OTHER BOOKS
by ROBERT BRIFFAULT

THE MAKING OF HUMANITY

PSYCHE'S LAMP

THE MOTHERS

RATIONAL EVOLUTION

SIN AND SEX

BREAKDOWN

EUROPA (*a novel*)

EUROPA IN LIMBO
(*a novel*)

REASONS FOR ANGER

THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE

By ROBERT BRIFFAULT

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FOREWORD

SPECIAL circumstances make necessary a word of introduction from the head of the editorial department of the publishing house that is issuing this book. Three years ago Simon and Schuster suggested that Mr. Briffault write a long, Gibbonesque history of British civilization. The project was agreed upon in principle, but other activities prevented Mr. Briffault from attacking so ambitious a task. Early in 1938 I therefore suggested that he do a much shorter book, dealing primarily with the position of the British Empire in the modern world. He went to work at once. The manuscript was completed in late July and reached New York in early September.

It is not necessary to recall what happened during the months of August and September; it is imperative, however, to point out that these events confirmed so completely the thesis Mr. Briffault set down last summer that we are publishing his original script exactly as he wrote it. One paragraph only, dealing with the then unfinished business of Czechoslovakia, had to be deleted. At our suggestion Mr. Briffault has therefore written a "Postface" which appears at the end of the volume. Here he shows how the Czechoslovak crisis confirmed his thesis and offers his interpretation of that episode.

One point more. Mr. Briffault conceived and wrote this book to illustrate how past influences created what he calls "The English Myth"—indeed, that was the title he wanted the book to bear. His publishers, however, felt that the course of events had given them no choice but to entitle it *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire.*

QUINCY HOWE

October 13, 1938

THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE

Chapter One

THE METEORIC EMPIRE

By a curious convention, almost invariably observed until recently, the history of England was brought to an abrupt conclusion with the battle of Waterloo. The idea was, I suppose, similar to that which required that a fairy tale should end with the words: "And they lived happily ever after." In point of fact, the history of England as a world power, instead of ending, begins with the battle of Waterloo, or thereabouts. The last chapter in our school histories is really the first in the annals of England as a factor of importance in world affairs, and what goes before is of the nature of a prologue or preface. That prologue is the history of a relatively poor country, which was generally regarded as backward in civilization, and which, as at most a second-rate power, had been until the latter part of the eighteenth century of very small moment in European or world developments. So dazzling has its subsequent career been, so enormous its influence and power throughout the modern age, which covers the historical retrospect of most people, that these would find some difficulty in picturing a world without England, and in perusing English history are prone to imagine that the England they are reading about is the same unchallenged world ruler, with the awe-inspiring presentment of which

they are familiar. Nor do English historians take serious pains to disillusion them. Yet less than two hundred years ago very little was heard of England in the affairs of the world.

It has been said that the real founder of the British Empire was Joan of Arc. To be sure, there were others, and other factors. But the fact remains that from the time the English were driven out of France until the present day, England has rigorously abstained from European conquests. Under her medieval rulers England, like all other European states, knew no other ambition than territorial expansion at the expense of her neighbours. But after the loss of her Continental dependencies, that ambition was completely and permanently abandoned. Nor did England take any important part in European politics. Henry VIII's attempt to enter the lists in the rivalries between Continental European powers proved brief and abortive. The exploits of English pirates and privateers on the Spanish Main, the capture of Spanish galleons, the harrying of the Spaniards, and the destruction of the Spanish Armada make exciting and spectacular chapters in English history. But the collapse of Spain was a case of suicide brought about by utter political incapacity and obscurantism, and to charge England with any part in that inevitable demise is an unjustified misrepresentation. The proof is that for all their harrying of Spanish sea traffic and their raids on Spanish-American towns, neither English privateers nor any English government ever ventured on an attempt to dispossess Spain of any of her oversea dependencies, and when the English eventually did set

foot on the new western continent, they took deliberate care to keep at a safe distance from the Spanish settlements.

Throughout the so-called religious wars that rent Europe during more than a hundred years, England played scarcely any part in the contest. Sweden proved at the time a more important power than England. Marlborough's wars to check French hegemony—the first instance since the Middle Ages of English interference on any considerable scale on the Continent—were unpopular in England, were protracted chiefly with a view to feathering the Churchills' nest, and, despite Blenheim and Ramillies, brought about no signal result, and no benefit to England except the Asiento contract, which gave her the monopoly of the slave trade.

England, excluded, whether voluntarily or not, from European contests, expended her activity chiefly on the sea and in remote lands. But she did not do so as part of any deliberately conceived scheme for building an oversea empire. England acquired booty and a few scattered trading settlements. But the value of colonial possessions, unless they were, like Mexico, Peru, and, later, India, sources of actual plunder and solid bullion, was slight before the industrial age, and no one accounted them important. England herself set no great store on them. She regarded colonies as convenient places of deportation for troublesome people, and as taxable estates. So late as the eighties of the last century the English people had to be indoctrinated as to the importance of colonial possessions

and to be taught by Joseph Chamberlain and Mr. Kipling to "think imperially."

Both as regards oversea expansion and definite influence or interference in European affairs, England made her first important appearance on the stage of world politics at the time of the elder Pitt, who is perhaps better entitled than anyone else to be regarded as the founder of the British Empire. But by that time the great transformation in the economic basis of world affairs, known as the Industrial Revolution, was already developing in England. It was also at that time that the curiosity of the brilliant French writers—Voltaire, Montesquieu, Diderot—was first attracted to the island kingdom. They furnished their readers with accounts of it as though they were describing some strange tribe which they had just discovered.

England had sunk very low before Pitt came to office. By financing Frederick II, and enabling the King of Prussia to lay the foundation of the German Empire, he was enabled to wrest Quebec and Fort Duquesne (later known as Pittsburgh) from the French. But England's first attempt to rise to the position of a world power was, shortly after, almost brought to nought by a series of misadventures. The first British Empire was lost through the revolt of the colonists; the English attempt at direct action on the Continent was crushed at the battle of Fontenoy; England herself was set in turmoil through the invasion of the Pretender at the head of Scottish troops.

Not until half a century later did England finally

emerge as a power of real importance in the world. For, while the son of the first William Pitt was struggling against the French Revolution and financing all the forces of reaction on the Continent, cotton mills and factories had been growing up in England, and the applications of contrivances devised to work mine pumps by steam were being extended to other machinery and to the easier transportation of coal. A new economic age had dawned, and England was its creator.

The Industrial Revolution furnished means of accumulating riches which rendered obsolete every previous mode of exploitation and economic domination. It opened sources of profit which beggared the paltry wealth to be derived from landowing, old-fashioned trading, or even from highway robbery. The balance of social power was shifted. The very nature of wealth, which became fluid instead of stagnating in real estate, was changed. The entire economic foundations of the human world were transformed.

Of that new power England was, as a result of circumstances presently to be examined, the originator, and for a considerable period she held virtual monopoly of its use. The supremacy, the domination, the influence which she achieved rested upon that advantage. It is currently believed by the English, and even by many foreigners, that the unique position that England came to occupy was the result of qualities of mind and character peculiar to a predestined "imperial race." The success of the English has been due, it is suggested, to their being endowed

with a greater tenacity of purpose than other nations, with a practical foresight and wisdom which, though their uprightness might be outwitted by the cunning and deceit of unscrupulous foreigners, has enabled the "bulldog breed," by calm perseverance in the path of duty and virtue, to muddle through difficulties. But all goes to show that the chief cause of their "muddling through" was that they had more money. It is notoriously easy to do so when one's banking account is large. The English are serene and impressively dignified. But common observation teaches that the presence of a fat wad of banknotes in one's breast pocket imparts a marvelous serenity and dignity to one's countenance and has a remarkable psychological effect on both the bearer and on those with whom he happens to deal.

England's rise to her position of world power was not due to superior foresight. When she acquired the most important base in the world for colonial expansion, she promptly lost it through sheer mismanagement and inability to apprehend the possibilities it held out. The English burghers' ambitions were confined to the prosaic accumulation of material wealth by trade, and for several centuries their worldly ambitions did not extend beyond that modest and pedestrian purpose. That is, doubtless, what Napoleon meant when he called the English a nation of shopkeepers. There were, of course, "shopkeepers" in every nation. But in none were the aims and general policy of the nation so exclusively restricted to the acquisition of pecuniary wealth. And Napoleon was not in a position to perceive that in those

"shopkeeping" propensities of the English lay the key to the most complete and universal domination that the world had ever known. Neither did the English perceive the circumstance any more clearly than did Napoleon. Their abstention from warlike ambitions, from empire building, whether in Europe or overseas, their general disinclination to interest themselves in European politics, their concentration on the practical aims of achieving material security and well-being by the acquisition of economic competence were all wise and commendable purposes—from the point of view, at least, of a "Poor Richard" philosophy. But they were not the deliberate outcome of superior wisdom. They were not, certainly, inspired by any Pisgah view of the fantastic heights of world power to which those homely ideals were to carry the "nation of shopkeepers."

There is indeed no parallel in history, ancient or modern, to the domination which, in the nineteenth century, England came to wield over the world. She held every key to the new, transcending weapon of economic control. England was the workshop of the world, its commercial distributor and carrier, and all the world was her market. Her wealth made all other nations look like poor relations. London City was the emporium of commerce, the planet's financial center, the banker and moneylender of the world. What appeared as the monetary stability of the nineteenth century was in reality the effect of England's absolute financial supremacy. "The world's gold standard, as it operated in the pre-war period, was in fact predominantly a sterling stand-

ard" (R. Palme Dutt: *World Politics*, p. 88). The material motive power of the new mechanical age, coal-fuel, was likewise practically England's monopoly, and imitators and competitors had to apply to England for the means of setting their factories going. The seaborne carrying trade of the world was entirely in her hands. It was supported by a navy which ruled unchallenged over the seven seas. Her far-flung oversea empire grew till one-fourth of the globe's land surface was painted red and the planet appeared stricken with an attack of scarlet fever. Although England continued to abstain from European entanglements, she was in fact the arbiter of national destinies, and the balance of power among nations was recognized as depending largely upon English good will and support.

