up by the capitalists for their excess profits. But people who have had no such provocation to clamour, people who suffer no such physical strain as tells upon the toilers, have shown themselves strangely incapable of holding their tongues. In view of the malicious note of their manifold clamour, the virulence of their countless aspersions, the contrary output of the would-be peace-makers is decent, if not edifying. But that, too, stands largely for undisciplined thinking, for the emotional need to talk when talking

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is idle. No more than militarists can pacifists reach wisdom by giving free play to instinct.

The feverish insistence on arranging the Terms of Peace long before the end of the war is in sight—a propaganda likened by the Prime Minister to the twittering of birds in a tempest—goes on by way of relieving the feelings of the propagandists, not of helping or influencing the situation. The last thing to be learned by many well-meaning men is that at certain times nothing is vainer than to seek to quiet strife by proclaiming that there are faults on both sides. If it be replied that that is what is being done in these pages, the answer is that one of the sides now addressed is pronounced the better-tempered, and credited with being able to listen to reason. The charge is that those concerned do not realize the nature of their own case, and go on exhort-

ing men to change their hearts for goodness' sake when the very exposition tells that they will not.

Among the best-qualified ingeminators of Peace is Mr. G. Lowes Dickinson, whose work on "The European Anarchy" goes over much of the ground not uninstructionally. But Mr. Dickinson's book as a whole is distressingly inconclusive. He seems to think it a philosophic proceeding to argue through chapter after chapter that no Power is to blame for this war, but that either all Powers alike are to blame, or that the blame is to be laid on the phantom shoulders of "the European Anarchy," which he gravely arraigns as "the real culprit." Why he stops there it is hard to guess. The older and more sacrosanct formula of "Our Fallen Nature" would have been quite as much to the purpose—nay, more so; and if Mr.

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Dickinson demurs on scientific grounds to that, he might make play with Nature, or Evolution, or, still better, Existence. Mr. Dickinson is philosopher enough to see, if he would, that on his present principle nobody is ever to blame for anything, since everything and everybody grows out of antecedents. He has no business, on his own showing, to blame the givers of blame. His method in politics is that of the people who put the responsibility for all crime on Society, as if an abstraction were more rationally to be blamed than a personality.

In point of fact Mr. Dickinson vacillates between blaming "the Anarchy"—a negative or privative abstraction this time—and affirming "the responsibility of all the Powers alike for the European anarchy," this while incidentally avowing, as needs must, "the responsibility of Germany for

the outbreak of the war." At what, then, are we driving? If the burglar informs us that his procedure is the outcome of an imperfect state of society, are we any forwarder? We, too, suffer from the imperfect state of society, and we still have to protect ourselves from the burglar. We do it nowadays with comparative moderation, abstaining from the use of torture and mutilation. If what Mr. Dickinson wants is that we should apply the same principle in dealing with Germany, the answer is that Peace Terms nowadays do not involve new massacres. Nobody proposes to treat the Kaiser as his officers and gentlemen treated Nurse Cavell.

Mr. Dickinson comes to the point when he assures us (p. 149) that "we *must* give up, in *all* nations, this habit of dwelling on the unique and peculiar wickedness of the



enemy." And he has just been telling us that the Germans will certainly never give up the habit! It is impossible to be more explicit:

There is hardly a German who does not believe that the war was made by Russia and by England; that Germany is the innocent victim; that all right is on her side, and all wrong on that of the Allies. *If, indeed, she were beaten, and treated as her "punishers" desire, this belief would be strengthened, not weakened. In every German heart would abide, deep and strong, the sense of an iniquitous triumph of what they believe to be wrong over right, and of a duty to redress that iniquity. Outraged national pride would be reinforced by the sense of injustice; and the next war, the war of revenge, would be prepared for, not only by every consideration of interest and of passion, but by every cogency of righteousness. The fact that the Germans are mistaken in their view of the origin of the war has really nothing to do with the case. It is not the truth, it is what men believe to be the truth, that influences their action. And I do not think any study of despatches is*

going to alter the German view of the facts (pp. 146, 147).

It is impossible, even for Mr. Oliver, to be more incoherent. Nothing is going to alter the German view of the case. So be it. At the same time we *must* all alter our views of the case, knowing that the Germans won't! They, convinced that they are innocent victims, will be sure to want revenge if they are beaten. *Therefore* we are to be very good to them, because otherwise they *would* want their revenge! Mr. Dickinson's final state of mind is simple vertigo. The philosophy of brute force, he avows, "has been expressed with peculiar frankness and brutality by the Germans. *But* most honest and candid men, I believe, will agree that this is the way they, too, *have been accustomed to think of international affairs*" (p. 150). In the name of reason, why the *but*?

“Agree, madam? Why, that is what we all said: we know not ‘agree’!” And if the Germans admittedly have been accustomed thus to think of international affairs, what, once more, is Mr. Dickinson driving at? This generation, he confesses, will not change its mind. Is it too great a strain, then, for the academic mind to realize that what really *must* be done is to treat Germany, so far as may be, on the principles on which we treat the burglar?

