

## The Effects and Results of War Hurtful, Not Helpful to Civilization

It is remarkable, if not instructive, to read and hear expressed the many views upon the effects and results of the present great European war.

How the end is to affect this or that nation; how militarism will be destroyed and peace secured as a permanent blessing for mankind are questions asked and agitated.

But no one who reads history or who is not swayed by favoritism will seriously be impressed with the belief that conditions will be materially different from what they were before the war began.

Human advancement has been rather circular than in a straight line—the extension, or rather the advance has been but the increase in the size of the circle.

While much talk is indulged in about the self-denial and self-sacrifice throughout the nations of Europe which are bound to bring permanent change in conditions, and sure to secure a uplift in both political and social conditions among all classes, history forbids us to indulge the hope of a realization of this picture.

Men from the beginning of civilization have been doing just what they are doing in Europe today, devoting themselves to war and to peace, to service of king and country, to acts of heroism, to rare display of patriotic valor, to works of devotion to duty, to deeds of self-denial, to patient suffering, to endurance of hunger and fatigue, to dangers passed, and hardships present and overcome.

All this is but history repeating itself.

All this is but what men in all ages have been repeating, yet dropping back after each struggle was ended to about the same level as before it began.

In some cases a little lower level was found, in others a somewhat higher one.

If the meeting demands and hardships of war heroically or successfully exercised any permanent or beneficial influence on the character of any people, this world would today be very much better than it is.

Humanity lacks much of attaining the exalted position which its suffering from war has earned for it.

The experience is that the licentiousness aroused, the heartlessness which comes from scenes of blood and ruin, off-set the good resulting from the strength of character built up.

That successful war brutalized humanity, and an unsuccessful war made it timid and deceitful was in the earlier ages, the lesson taught.

This was especially true of the Assyrians and the nations they conquered.

Moral and political reaction as well as hate and prejudice are the frequent results of war.

Rome wrote her vengeance in the destruction of Carthage.

Modern times and nations have not been any better than were the ancients.

After the Puritans in England came the license of the reign of Charles II.

From the wars of Louis XIV the grand monarch of France came the demoralization which culminated the French revolution and the execution of Louis XVI.

This was followed by the Napoleonic wars.

It is true, and a most notable fact, however, that the result of our civil

war in 1861 to 1865 has been the most wondrous for recuperation, for reconstruction, for human uplift and betterment the world ever saw; still the moral strength of American character is not today what it was before the war.

Political and religious ideas of right and wrong have lost much of their former vigor.

We tolerate wrongs—and even excuse them—such as the people two generations ago would have unhesitatingly condemned.

This tremendous European experience is no new thing.

It is just what not only Europe, but all the world has gone through with before.

To whatever age one looks, there is nothing to encourage the hope that the war will improve conditions in Europe.

The very magnitude of the conflict, if nothing else, would destroy all hope of improvement.

The world for at least two generations has seen its brightest and happiest days.

There is nothing truer in history than that human advancement has been through years of peace and that human debasement and misery follow war.

That Europe will in every important respect be the worse for the war,

is the result which all human experience teaches us to expect.

Are we, now at peace in this country, wanting war—wanting it with any of the warring nations or with Mexico?—Montgomery (Ala.) Journal.

### TORPEDOING A MYTH

With painstaking care our neighbor the Sun has inquired into Mr. Roosevelt's oft-repeated contention that "under The Hague convention it was our bounden duty" to prevent or resist the German invasion of Belgium, and finds, of course, that no "bounden duty" or any other duty in respect to Belgian neutrality ever rested upon the United States.

This has been one of the most persistent myths of the war. It was first dragged into the light of publicity, we believe, by Robert Bacon, who was secretary of state for a few days in the Roosevelt cabinet. Mr. Bacon brought it home from Europe; Mr. Roosevelt seized upon it as an issue that might be used against President Wilson; various English newspapers accorded it a place in their columns, until tens of thousands of credulous persons came to believe that the United States was under some sort of treaty obligation by the terms of The Hague conventions to protect the neutrality of Belgium.

No such obligation ever existed. Any person who will take the pains to read Convention V., "respecting the rights and duties of neutral powers and persons in case of war on

land," can ascertain for himself in ten minutes that the United States government had no moral or legal responsibility whatever for the neutrality of Belgium, and that the convention itself, by its own terms and provisions, had no binding force upon any of the belligerents in this war, to say nothing of other neutrals. But even if the convention had been in effect, the obligations of the United States were nullified by the reservation that "nothing contained in this convention shall be so construed as to require the United States to depart from its traditional policy of not intruding upon, interfering with or entangling itself in the political questions of policy or internal administration of any foreign state." • • • —New York World.

### A RESPONSIBLE GOVERNOR

What a determined governor can do toward the enforcement of law and decency was shown by Luther E. Hall, governor of Louisiana, when the sheriff of a parish and the prosecuting attorney, who was his son, would not close a big gambling den near New Orleans. They still refused when the governor ordered them to close it. So Governor Hall closed it himself with the militia.

"The governor of a state is just as responsible for lawlessness as the local officers, and if they refuse to suppress it, the duty of the governor is to act," said Governor Hall afterward—a truth which applies as well to Missouri as to Louisiana.—Kansas City Star.



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FATHER AND SON

—McCutcheon in the Chicago Tribune.