With that unparalleled hegemony went a moral influence, heavily weighted with Bank-of-England notes and golden guineas, no less remarkable than her imperial power. Unlike many empires of the past, England excited, even among rivals and competitors, more admiration than envy or jealousy. Anglomania spread throughout the world as universally as Manchester goods and English financial persuasion. Wherever one went, in France, Germany, Austria, Italy, Scandinavia, to say nothing of the United States, which has always been more royalist than the King, an expression of reverence greeted the mention of England's name. "The English are a wonderful people"; "England is a marvelous country," one heard in every land, and even black African potentates and brown rajahs, duly honored by em-

pire builders with friendly baksheesh, bowed their heads at the thought of the Great White Queen and the English sahib. The English gentleman became a pattern whose nature partook of a moral and religious significance; Siamese princes and German emperors sent for their clothes to Saville Row. England and the London *Times* were generally supposed to be the final sources of human wisdom.

That unique prestige enjoyed by England and all things English is, apart from the authority, dignity, and charm which wealth commonly imparts, readily intelligible. Through the Industrial Revolution not only did England establish her domination over the industrial nineteenth century; she created it. The age of industrial and commercial "progress" was also the age in which, as a consequence, bourgeois power came to its own. The English burghers had, in their ways of thought, their outlooks, and their lives achieved with unequaled perfection the ideals of the bourgeois soul. Their whole mode of existence, centered on material well-being, security, and stability, eschewing the exhausting cerebral stimulation of ideas, appreciative of the charm of established habit and tradition, of the peace of moral satisfaction, the titillation of eloquently expressed noble sentiments too vague to hold the danger of practical application, fulfilled exactly every bourgeois dream. The English bourgeois had even, by a fortunate concourse of circumstances, incorporated some of the characters of one of the most powerful and impressive aristocracies the world has known. He had become a gentleman. The privileged character of the English burgh-

ers appealed to some of the most fervid of bourgeois ambitions. The English were the most snobbish people in the world—with the possible exception of Anglophile and English-aping Americans. It cannot be wondered that the golden age of bourgeois power, brought into existence by England, should be filled with reverent admiration for the creator who had fashioned it in his own image. To the international chorus of admiration for England there was, as far as I know, but one exception, namely, czarist Russia. In Russian society the English bourgeois was detested and despised. But the exception proves the rule; there was practically no bourgeoisie in Russia.

Although after the end of the Napoleonic wars, England appeared almost suddenly as the dominant power on the world stage, English hegemony did not reach full development until a good many years later. The triumph of the English bourgeoisie did not obtain political recognition until 1832, with the passing of the Reform Bill. The world control of industrial and wave-ruling England did not become fully evident to the world until the middle of the century. The year of the Great Exhibition of 1851 may be regarded as marking the proclamation and recognition of that matchless power and influence. Their full development and that of the world empire were not attained, however, until the second half of the century. The sixties, seventies, and eighties of that English century represent the apogee of Britain's imperial growth.

But if the actual foundations of that overwhelming power and influence be understood, it is manifest

that those foundations could not continue indefinitely unaltered. That power and that influence rested almost exclusively on the fact that England was first in the field of new economic conditions which transformed the world and displaced all other sources of wealth and economic control. It rested upon an initial monopoly. That monopoly could not, in the nature of things, endure forever. The very character of its operation excluded such a possibility. The old forms of economic control through landownership and privileges were relatively stable and unchanging. Not so the far more effective, but less secure, means of capitalist exploitation. The rapid rise and gigantic proportions of English power, enjoying the virtual monopoly of those new means, was the outcome of unlimited markets where no opposition could be offered to unchecked advance. Those conditions were obviously transient, and only a few years must of necessity alter them completely. England was instrumental in industrializing and capitalizing the whole world. But in the very act of so doing, she was putting an inevitable term to her own growth and expansion. The new economic power she introduced required expansion as the condition of its miraculous wealth-producing faculty. The stability, the conservation of the *status quo*, so dear to English ideals, were precisely the qualities which the mechanism of the system most eminently lacked.

The century of English domination had not yet drawn to a close before the fateful bodings that it was already set upon the downward path began to appear. The decades of the latter half of the century

when it reached its dazzling apogee were fitly crowned with an impressive apotheosis. In 1897 the old Queen who had seen the greater part of England's rise to world power and had presided over the halcyon days of its unparalleled glory celebrated her Diamond Jubilee. She was too feeble to face the fatigue of a pageant at the Abbey, as on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee, and the celebration was limited to her attending a short service at St. Paul's. But that simplicity and restraint lent to the commemoration a character even more solemn and impressive than the somewhat gaudy demonstration of ten years earlier. Not only the English crowd, framed in the statuesque hedge of Lifeguards, gorgeous Bengal Lancers, and contingents from all the Dominions, but the whole world stood hushed and respectful when the small, tottering old lady was assisted up the steps of the cathedral. All envious or malicious thoughts were laid aside, and an impressed and reverent universe acknowledged without grudge the splendor and invincible might of a power the like of which it had never before seen.

Within two years of that triumphal apotheosis, the mighty world ruler suffered the most glaring and sordid humiliation that any empire has ever borne. No circumstance was lacking to complete the ignominy of the anticlimax. The naked turpitude of British aggression against the Dutch farmers who had originally been fraudulently dispossessed by England and, seeking refuge from continuous British injustice, had been driven to trek to new fields, was made manifest to the whole world beyond any possi-

bility of disguise. The sordid motive of lucre in its filthiest form was too glaringly exposed to be clothed in the decency of moral phrases. The bandit raid of "Dr. Jim," plotted by Rhodes with the manifest complicity of the British government and Joseph Chamberlain, resulted in the ignominious arrest of the bandits by the Boer farmers. The bungled expedition of the Rand burglars was taken up by the armed forces of the British Empire. The veil was suddenly and rudely torn from that English façade of high-flown moral principles, just rule, fair play, and all the moral paraphernalia of acquisitive hypocrisy which had been silently accepted in the reverent solemnity of the Jubilee. A wave of indignation swept the world. French, German, American volunteers were moved to offer their services to the assaulted farmers and join them in the defence of justice and liberty against the hypocritical British oppressor. The fable of English righteousness was exploded. In a few weeks, as glaring defeat after defeat followed in rapid succession, and British troops entered Pretoria, not as conquerors, but as prisoners, the fable of the invincibility of British power was likewise wrecked in the sight of the world. The whole of the resources of the "bulldog breed" had to be mobilized, not only the British army, but the territorials; volunteers were called for, and forces raised from all the Dominions of the great Empire, to redeem the tatters of British prestige. When eventually Pretoria was victoriously entered, it was supposed that the war was ended; it had, in reality, only begun. During four years

Christian De Wet and his roving units defied the resources of the entire British Empire. The methods employed to reduce the Dutch farmers to submission—concentration camps, the wholesale burning of peaceful farms, executions, the brutalizing of women—were generally spoken of as the "methods of barbarism." They failed entirely in their object, and a negotiated peace had at last to be sought from the unconquered Boers who demanded the terms which they had so richly won and which made South Africa's connection with the Empire a slender bond severable at will as expediency might dictate. England, tactlessly unconscious of the fulsome effect she produced, did not fail to represent the settlement as "magnanimous" and "generous."

The humiliation had killed the old Queen. There followed, till the outbreak of the World War, a brief breathing space, somewhat pompously spoken of as the Edwardian age, during which England sought to recover her serenity and splendor. She was, however, during those years, engaged, not in extending or consolidating her world hegemony, but in seeking the shelter of alliances against the gathering storm.

A very different England from the world-dominating power which thirty years before had celebrated its apotheosis emerged out of the shambles of Armageddon. Of the monopolies upon which her economic supremacy had originally been founded there could no longer be any question. England's chief motive for plunging into the conflict had been the threat to her industrial and commercial primacy. Yet when she came out victorious from the struggle,

that primacy had become abolished. England still held, on the eve of the conflict, the first place in production and trade. Her exports were 13.11 per cent of the world's total, while her nearest rivals, Germany and the United States, commanded only 12.39 and 12.56 respectively. Her share of the world's export trade had fallen in 1924 to 12.94, and in 1929 to 10.86, while the United States' had risen to 15 and 16. British exports of manufactured goods sank from £411 millions in 1913 to £280 millions in 1933. Vanquished Germany's production before the establishment of the Nazi regime exceeded in value that of victorious England by over thirty million pounds. From £411 millions in 1913 British exports of manufactured goods had sunk in 1933 to £280 millions. The total export and import trade of Great Britain, which amounted to £1,404 millions gold in 1913, had fallen in 1935 to £743 millions.

England's initial commercial supremacy had rested on her cotton manufactures. In the last years of the nineteenth century more cotton spindles by far were at work in England than in all the rest of the world put together. By 1927 the cotton spindles of Lancashire represented only about a third of the world's total. Today no illusions are any longer possible as to the total ruin of the industry. "Parts of Lancashire are worse off than many areas in the country which are officially described as 'distressed.' The cotton industry is rapidly declining and thousands of operatives are out of work with no prospect of ever being able to return to the mill. . . . Matters are reaching a grave stage. It is feared that the one-

time busiest and richest county in the country will become desolate" (*News Review*, July 28, 1938). The enormous initial advantage which England had enjoyed as the pioneer of mechanical industry, instead of constituting a point in her favor has become a handicap. Her machinery and traditional methods have been pronounced by experts to be forty years behind the times. English manufactures have never recovered from the loss of the skilled specialist labor brought about by the disorganization of the war. The deterioration in the quality of English goods has never been made up.