Mr. Dickinson really ought to be above the fallacy of the quibble about “punishment.” It is the verbalist fallacy of the people who, desiring to reform our penal system, argue that there must be no “punishment,” as if that word itself could be abolished. Whatever system withholds from the burglar liberty to continue his course *is* for him punishment: the word is neither here nor

there. Does Mr. Dickinson really suppose that, if a defeated Germany is compelled to make good the devastation she has inflicted, "the Germans" will not feel that they are "punished"? Does he seriously propose anything less? He will *not* dispute, presumably, that a victorious Germany would certainly have annexed much, if not all, of the territory she now holds. Are we, then, to say that no territory should be taken from Germany because Germans would feel that to be an iniquitous "punishment"? Has he not told us that they will regard the triumph of the Allies in any case as "an iniquitous triumph of wrong over right"? And are we, then, to arrange our safeguarding measures in the insane hope of pacifying admittedly aggressive enemies who confessedly will not be pacified? And what *is* the use, upon these premisses, of

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telling us that we all *must* change our hearts?

This propaganda, too, roots in hysteria. Mr. Dickinson had to relieve his strained feelings somehow; and he is so far from concealing his nervous condition that he is at pains to declare his sincerity, as if that were any more in dispute than the sincerity of Mr. Oliver, or as if it mattered. From a professed philosopher, in war-time, we have a haphazard broaching of the philosophic problem of Determinism, but not for the sake of philosophy, which gets scant consideration. The odd thing is that Mr. Dickinson, apparently by reason of a need to contradict the other people, is much more concerned to be internationally sympathetic than he was in time of peace. Once he produced a book on "Revolution and Reaction in Modern France." There

was not much sympathy about that: hard analysis was all that was offered to the alien in his troubles, which were not set at the door of any abstraction, but represented as his own sins. It is only when Germany lets loose the war of wars that Mr. Dickinson is concerned to lay a nation's crime on the shoulders of everybody else. It would be misleading to ascribe to him what Spencer called the Bias of Anti-Patriotism; but a bias he has, and it is not what somebody called "the fatal bias to justice." A variant bias is exhibited by Mr. Shaw, who had to have a view—or views—of his own on the war, and found one of them by hilariously proclaiming that the working class was doing very well by it all, wealth being better distributed than ever before. Thus can a Socialist pipe to the Dance of Death.

In the face of this medley of undisciplined voices it would seem as if the nation's fate, after all, lay in the hands of the practical politician, so decried by the inspired Mr. Oliver, and so distrusted by the judicious Lord Esher. He at least knows a few fundamental truths not disclosed to those earnest publicists. As, for instance, that the One-Man Rule they hanker after, if set up, would mean very short shrift for their respective factions after a brief trial. But that is not a real issue; it is a question mooted by garrulity and the spirit of inconsequence. The real issues are those which will present themselves when the war is over: first, what is to be done to guard against the enemy; secondly, what is to be done to restore our own strained social fabric.

The practical politician is buttonholed

on two sides by typical extremists: the zealots, who propose to divide the world into two hostile trading groups, carrying on an eternal economic war when the bodily war is ended; and the counter-zealots, who insist that Germany must at once be made a member of the League of Nations to secure peace. It is sobering to have to realize that the former species is incomparably the more numerous—that is to say, that the spirit of hate is overwhelmingly stronger than the spirit of fraternity. But for that very reason this particular manifestation of the spirit of fraternity is a perfectly idle extravagance, an indulgence in intellectual indiscipline which can only foster new exorbitance on the other side. If on the side of the Allies there is a widespread disposition to make an end even of trade with the enemy, how is the enemy



likely to relate to a system of international machinery for the preservation of peace? There is far more malice on that side than there has ever been on this, and that malice will be at its height when the war ends adversely to the Central Powers. To propose, then, to make them component parts of a machinery of which the fundamental purpose is to keep them in check is to be merely fantastic, to insist on tabling an impossible theory of action for theory's sake. And to exclaim that any other arrangement will be useless is merely to say that all steps towards an ideal are useless if the ideal be not immediately consummated.

If it be merely affirmed that the peace of the world will never be absolutely secure until all the nations are committed to it, there is no dispute. Absolute security in perpetuity on the day after Armageddon is a

midsummer night's dream. Man cannot pass at one step from the worst to the best, from pandemonium to perpetual peace. And the nations upon whom has been forced a stupendous war cannot immediately pass to a state of trustful co-operation with the nations which forced it. Given a complete revolution in German polity, some such co-operation might be contemplated; but who relies upon that? Sane men cannot be sure of German sanity, in the ordinary way of evolution, for a generation hence.

The task of the practical politician, then, will be on the one hand to take sober safeguarding measures in alliance against the beaten foe, avoiding all measures aiming at superfluous injury, and on the other hand to conserve and rebuild actively the drained resources of the State. Every arm withheld from productive labour that can be turned

thereto is but an addition to the immense load of debt that has been laid upon every one of the Allies, an obstacle to the recovery of national well-being. A Peace with universal Conscription would be but a hopeless resumption of the way of life that brought about the war—an admission that the war has been but a vast failure all round. A Peace with universal armaments on a scale of new monstrosity would mean the consummated failure of civilization, the deliberate choice of the Way of Death. It cannot be.





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