A similar tale is told in every branch of industry. In the middle of the last century England was producing about one-half of all the pig iron in the world. She still was producing about a quarter at the end of the century. Her share has now fallen to less than one-tenth and is steadily declining. Postwar English steel production has dropped below one-tenth of its prewar proportion to the world's output. This decline is proceeding at an accelerated pace despite the armament campaign. As compared with 1937, the 1938 production of pig iron is down by over twenty-two per cent, and that of steel by over thirty per cent, and the blank order books show that drastic further curtailments will have to be effected when present contracts are completed. Quality as well as quantity has deteriorated to such an extent that the British motor industry has long been complaining bitterly that it can no longer compete in the market, owing to the inferior quality of British sheet steel, as well as its cost.

King Coal has been dethroned. The world demand for England's onetime magic source of industrial power has sunk to roughly one-half of what it was before the war. Her market has become ever more restricted in extent. Coal exports were 73 million in 1913; they were 35 million in 1936, and 40 million in 1937. British ships, which were wont to supply the world with coal, now set out on empty bottoms to bring back to England, not as of yore the world's wealth and tribute, but bare necessities. The number of British ships carrying cargo and passengers is today (July, 1938) 2,400 less than in 1914, and is reported by the Board of Trade to be steadily decreasing. The mercantile marine of the onetime ruler of the waves is now facing a crisis, and clamors for government subsidies to save ship companies from ruin. British shipping, Mr. Amery informed the House of Commons, is being swept off the seas. Shipbuilders are ceasing to build, and ships are being sold to foreign countries because the goods are not there to transport.

That transformed situation of the country which rose to power as the world's workshop and the ruler of the waves is not one that can lie hidden in the obscurity of statistics. England has been compelled to declare it by reversing her immemorial policy of free trade and adopting stringent measures of protection. The shops of the onetime workshop of the world have become papered with almost desperate appeals to "buy British goods." The financial columns of the papers advise, at the same time, foreign investments.

Sterling has been devalued. From being the banker of the world, England has become a debtor nation. Her credit reached the point of exhaustion during the war, and America had to enter the fray in order to salvage what she could of her lendings. England's colonies, not only Canada which is now economically dependent on the United States rather than on England, but also Australia, turn elsewhere to float their loans. The Australian Premier, Mr. Bruce, bluntly declared after the Imperial Conference of 1926 that "it is feared that British surplus capital is insufficient for a lending policy on the same scale as in the past." For the first time the economic stability of Great Britain has been questioned and, despite every manipulation the balancing of future budgets, causes grave political anxiety.

These are not mere straws in the wind. They are not mere indications pointing to the decline of England's domination. They constitute the actual disappearance of the concrete foundations on which that domination rested. Upon those economic monopolies depended the entire structure of her power. Vague oratorical suggestions that English tenacity and pluck have "muddled through" critical situations in the past are irrelevant. The complacent myth that the position of England rested upon other than material advantages, upon some mystic foundations of imponderable virtues and mental qualities, are mere metaphysical interpretations of history. To have recourse to them in order to evade inacceptable realities may lull English sentiment,

but is not a manifestation of mental qualities calculated to confirm them.

England's empire over which the sun never sets, even though it received considerable extensions as a result of the war, no longer represents the assets for which it formerly stood, but rather multiplies her vulnerability. The four self-governing Dominions have definitely signified that they are neither to be regarded as preserves for the investment of English capital nor as markets for favored trade. The Ottawa Conference of 1932, sought by England as almost a measure of despair to recapture her weakened hold on Empire markets and to secure her means of sustenance, brought instead a rude shock of disillusion. The Dominions made it explicitly clear that no sentimental considerations would stand in the way of their pursuing their own interests first. The Federation of British Industries loudly lamented that "the Ottawa agreements have proved more beneficial to the Dominions than to Great Britain," and that "if the nations of the Empire decide to stand alone, each of them must eventually fall under the domination of some foreign economic group." Canada, the bulk of whose economic and financial relations is with the United States, declared that its policy would be determined by its interests; Australia has proclaimed that neither economically nor strategically could the Commonwealth regard itself as dependent upon England; the representative of New Zealand at the League of Nations denounced English policy and took his stand with the Soviets against England; in South Africa, while General

Smuts is the loud-speaker of a rhetorical British imperialism, Hertzog, with no less influence, openly proclaims that the ultimate goal of the Union of South Africa is complete secession. Since the Chanak crisis of 1922, all the Dominions have notified England that she must not count upon their necessarily rallying to her defense in the event of war.

Not only the British Empire, but the whole of England's rise to power and her domination, is linked with her possession of India. The industrial revolution which brought about that power was made possible by the Indian loot. Since then all British expansion in the East, and to a large extent in Africa also, has been financed by taxation imposed upon the Indian people. That cornerstone of English domination is now irremediably doomed. Since 1930 revolt has been forcibly held down in India by methods suggestive of German Naziism, the full extent of both revolt and repression being carefully concealed from public knowledge by stringent censorship and official prevarication. Following a favorite policy, England is now endeavoring to meet the situation by organizing the native propertied classes against the people of India under the form of magnanimous reforms in the direction of autonomy. The flimsy likelihood of even staving off the inevitable issue by that means is rendered more slender still by the policies imposed upon England in the Far East. Even before the war her means of maintaining the command of the sea while at the same time fighting Germany's challenge to it were judged inadequate, and England built up the Japanese navy to act as

her watchdog in the Pacific. But, as with Germany, the power she has herself conjured up has turned into a menace. Whatever the issue of the present conflict in China, England's domination in the Far East and her Indian empire will before long be at the mercy of either a victorious Japanese imperialism or the power and inspiration represented by a united and awakened China.

The one other material factor which, besides economic wealth, constituted the strength of English domination was her navy's command of the sea. It was as much in defense of that strategic monopoly as of her industrial pre-eminence that England went to war in 1914. She had up to that time sternly insisted upon the maintenance of the two-power standard, accounting the possession of a navy equal in strength to any two others indispensable to her security. Today that once vital demand is not mentioned, and England's efforts in the repeated naval conferences which she has called together for the purpose is limited to the endeavor to maintain a one-power standard. British naval authorities admit that "we are not at the present time in a position to defend our widespread and priceless interests in the Pacific" (H. C. Bywater, *Sea Power in the Pacific*, p. xvii), a statement which is not only confirmed, but demonstrated in a practical manner by the Japanese. England's command of the sea is dependent upon alliances.

So is her political and strategic action in the post-war world. England's policies, despite intentional obscurities and apparent indecisions, have always

been particularly definite, and their aims clearly conceived. They were consciously and avowedly directed towards the promotion of her material interests regarded in their most concrete form. But that simple aim is today complicated by a situation with which it has never before been confronted. Many of the causes which jeopardize England's economic power are inherent in the economic system itself which she has been instrumental in introducing, and are common to all countries which have adopted it. Over England's loss of her monopolies and the decay of her power hangs the further menace of social change. That menace affects not her alone, but the whole world of capitalist industrial enterprise and finance. But the dread of social change is particularly great in bourgeois England. The whole of her ideals and outlooks, her hope of making the best of altered conditions of reduced power, rest upon the chances of preserving the social *status quo*. That anxiety dominates all her aims and policies. It takes precedence over the defense of her immediate concrete interests. That motive, the warding off of social change, or in other words, the promotion and support of all reactionary forces, does not, as formerly, run parallel with the defense of her vested economic interests. On the contrary, it sharply conflicts with those interests. The efforts of England's reduced power are therefore no longer directed along a clearly defined line of policy calculated to maintain and augment her concrete advantages, but are divided between two conflicting purposes. The goal of England's policy is no longer to compass her

greatest good, but to choose between two evils. Such is her haunting fear of social change that, confronted with the choice, she gives without exception precedence to considerations arising from dread of that peril, and sacrifices the interests which have hitherto been the sole aims of her actions. Thus, by a paradoxical irony, England has become the artificer of her own decay, the promoter of her own demise.

The decline of a nation which has wielded great power and influence is never recognized, however pronounced and rapid may be its downfall, except retrospectively, long after it has taken place. Not only is it not admitted by the nation itself, but it is often not realized by contemporaries. Rome had long lain in ruins and had sunk to a mere name and shadow before the fact that she was no more was generally apprehended. When she was sacked by the Vandals, the event did not arouse any extraordinary amount of attention. The misfortune was regarded by the Romans themselves as an untoward accident which Roman power would survive as it had outlived many other perils and losses, and they went on discussing other things. Spain under Philip IV had long been totally bankrupt, famine was chronic not only among the general population but even amid the faded splendors of the Catholic court; but it was not until many years later that her rulers brought themselves to admit that they were no longer the most powerful, glorious, and magnificent monarchs in the world, the rulers of an empire over which, as they were fond of saying, "the sun never set."

Sharply defined as is the contrast between the sit-

uation of England since the World War and her former position of world control, the very suggestion that her day is over is received by most Englishmen with scorn and derision. The reserves of wealth and credit accumulated during a century of economic world control still bestow upon England a commanding position. More important even than the residue of her economic power, which would not of itself justify the influence which she still exercises, is the survival of her recent unparalleled prestige. But the authority of her counsels among other nations, which place unconsidered reliance upon her credit and ability, is wielded over a decayed, disordered, and distracted world in which she is the leader of the reactionary forces that are fighting for a foredoomed cause. That leadership appears likewise, and more truly, as a series of surrenders, of capitulations to blackmail, as the price paid for the desperate defense of her imperiled security.

The decay of England and her imperial power is too evident a fact not to be generally taken into account in world politics. Blustering Nazis could not treat with her with secure contempt, an Italian adventurer could not openly defy her "scrap-iron navy," were they not well aware that the England that can thus be set at nought is a very different England from the imperial and imperious Britain whose flag could not be touched without dire penalty. Japanese militarists are not aware of uttering anything but a commonplace when they remark that "England is on the down grade" (Tota Ishimaru, *Japan Must Fight Britain*). The Premier of the Aus-

tralian Commonwealth is not indulging in extravagances of speech when stating that the Dominions can no longer depend either upon England's wealth or on the protection of her navy (*The Times,* June, 1925). The self-governing Dominions, Sir Auckland Geddes remarked, still speak of England as "the motherland," but in the use of the expression there is an implication of "something of old age, if not senility." England is no longer regarded as the ruler of her empire, but is frankly described as a parasite upon it. Mr. O. M. W. Sprague, economic adviser to the Bank of England, admits in moderate language that, short of radical and inconceivable economic changes, "there can be nothing in the future for this country but a slow decline" (*The Times,* May 13, 1931).

That decline is, however, not slow, but exceptionally rapid. It is veiled and disguised to the contemporary eye by the lingering survival of psychological influences, of prestige, of mental associations that are not of a sudden obliterated. Those imponderable psychological—one might almost say "psychical"—survivals outlast for a time the realities of power.

Nothing in England's imperial position was more impressive than its seeming solidity and stability. It was not the shallow and flashy outcome of military fortune, it had not been established by the sword. Her power reached down to the economic basis of a world. Yet that power has proved more transient and insecure than the rule of many an imperial raider. England claimed to owe her success to the excellence of her political institutions, to the

ripe wisdom of those who guided her destinies, to superiorly developed political insight and resourcefulness. Yet the brief period of Spanish domination, which conspicuously lacked those supposed merits, which committed every political and economic fault it was possible to perpetrate, has been no more ephemeral than England's allegedly wise rule. Not until the later years of the eighteenth century did England emerge out of almost complete insignificance and obscurity through the wealth suddenly acquired from the plunder of India and the development of industrial methods. The ruler of the bourgeois age of industrial capitalism entered upon the heritage of the old Europe of feudalism and absolutism after a protracted world war and world-shaking revolution. Her triumphant career has drawn to a close a century later, after another world war and another momentous revolution. The heyday of that career of power is almost entirely comprised within the lifetime of a single ruler. On the occasion of that ruler's jubilee the official bard of the English bourgeois age celebrated its glory in strange poetic strains:

Fifty years of ever-broadening Commerce!
Fifty years of ever-brightening Science!
Fifty years of ever-widening Empire!

The noble bard was unconscious that he was at the same time inditing the epitaph of that empire. Within fifty years of the recognition of its supremacy, England's monopoly of economic world control had vanished irrevocably. Rome had linked the sup-

posed eternity of her power with the stone tiers of her Colosseum. England's supremacy has lasted scarcely as long as the frailer structure of the Crystal Palace, in which she celebrated her rule of the age of "Progress" and boundless complacency. Her complacency has outlasted it. But when the extraordinary career of England shall come to be viewed dispassionately in the larger perspective of history it will be seen to have been singularly brief—almost meteoric.

Chapter Two

THE ARISTOCRATIC TRADITION

PATRIOTIC sentiment discourages inquiry into the causes of national achievement, and usually ascribes these to qualities innate in the race. Racial theories foster loyalty to ruling powers. The same theories, and the mythological conceptions of heredity which go with them, serve, within the State, to justify class inequality by representing it as "natural." Aristocratic ruling classes are said to owe their privileges to superior natural endowments, capitalist power is regarded as the outcome of "natural ability," and the lower orders occupy the position in which they are placed as a result of their natural moral and mental inferiority.

Those theories, common to all national groups as well as to savages, have been the object of particular "scientific" interest in England, and it is interesting to note that the frenzied development which they have acquired in Nazi Germany originated largely with an Englishman bearing the somewhat sinister name of Chamberlain.

What may be termed the English myth, a fiction serving for both home and foreign consumption, consists in ignoring or belittling the fact that England's power has rested entirely upon the material circumstance of her superior wealth, and representing that it has rested instead upon the innate

and hereditary attributes of an outstanding race gifted with superior moral sense, ability, and wisdom. According to that myth, the successes of England and the great influence she wielded over other nations during the nineteenth century were the natural effects of the exceptional native endowments of the English race, and England's material wealth itself would be interpreted as the result, rather than the cause, of the virtue, wisdom, and sagacity of a predestined imperial breed. Popular and educational histories of England are devoted to the illustration of that view. Every phase in that history, every event, from the most remote and barbarous times, serves to demonstrate the moral elevation, the selfless devotion to public interests, the wisdom and farseeing judgment of the leaders of English policy, as well as the fortitude and superior "natural common sense" of the English people as a whole. After perusing the uninterrupted record of high moral purpose, steadfast righteousness, and balanced wisdom, one is left wondering how such an edifying career, unbroken throughout centuries, ever came to result in the unmatched baseness, unscrupulous and shameless dishonesty, and the utter lack of elementary understanding or intelligence exhibited by English political leadership at the present day. Were one to accept the account of English history provided by, say, Professor George Macaulay Trevelyan, one would be led to form a much more lurid conception of the ruin and collapse of the English mind and character than is justified by the facts.

The English myth of natural racial superiority,

despite the great services it has rendered to English prestige and influence, constituting as it does the basic assumption of Anglomania, is not hypocritical or deliberately fraudulent. It is but the logical consequence of the assumption which has hitherto served as the unquestioned basis of national psychologies, interpretations of history, and nationalistic hysterias. The innate peculiarities of the French, German, Russian, Italian, Spanish, or American "races," no less than those of the English, have currently been supposed to be the sources of their national characteristics and, as a consequence, the chief factors determining the courses of the respective histories of those nations.

That deeply entrenched assumption is a complete fallacy. It is in stark contradiction with facts and inconsistent with itself. It was an Englishman, John Locke, who first clearly demonstrated that the contents of the mind are not inherited. It can now be likewise shown that the habits of the mind are no less acquired, that the character of the emotions and sentiments—the motives which determine both judgment and behavior, and therefore most of what is referred to as "character" or natural "temperament"—is not the result of anything that can be transmitted by natural heredity, but depends upon the conditioning brought about by the social environment, by education, human contacts and example, and cultural tradition. With the inconsistency inevitably attaching to myths, the very same people who are most emphatic in ascribing the achievements of England to the English "character" at the

same time proclaim the vital function of English public schools for the "building up of character," and are prepared to declare that without the English public schools the English character would go to pieces. No national mental traits are due to race. No baby is born an English gentleman or, despite the English dictum, a little Liberal or else a little Conservative. None, certainly, is born with a public-school accent or a Nonconformist conscience. The mind of man is a product of social environment, and his social environment is a product of history. National character is the product of national history, and not vice versa. It is not a product of race, heredity, or glands.

In no instance is the fallacy of racial theories more clear than in that of the English. In the first place there is no English race. The English are the most composite nation in Europe.

A true-born Englishman's a contradiction,
In speech an irony, in fact a fiction.

The absurdities of nationalistic myths are illustrated by the contention of nations so racially mixed as the English or the French that their qualities are due precisely to racial mixture, whereas people like the Germans, whose racial composition is relatively "pure," though the Prussian elements are in reality Slav, contend that national excellence is due to racial "purity." The English of the northern midlands and east coast, who are predominantly Scandinavians by race, boast that they are "pure," and are prone to look down on the southern English as "mongrels."

In point of fact, racially mixed populations are likely to enjoy advantages over those which are racially "pure," because racial mixture usually implies more widespread cultural contacts. The relatively "pure" races, such as Germans and savages, are "pure" because they have remained for a long time isolated from cultural contacts.

Constantly contradicting themselves as they do, English racialists who set down the English character to its having been built up in the public schools, also explain it by England's geographical isolation, its purity having presumably been preserved undefiled from contact with lesser Continental breeds. No explanation of the English character is so prevalent as that which sets it down to the circumstance that Britain is an island. The relation is true in a sense, but not in the sense in which it is intended. No European people have been less insulated or isolated by the natural boundaries of their country than the English. The surrounding sea has served as a highway of intercourse much more than as an isolating barrier. The English have always been the greatest travelers among Europeans. Until quite lately the words "traveler" and "tourist" were, on the Continent, practically synonymous with Englishman. The wandering propensities of the English date back to earliest times. In the Middle Ages Englishmen, and no less Englishwomen, were, we are told, to be found in every part of the Continent. A whole quarter of Rome was known as the Saxon quarter from the number of Saxon pilgrims, and Saint Boniface complains that there was scarcely a town in Europe

in his day where English prostitutes were not to be found. In Norman times intercourse between England and Norman Sicily was almost as close as between England and France. The habit of regarding a Continental "grand tour" as part of the education of every expensively brought up Englishman dates from as far back as Tudor times. From the seventeenth century onward it became increasingly general. English people have always been, beyond all comparison, better acquainted, so far as travelers' acquaintance goes, with the Continent as well as more distant lands than any Continental nation has been with England. The term "insular" is certainly far more applicable in its implications to the French than to the English. The French, as a whole, have always been a stay-at-home people, profoundly averse to leaving their country, and their culture has been, and largely remains to this day, obstinately and narrowly immured within their own national tradition. To speak of the English mind as being the effect of insularity due to Britain's sea boundaries is nonsense.

English characteristics are, nevertheless, definitely related to the fact that Britain is an island, but they are due to the effect of that geographical circumstance upon English history, and not directly on the English mind.

The fact that England was protected from the danger of invasion robbed the kings of England of the pretext for maintaining a permanent royal army. On the Continent the formation of national states took place through the consolidation of the central-

ized power over powerful nobles. Continental realms, being constantly threatened with war and invasion, were under the necessity of maintaining large standing armies which were naturally at the disposal of the kings. Those royal armies, besides serving to protect the country against foreign aggressors, were used to reduce powerful feudatory nobles to submission. In England this could not happen. Only in the period immediately following the Conquest did the Norman kings dispose of armies with which to coerce local Saxon potentates and afterwards to reduce their French feudatories to submission to the throne. William of Normandy unified England. Under his immediate successors much the same state of things arose in England as on the Continent; the barons fought private wars among themselves and the country fell into a state of anarchy. As in France and elsewhere on the Continent, the King, in this case Henry II, fought and strove to put down the insubordinate nobles. But he enjoyed a particular advantage in endeavoring to do so. England being merely a province of the extensive Angevin dominions, Henry II was not dependent upon his barons to furnish a feudal army. He therefore solved the problem of feudal banditry and private wars by disarming the barons altogether, abolishing their feudal military contributions in armed men, and replacing them by taxes, known as "scutage." The position became, under the later Plantagenets, curiously reversed. With the shrinking of the French domains of the King of England, he required an English army. But the nobles, many of whose cas-

tles had meanwhile become dismantled, reasserted their power and denied the king's right to raise and maintain an army without their consent. That was the chief intention and provision of the Great Charter wrung from the King immediately after his forces in France had suffered annihilation at the battle of Bouvines. "No scutage or aid shall be imposed in our realm save by the common council of the realm," reads the famous document. The English sovereigns never thereafter disposed of a standing army or even of a bodyguard sufficiently strong to put down a riot or to withstand the retainers of a single baron. The regiment of the Coldstream Guards founded under Charles II was the first armed body of which any English sovereign, since Runnymede, ever disposed. Henry VIII constantly sought to obtain the right to have an army of his own. But the peers of the realm replied to the infuriated monarch that there was no occasion for an army, England being an island.

To that single circumstance—that the kings of England had no pretext for raising and maintaining an army—is due, more than to any other, the whole historical and social development of England. The English landed aristocracy retained and developed a power, independent of the Crown, which had no parallel on the Continent. They were and remained the rulers of England. Although England eventually rose to power as the most typically bourgeois country, as a "nation of shopkeepers," yet she developed as the most purely aristocratic country that had ever existed.

The apparent paradox is in reality perfectly logical. In order to keep in check the power of the crown, the aristocratic rulers of England played off the burghers against the throne. From the very first, from the imposing of Magna Charta on King John, the feudal barons required the assistance of the burghers, and they would not have been able to carry out what was in effect a revolution, or rebellion, had they not, as is the case in all revolutions carried out by an already powerful class, courted and obtained the cooperation of the people, and in particular of the Londoners, who joined with them in arms to extract the Charter from the King. The document, which was in fact the charter of the aristocracy, establishing once and for all their rule in the government of the country, had thus to include clauses benefiting the barons' burgher allies as a payment for their assistance, in the form of guarantees or, as they were called in the language of the time, "liberties." The kings of England, on the other hand, likewise constantly played off their faithful burghers against the barons in the contests which arose to preserve or recover the powers of the dispossessed throne. Hence the exceptionally favored position of the English burghers, who held to a certain extent the balance of power between the two contending forces of throne and landed aristocracy. The position of the English burghers thus differed considerably from that occupied by the corresponding classes on the Continent, where they were plundered in turn by throne, nobles, and clergy.

Hence also English "liberties" and the "mother of

parliaments." The former term had in England a somewhat more concrete and restricted meaning than the theoretical and abstract connotations it later came to acquire. It was not thought of as an abstract principle or as an absolute good of universal application, but stood for the acquisition of specific guarantees and privileges, and was thus, from the first, not inconsistent with the defense of those privileges, however opposed they might be to popular liberty. Thus, for example, the burghers of some of the Western shires applied for and obtained the "liberty" *not* to send representatives to parliament, the expense of sending two knights of the shire to London being rather onerous and regarded as vexatious.

As to the "mother of parliaments," English historians, in using the phrase, have conveniently overlooked the fact that the Spanish Cortes, founded from the first on the principle of "no taxation without representation," which they fiercely and successfully defended in even the worst days of autocracy, are considerably older than the "parliament" of Simon de Montfort, a rascally Frenchman, the son of the leader of the atrocious crusade against the Albigenses. The Spanish elected assembly now sitting under the bombs of Mr. Neville Chamberlain's friends is thus better entitled to be regarded as the dean of parliamentary institutions than the English government which is seeking its destruction. The Sicilian parliament of the Norman Hauteville rulers, who had been forced to respect the liberties of the Saracen state which they only partly succeeded in

conquering, was older still. One of its officials, or *Khaïd,* was a certain Thomas Brun, or Brown, an Englishman, who later transferred his services to King Henry II, bringing over with him the principles of parliamentary fiscal administration. The name by which it became known, the Exchequer, derives from the Saracen practice adopted by *Khaïd* Thomas Brown of using a chessboard as an office table.

The English Parliament, or as it was called, the "High Court of Parliament," which corresponds to what is now the House of Lords, had little or nothing of the character of a liberal institution, but rather the contrary. It was an assembly of the ruling landed aristocracy to carry out the essential provision of Magna Charta, which it eventually displaced, by seeing to it that the king did not levy any money or enact any decrees without the consent of the ruling aristocracy. The burgher classes, as represented by knights of the shires, were summoned to attend; but this was merely a convenience in assessing and collecting taxes. The shire knights stood at the bar of the august assembly, but did not take part in its deliberations, or indeed open their mouths. They were there merely to learn the will of the governing powers and to answer questions, when need arose, as to how much they could pay. Before answering any such question, the knights retired to any convenient place in the neighborhood—the monks of Westminster lent them the use of their Chapter House—and deliberated behind closed doors, being provided by the Lords with a "Speaker" who com-

municated their answer to the High Court. Such was the unofficial origin of the House of Commons, which took no part in any legislation until the reign of Henry VI, was scarcely heard of until it was used by Henry VIII to endeavor to check the Lords, and first acquired importance when, as the Long Parliament, it sat for a time as a burghers' revolutionary committee. The British Constitution, which was never set forth, but, like Topsy, just grew, never was the outcome of any principles, but was the result of the promotion of particular concrete interests, and essentially the interests of private property. It was reported in 1828 by the Royal Commissioners on Real Property to approach, in the fulfilment of that function, "as near perfection as can be expected in any human institution." It remained in the nineteenth century what it had been in Plantagenet times, the instrument of the government of the country by the ruling class. "To sustain, to repair, to beautify the noble pile," wrote Blackstone, "is a charge intrusted principally to the nobility, and such gentlemen of the Kingdom as are delegated by their country to parliament."

The relations of the English ruling aristocracy to lower social orders differed considerably, owing to the different circumstances of the case, from those between Continental aristocracies and their social inferiors. Not only had the burghers to be treated, as means of checking royal power, with greater consideration, but the whole manner in which the power of the aristocratic ruling class was exercised was different. On the Continent a great noble, while he had

little or no part in the government of the country, was an almost complete despot within his own domains. His dependents, whom he frankly despised as *"canaille,"* were treated by him, his officials, menials, and men-at-arms, with unchecked tyrannical brutality. They were despoiled by the feudal lord, both on his own behalf and in the levying of dues and taxes of which he generally was the collector. Any burgher community within his jurisdiction had to pay ransom in the form of payment for charters and immunities. The English aristocratic landowner's power was not wielded chiefly as that of a local tyrant, but in a collective capacity, as a member of the ruling class governing the realm. It was too solid to require enforcing by petty violence. The rulers of England wielded a far more effective means of exercising their power: the Law, of which they were the makers, custodians, and dispensers. That orderly and constitutional appeal to the law of the realm was not inconsistent with the most ruthless repression and oppression. It was an appeal to a penal code notorious for its savagery, which remains to this day the most unmerciful and swift in its severity. But the ruling class's relation to their subjects could afford to assume the form of a superior paternalism, founded on the self-evident truth that gentlemen knew best what was good for the people, a benevolence which inculcated dull-witted dependents with a reverent servility unmatched in any other country.

The English feudal aristocracy's peculiar position gave rise to other features which contrasted with the

character of Continental nobilities. Henry II had used the independence which his French dominions bestowed upon him to dispense with an English army, and thus to put down the anarchy of private wars among the English barons by demilitarizing them. A great many feudal castles were destroyed and replaced by "manors." A nobleman's country house is still called on the Continent a château, although it may be no more than a small villa; in England, it is a house, manor, or hall. The demilitarized English aristocracy thus assumed, to a far greater degree than their Continental analogues, the character of "country gentlemen." Unlike the aristocracies of France or Spain, the English rulers were not dependent to any extent upon Court favor. They were not called upon to frequent the Court, to vie with one another in ostentation or in brilliancy of culture: they remained essentially a rural aristocracy. Their tastes remained simple. The pleasures of the English aristocracy have continued to be the physical pleasures of a country gentry, not differing greatly from those of Red Indians—to hunt animals, to enjoy violent muscular exercise, to eat enormous quantities of meat—"plain English food"—to indulge an unquenchable thirst. They did not, like the French, or Italian, or other court aristocracies, develop conversational talents, a desire to shine by the display of refinements of culture. Unlike the Continental courtiers whose careers often depended upon their wits, the English aristocracy prided themselves upon the bluntness of their intellect and their conversational dumbness. They were marked by an al-

most fanatical horror of "ideas," which they instinctively regarded as dangerous, and which smacked, like French "made dishes," of foreign sophistication and effeminacy.

What may be termed the English aristocracy's seizure of power at Runnymede was carried out through concerted action. The English ruling class have ever since been more concerned with making common cause in the defence of their class power and privileges than with mutual rivalries and contests for favor. A unique *esprit de corps,* an unmatched class consciousness and solidarity thus developed. While a French or Spanish nobleman regarded another in the light of a rival and competitor, to be treated with a certain amount of polite mistrust, to be, if needful, kept at a distance by punctilious ceremony, dignified reserve, and a scrupulous, defensive point of honor, the English gentleman looked upon a fellow member of the ruling class as "one of ourselves." The English gentleman was, among equals, a good fellow; he was *nicer* than the mistrustful Frenchman, Italian, or Spaniard. He was, on the whole, more honorable in purely individual relations among equals. There is, proverbially, honor among—members of a ruling class. But the "niceness" of English gentlemen does not prevent the rigorous observance of the barriers of caste any more than their paternalism is inconsistent with the swift hanging of poachers. Lady Ashburton was a very gracious patroness of Carlyle, but on taking him with her to Scotland she packed him with her maid and the family doctor in a second-class railway

carriage, while her ladyship traveled first class. In the army, the buckets from the officers' latrines are disposed of separately lest their contents should mingle with the excrements of common people. English niceness and paternalism excel in the merciless snubbing of bounders and the swift hanging of poachers. Let class privileges and interests, or the prejudices necessary for their maintenance be impugned, and nice gentlemen turn ferocious and implacable.

The rigorous rule of primogeniture, indispensable to the preservation of vast estates, created a numerous class of gentlemen by birth who had, as potential members of the ruling class, to be treated as gentlemen until they proved the contrary by their failing to inherit a title and estate. Thus arose, between the ruling class and the burghers, an intermediate class which had to seek careers. In modern England such suitable careers are afforded by the army, which provides an exclusive club where penurious gentlemen may enjoy respectable amenities and unlimited leisure and retire as Colonel Blimps. But in an older England there was no permanent army. Many younger sons sought their fortunes abroad as adventurers or pirates.

England's sea power had not its origin in any particular disposition of islanders to seafaring, but in the social consequences of their geographical situation. The Spaniards and Italians benefited greatly from the oriental methods of seamanship introduced by the Arabs—methods which entirely differed from the old classical traditions of Mediterranean seafar-

ing. They sailed to new worlds under the canvas of galleons and caravels constructed on the oriental pattern and guided by the mathematical data elaborated by the Spanish Moors, and the compass introduced from China. But as regards fighting ships and methods of sea warfare, they continued to adhere to the old classical pattern. Among all Continental nations the army was a career for the nobility. When they fought at sea the noble warriors regarded ships merely as floating platforms for the transport and deployment of infantry, and the seamen who manned those platforms as servants or slaves of the fighting forces. Spaniards continued accordingly to use in sea warfare galleys which could, they considered, be maneuvered with greater ease in boarding or ramming enemy ships.

In England there was no aristocratic army either on land or sea. The Elizabethan ships which harried the galleons on the Spanish Main were those of pirates and privateers, not galleys in the service of a noble army. Their commanders were seamen, their crews were both seamen and soldiers, not landlubbers and galley slaves. The ships, though built for long voyages, were also built for fighting. The English pirates were the first to conceive the idea of mounting guns in the hulks of their ships and firing them through the portholes. The pattern of English men-of-war and the methods of sea fighting scarcely varied from the time of Drake to that of Nelson, and the English broadsides decided the issue of many naval engagements. Henry VIII first obtained the means of laying the foundation of a Royal Navy,

and procured the services of Italian shipbuilders to improve the construction of his fighting ships. But the aristocratic ruling classes and the burghers held the purse, and it was over ship money that the latter and the ruling powers first fell out and debated their respective claims.

The foreign Catholic Church, which was in Continental countries the real power behind the throne, was cast off, as was inevitable in a country where there was no powerful throne to support it. In its stead the rulers of England established a Church of their own, which was a mere instrument of their aims and power. The Church of England, a purely class institution, has little theological or religious significance, except in so far as those attributes may serve the purpose of defending privilege, consecrating aristocratic rule, and impressing reverence for it on the people. Until the social changes of the nineteenth century, the parson or chaplain appointed by the landowner held in the social hierarchy the position of a higher domestic and often took his meals in the servants' hall.

What is accounted the national character and a natural racial endowment of a people is, in an overwhelming degree, molded by the pattern set by the ruling class. It is imitated by less influential social orders, and the lowest strata of the population become adapted to the pattern. We are told that as far back as early Norman times, well-to-do English merchants affected the manners and dress of their French rulers and made an effort to speak French. English writers have sometimes enlarged on the debt

which England owes to snobbery. The dingiest suburban gentility is a studied imitation of Mayfair and Belgravia. English manners, customs, conversation, and convictions are in decayed boarding houses and in the shopman's back parlor patterned on those of the aristocratic rulers of the country. The bedraggled female in the gin shop calls herself a "loidy," and accounts it indispensable to crown the edifice of her tattered rags with a hat, to the astonishment of European womanhood. Snobbery, though universal, is recoginized as one of the specifically English virtues. That is the logical consequence of the fact that the English aristocracy have been the actual rulers of the country, and occupied in England a position differing entirely from that held by Continental nobilities. The latter were dependent upon an absolute centralized power; their fortunes were conditional upon its favor; their power and splendor were parasitic on that of the Court. England was a land of liberty; that is to say, the ruling feudal class enjoyed full liberty to exercise undisputed despotic power over all others. France was ruled by kings, Spain was ruled by priests, England was ruled by gentlemen. King John exclaimed, after signing the Charter: "They have given me five-and-twenty over-kings!" The English aristocracy were kings, not over their domains merely, like petty Continental noblemen, but over the country and the people. Truly an imperial race! Their position imparted to their type the impressiveness which attaches to unchallenged power. The dumb insolence of the English gentleman had no need of gaudy ostentation or

swaggering braggadocio to assert its secure and confident arrogance. It increased its stature by understatement.

The English ruling class's favorite title of "gentleman" came to acquire mystic, moral, and almost religious connotations. But that was after it had become vulgarized, and from signifying a person of "gentle" birth, that is, a member of the English aristocratic ruling class, it had come to denote any person with an income of at least three thousand pounds a year. The familiar type of the English gentleman did not, in fact, come to full maturity until England herself had risen from an obscure island realm to the economic dictatorship of the industrialized world, when the reality of power had passed from the hands of the traditional ruling aristocracy, and their debased title became indiscriminately usurped by Manchester haberdashers and Birmingham ironmongers. The tradition of the type alone survived, though in a modified form. English gentlemen of older times differed considerably from that type and their character presented features which would be accounted quite un-English. The oldest medieval accounts represent the English as distinguished above all other people by their extreme lewdness, drunkenness, their boisterous disposition, and their love of noise and merrymaking. The Norman barons were, from all accounts, marked by great excitability, a vivacious disposition, a violent, gesticulating manner, and an ungovernable temper. The English gentlemen of the Elizabethan age struck contemporaries by their grossness, their utter lack of

polished manners, their boorishness, awkwardness of demeanor, and their lewdness, and English ladies surprised the Spaniards by their immodesty and whorishness. The character of the English gentleman of the time of the Restoration and the Georges is sufficiently well known for the contrast it presented with the paradigm of the Victorian age which furnished Newman with themes for moral edification to be apparent. Corruption, trickery, and cynical unscrupulousness appear as the salient features of the gentlemen portrayed by Chesterfield and Walpole. The attribute in which the English gentleman of any period anterior to the rise of England to glory appears to have been most conspicuously lacking was any form of virtue.

The full-blown ideal type of the gentleman, which is commonly, though erroneously, assimilated to the English national character, was the somewhat artificial product of a social revolution scarcely less important in its effects than the industrial revolution of which it was the direct outcome. The result of that change was to blend the English aristocratic tradition with the burgher tradition.

Chapter Three

THE BURGHER TRADITION

THE solid and secure hold which the landowning aristocratic classes had obtained on English government smoothed the course of the country's social and political development. That greatly admired stability and immunity from sudden and violent changes, which has been, as will presently be seen, considerably exaggerated, has been set down to the innate conservatism of the English people, to the law-abiding character of the English, to the natural moderation and common sense of their dispositions, to the excellence of English institutions. It was the outcome of the firm stranglehold which, from earliest times, the landowning aristocracy secured on the government of the country, on the means of maintaining it by armed force, on the throne, the Church, and the minds of the people. Neither the repeated efforts of the kings nor the enormous power of the Catholic Church ever succeeded in shaking off that grip. The only effective opposition which the aristocratic rulers of England had to face was from the burghers and the people.

Despite the favored condition the English commoners enjoyed, or perhaps because of it, and the condescending support graciously bestowed upon them by the aristocratic rulers, the burghers consid-

ered they had grievances. The charming amiability of English gentlemen has, as already noted, sharply defined limits. A commoner is not a gentlemen. When a deputation of fourteen tailors presented themselves to submit a petition to Queen Elizabeth, whose power and success were due to the manner in which she assimilated herself to the ruling classes, they were received with the greeting: "Good morning, gentlemen both." The estimate that a tradesman was at best the seventh part of a gentleman entirely agreed with accepted standards. There were more substantial, if not more ranking grievances. The English gentleman's gracious paternalism was, as usual, more rhetorical than practical. The rulers of England took good care that the burdens of taxation should fall on the rich burgher merchants rather than on themselves.

The old-time class struggles between the bourgeois orders and the power of feudal aristocracies, while they naturally arose from economic oppositions of interests, have seldom been waged directly and avowedly on that basis. In those struggles, the battles have been fought under the more or less spurious banners of substituted ideologies. That substitution has been all the more easy because the economic aspect of the contrast between landowning ruling aristocracies and money-acquiring bourgeois extends much farther and deeper than that economic aspect. Aristocrat and bourgeois constitute two sharply differentiated social species. The insolent arrogance of the aristocrat, be he never so brutal, has a certain animal magnificence. He is

the type of the beautiful blond beast. A certain savage, primitive impressiveness attaches to the haughtiness of his power. The bourgeois, on the other hand, is handicapped by an incurable meanness no less inseparable from his estate. The difference arises from the circumstance that the robber baron, whether in the form of a highwayman or of a peer of the realm, does not think in terms of money, whereas the whole mentality of the money-acquiring bourgeois is degraded by his dependence upon pecuniary profit. The contempt of the gentleman for the "seventh-part-of-a-gentleman," however veiled it may be by gracious, condescending patronage, contains the grain of truth which lends an added sting to offensive prejudice.

It appears to be a general psychological law that resentment called forth by grievances which inflict wounds on pride rather than material injury and suffering are prone to take the form of a sentiment of superior righteousness. A classical historical example is afforded by the ancient Hebrews. They were a trading community surrounded by powerful and hostile neighbors. Their history was a long tale of defeated ambition, successive disasters, and galling humiliations. The effect upon an intelligent and sensitive people was a hitherto unknown hypertrophic growth of righteousness. The conviction that they were the representatives of righteousness upon earth, the saints, the elect of God, enabled them to compensate themselves for bitter humiliations by triumphing in imagination over their wicked and iniquitous enemies, the heathens and their abominations.

An exactly similar result was brought about by the gnawing humiliation of the English burghers at the condescending paternalism of their aristocratic rulers. They indeed assimilated themselves to the ancient Hebrews. They were the lost tribes of Israel, and the Bible, they became fully convinced, had mainly reference to the English. There exists at Windsor Castle a geneological tree showing that the present King of England is descended from David and Solomon. Steeped in the Word of God, the seventh-part-of-a-gentleman denounced ship-money and the whoredoms of Babylon.

Ruling aristocratic classes are never deeply religious. When barbarous Europe was Christianized, the petty kings and barbarian aristocrats willingly seized upon the advantages offered by alliance with the powerful ecclesiastical organization, and accepted a nominal and formal conformity with its doctrines and peculiar moral principles. But they continued in their habits and mode of life exactly as before, enjoying their power and privileges to have, as a matter of course, as good a time as possible. The English ruling aristocracy were no exception, and were rather noted as excelling in their somewhat crude pursuit of a good time. They had been somewhat less enthusiastic Catholics than their Continental counterparts, and when the vexatious pecuniary and other pretensions of the Roman Church had been cast off, gave the most lukewarm of formal support to their puppet class-Church as a convenient political institution. Its chief use was to serve as a token of loyalty to the established order of aristocratic

class rule. Continued fidelity to the Roman Church, which many of the aristocratic class maintained, was not accounted seriously offensive. But the insolent nonconformity of burghers, tinkers, and petty squires who attended Bethels and conventicles was the impertinently defiant mark of seditious minds.

As was usual in an age when social maladjustments were commonly set down to acts of God, the revolt of the burghers assumed the religious form of revolt against the feudal Church of the aristocratic rulers.

Which of the two forms of Christian religion has had the more baneful results upon the minds of European populations, the Roman Catholic or the Protestant variety, is a question which it is extremely difficult and perhaps impossible to determine. Where, as in Spain or Austria, the power of the Catholic Church has been supreme, the effect has been, we know, the complete snuffing out of the thinking mind among the people, and the perpetuation of the Dark Ages. But, on the other hand, English bibliolatry has had even more pervading and permanent, though quite different, cretinizing effects. The complete intellectual surrender to priestly authority, required by the Catholic Church, has resulted in obscurantism, and abolished intellectual activity and culture. But Catholic submission, consisting as it does in ritual-prescribed observances, attendance on Masses, confession, etc., and not only discouraging, but actually forbidding theological thought, discussion, or inquiry, leaves the mind free from those preoccupations, abolishes not only intel-

lectual, but likewise moral problems. They are solved for the Catholic by submission to authority; he is delivered thereby from their obsession. The Catholic may, accordingly, be more human and more spontaneous in what mental and moral activities remain to him. He is not held to demonstrate and manifest at every moment, by the gravity of his demeanor, his concern for religion or righteousness. Among Continental Catholics, that limited liberty commonly goes so far as to allow of the combination, startling to the Protestant, of political anticlericalism with quite orthodox and sincere practicing religion.

With the principle of private judgment, the effect of religion on the mind became entirely different. Every man became his own theologian. The revolt against "popery" resulted in England in a universal obsession with theology. Each weaver or tallow chandler discovered his own solution of religious and theological doctrine, much as today every petty journalist or office clerk has his own plan for the solution of the world's social problems. The ignorance of the mass of English petty burghers and craftsmen was abysmal. The majority were completely illiterate. Many learned to read for the express purpose of being able to peruse the Word of God. They had no other literature, nor wished to have any. When, long after the Revolution, a tendency arose to rehabilitate the Puritans, the hypocrisy and semi-illiteracy which had previously been charged against them by the aristocratic classes were excused by pointing out that even such men as Cromwell had scarcely ever read any other book

than the Bible. The stranglehold of a tyranny was thus voluntarily fastened upon the general English mind by theological obsession more complete and blighting in its way than was ever produced by the authoritarian absolutism and obscurantism of the Catholic Church. From that pervading blight, the English mind has indeed never recovered. The Puritan Commonwealth devoted more attention to the establishment of schools and to the spread of education than any English government before or since. In a few years the number of popular schools in England was more than doubled. But those schools were exclusively theological; their object was "Bible study." In the sequel, the Church of England—which had originally kept as close to Roman Catholicism as was consistent with throwing off the supremacy of Rome—and English Catholicism itself became, in self-defense, infected with the same disputatious theological obsession as sectarian Puritanism. The universities, which had always been mainly theological Church institutions, became more pronouncedly so. The public schools, also originally Church schools, came to be, when their importance developed, Christian institutions conducted by Church of England priests. England became the plague center of a Bible Belt which spread round the world. A particularly virulent form of religious cretinism, quite unparalleled and unknown elsewhere in the world, became one of the most conspicuous and astonishing characters of the England mind. In throwing off priestly tyranny, England became the most priest-ridden country in the world.

Bible-studying Puritan tinkers and tailors not only discovered personal solutions to questions of doctrine, and began to prophesy and lead revival meetings, but they also acquired a monopoly of righteousness. Therein lay the supreme comfort and strength of religion. Ability to quote the Scriptures compensated the illuminated tinker or burgher who had just learned to read for his inability to cite pagan Latin authors, to appreciate the subtleties of Euphuism, or for whatever cultural deficiencies the gentlemen who had dabbled in the New Learning or delighted in the frivolous and lewd plays of Mr. William Shakespeare might, in the beastliness of their heathen devices, charge him with. But, above all, the seventh-part-of-a-gentleman was raised by religion to heights of righteousness from which he could afford to look down upon the dissolute followers of Belial who, in their ungodly folly, presumed to despise him. He was empowered to wag a didactic finger at them, to admonish them and testify against them, citing the very Word of God as to the fate that would befall the wicked who persecuted His saints.

Moral values took the place of all others. Literature and art would come, in England, to be appraised exclusively in moral terms. For the thoroughgoing Puritan, that standard of appraisal entirely suppressed them. Politics became likewise moral questions.

The ruling aristocracy found themselves for the first time placed before a strange dilemma. They had to choose between two evils: on the one hand

the pretensions of the King who, with his foreign notions of absolutism, did not grasp the gentlemen's agreement by which English gentlemen and not the king were the real rulers, and, on the other hand, the insolence of the burghers who had so far forgotten themselves as not to know their places. The rulers of England did not hesitate, as they have never hesitated when placed in a similar dilemma. In choosing between the two evils they chose the reactionary side, and supported the absolutism they had hitherto combated against the greater menace of popular government.

But for all its religious and moral vesture, the Puritan Revolution which established in England parliamentary government and "democracy," as understood by comparatively well-to-do burgher classes, was in reality a full-blooded revolution. Complacent English history is fond of dwelling on the boast that England's splendid political institutions, "which nothing could improve," have been a natural growth, which has taken place by constitutional methods, without the violent revolutionary changes which mark and mar such developments in foreign nations. The allegation serves as a permanent argument for reformism and against direct action. By "English political institutions" is generally understood parliamentary government. Before the Long Parliament there existed no trace of parliamentary government in England, no House of Commons, except as a totally insignificant private gathering of squires who had no voice and merely received orders. England's parliamentary government,

England's glorious "political institutions," were the outcome of a four years' bloody and desperate civil war and revolution in the course of which, incidentally, the king was beheaded. English Liberalism is as much the result of direct action and blood-red revolution as French Jacobinism or Russian Bolshevism.

The fact has always been felt, by English historians and political orators, to be profoundly embarrassing, and every clumsy subterfuge has been resorted to to obscure and disguise it. The English civil war has been presented as a theological controversy. But the leaders of the Long Parliament did not regard it in that light. "The Powers of Parliament are to the body politic," said Pym, "as the rational faculties of the soul to man," expressions which almost seem to prefigure the language of Thomas Paine or of the French *philosophes*. Theology was the vesture of the conflict as of most social conflicts in an age when the apprehension of social issues was even more impossible than in subsequent revolutions. But the theological dispute followed curiously the social lines of cleavage. The supporters of Parliament and the Independents were London and the Home Counties, and the textile manufacturing districts, what we should call the "industrial" centers; while the supporters of feudal and Church of England reaction were Oxford, the then backward regions of the North and West of England, and the purely agricultural populations.

The Stuart kings completely misunderstood England. England, as the English are fond of admitting

with modest pride, has never been understood by foreigners, and that is true even when the "foreigners" are Scots or Americans. England is a sadly misunderstood country. It requires indeed a certain degree of subtlety to understand that England was and is a monarchy which is not a monarchy, a democracy which is not a democracy, that she has a constitution which has never been constituted, laws which are not on the statute book, has had a Reformation which was not a reformation, and a Revolution which was not a revolution. The Stuart kings, when they were called to the throne of England, could not get it out of their misunderstanding heads that they were going to be kings of England. They derived their notions of monarchy from France, and were unaware that England was an oligarchy governed by an aristocratic ruling class. The immediate occasion of the English revolution was afforded by the Archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud, a typical Anglo-Catholic of the most modern type, more fanatically ritualistic than the Pope, as abundant in verbose theological foolery as a whole Oxford movement, as sadic in his spiritual convictions as a Spanish inquisitor, as fiercely reactionary as Dean Inge, and as maniacal in his love of tyranny as a Fascist. The pet ideal of this charming product of Oxford was to coerce not only all England into Church–of–Englandism armed with all the power of the State as its dependent temporal arm, but likewise Scotland and Ireland, and even, if possible, Dutchmen and Flemings. Pym's Parliament, supported by all the wool merchants and

weavers, which had been summoned by King Charles to furnish money for those schemes, sent Oxford Anglo-Catholic Laud to the block for high treason, generously sparing him having his testicles cut off—the customary English penalty on that charge—and likewise Strafford, another Fascist born before his time. The English founders of Liberalism were not given, like their oratorical successors, to beating about the bush. They dealt with "malignants" like true revolutionaries, and John Eliot uttered in Parliament a principle which, had its implications been fully apprehended, would have laid bare all the futilities and inconsistencies of liberal democracy, reformism, parliamentarianism, and all the fictions of bloodless revolution. "If we abstain from dealing despotically with such men," he said, "they will deal despotically with us and with others." Not by mealy-mouthed bloodless democracy that bestows upon "malignants" liberty to oppress can revolution be accomplished, but by depriving "malignants" of that liberty.

The English burgher revolution, which by an historical irony served, together with its fruits, as a model to the French, and all other burgher revolutions, followed the normal course of all revolutions unequipped with a clear understanding of social facts. After a military dictatorship necessitated by hopeless confusion and compromises, it fizzled out, and reaction was restored upon its ashes. But, at the same time, it left behind it the instruments of social change which it had set out to acquire, and after having been put out it burst again into

flame until the social changes were eventually secured which those instruments were intended to compass. Parliamentary government became firmly established nearly fifty years later. It took nearly another hundred and fifty years for bourgeois Liberalism to break the dominating rule of the English landed aristocracy and squirearchy.

Reaction, though it did not venture to bring back the Star Chamber and High Commissions, was as fierce in its passion as are all reactions after the ruling powers have suffered a severe scare. The Commonwealth, the long civil war and revolution, were regarded with the same horror and detestation as were later the French or the Russian revolution, and Oliver Cromwell's hated name was thenceforth recorded in history as that of "a bad man, with all the wickedness for which hell fire is prepared" (Clarendon). His body, together with those of Bradshaw and Ireton, was dug up and publicly exposed on the gallows at Tyburn. The corpses of Pym and Blake were cast out of Westminster Abbey and thrown into the common grave. Those passions subsist to this day, despite the eventual triumph, after some two centuries, of the objects and purposes of the English Revolution, and the consequent attempts to explain it away, blur its outlines, and excuse it. The burgher revolution is to English historians the most embarrassing chapter in history. For the whole theory of English history has been, in fact, made to serve the purpose of a political pamphlet in passionate support of constitutional methods of reform, a tract against revolution.

The word revolution appears indeed conspicuously in English writings of the eighteenth century; it appears in fact in the form of "our glorious Revolution." But it must not be imagined, as one might carelessly be prone to do, that the expression refers to the twenty years' armed struggle which established parliamentary government in England. Nothing of the kind. "Our glorious Revolution" refers to the pitiable absconding of James II, who had proposed to carry out reaction to the point of substituting royal absolutism for the rule of the landed aristocracy; it refers to the somewhat inglorious fetching over to England of Dutch William, escorted by a Dutch army and a Dutch fleet, so that in future the aristocratic rulers of England should have only foreign puppet kings unlikely to challenge their power. The "Revolution" was "glorious," not because it substantially conceded, by registration on the Statute book, the objects which the English burghers had fought a bloody civil war to achieve, but because it was "bloodless." The bloody strife which had won those objects was referred to as "the late regrettable disorders," the Commonwealth was a "period of anarchy." English "liberties" were due to "our glorious Revolution."

With a genius for feint and trickery worthy of more recent times, the rulers of England saw to it that the inevitable concessions to the burghers, wrung by the wholesome fear inspired by the recent "disorders" and "anarchy," should be in effect null and void. The House of Commons was packed with younger sons and obedient retainers, rotten

boroughs were set up for auction to suitable bidders, and Robert Walpole could boast that every representative in the House "had his price."

The "Revolution" which was not a revolution was also proclaimed "glorious" because it was regarded in the light of a permanent "Settlement." It was believed to have fixed and fastened down solidly and forever the whole social-political system and structure of England as a comfortable dwelling place fit for gentlemen. It was a conservative revolution. Up till that time there had more or less always been pending causes of unsettlement and uncertainty. There had been constant dynastic disputes; there had been constant attempts by the Crown to wrest power out of the hands of the proper rulers of England; there had been the pseudo-Reformation, there had been the great burgher revolt against the aristocratic rulers of England and their pseudo-reformed Church. Never had England been comfortably settled down under its paternal rulers and free from flux and uncertainties. In the "glorious Revolution" the rulers of England deliberately set themselves to "settle" everything finally and permanently. The Bill of Rights took pains to settle the question of royal succession forever. The Puritan burghers were given their House of Commons in which care was taken that they should not be represented. They were given, as requested, parliamentary government by the ruling aristocracy and squirearchy, with puppet kings (preferably not speaking English) subject to the power of their loyal subjects in a packed Parliament (the best gentlemen's club in London). The noncon-

formist sectarians were granted certain high-sounding "liberties" and tolerations under a tame established Church of England. The "Settlement" bore in fact a strong resemblance to numerous "settlements" subsequently effected of miners' strikes and the like, in which the strikers were nominally granted all their demands and skilfully persuaded that they had won, while careful provisions were made to secure that none of their demands should take effect or ever have a chance of doing so. Such was the "glorious Settlement" devised by the rulers of England who, like Macbeth's witches, "palter with us in a double sense; that keep the word of promise to our ear and break it to our hope."

England has no expressly formulated and written constitution. But what is known as the Declaration of Right, issued the year William and Mary ascended the throne, was accounted as standing in lieu of one and is regarded as representing that glorious English constititution "which nothing can better." Its principles have been repeatedly set forth, and never with more stately eloquence than by Edmund Burke in the course of his ravings against the establishment of a parliamentary constitution in France. The supreme purpose of those glorious principles is to defend and promote the "security of property." "Nothing is a due and adequate representation of a state," Burke concedes, "that does not represent its ability as well as its property. But as ability is a vigorous and active principle, and as property is sluggish, inert, and timid, it never can be safe from the invasion of ability unless it be out of all propor-

tion predominant in the representation. It must be represented too in great masses of accumulation, or it is not rightly protected. The characteristic essence of property, formed out of the combined principles of its acquisition and conservation, is to be unequal. The great masses therefore which excite envy and tempt rapacity must be put out of the possibility of danger. Then they form a natural rampart about the lesser properties in all their gradations. The same quantity of property which is by the natural course of things divided among many has not the same operation. Its defensive power is weakened as it is diffused. . . . The power of perpetuating our property in our families is one of the most valuable and interesting circumstances belonging to it, and that which tends most to the perpetuation of society itself. It makes our weakness subservient to our virtue; it grafts benevolence even upon avarice. The possessors of family wealth and of the distinction which attends hereditary possession are the natural securities for its transmission. With us the House of Peers is formed upon this principle. It is wholly composed of hereditary property. . . . The House of Commons too, though not necessarily, yet in fact, is always so composed in the far greater part. . . . It is said that twenty-four millions ought to prevail over two hundred thousand. True; if the constitution of a kingdom be a problem in arithmetic. This sort of discourse does well enough with the lamp-post for its second: to men who may reason calmly it is ridiculous."

Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France,*

be it noted, was written in 1789. His ravings against the eighteenth-century revolution which, but for the literary quality of his vituperations and the stately legal language in which they are attired, resemble in contents the discourses of Dr. Goebbels, were not directed against the "terror," the "September massacres," or any of the "excesses" of the revolution, which had not yet taken place, but against the as yet perfectly constitutional establishment of parliamentary government. His indignation was not aroused by any "regicide," or even by the deposition of the king, but by the proposal to limit the powers of the monarchy in faithful imitation of the supposed English pattern. His diatribes against that outrage were eagerly snatched up in the street in thousands of copies by an avid English public, so perfectly did they give voice to English opinion, and the book is, to this day, an indispensable classic of English education in school and university, accounted second only in educational importance to Shakespeare. It plays in England a part similar to that of *Mein Kampf* in Nazi Germany, as a political Bible.

The French Revolution was, in fact, the third English revolution, the preface to the final stage of the English class struggle of bourgeois and landed aristocracy and squirearchy which had been initiated in 1637. It was, as Burke stated, "a great crisis, not of the affairs of France alone, but of all Europe, perhaps of more than Europe"; it was "the most astonishing thing that has hitherto happened in the world." The panic it set up among the English ruling classes

is not easily imagined at this distance of time. They, and the English in general, are understood to be marked by a composed and calm dignity, which is represented and imagined to be a part of the "English character." But that traditional attitude is merely the superficial external mask which commonly goes with secure power. The English are in reality one of the most emotional people in the world. When the security of their power and property is even remotely menaced, their jittering perturbation becomes hysterical. The English ruling classes were in hourly expectation of seeing the guillotine set up on Westminster Square. Their terror was scarcely abated two decades after they had brought a Bourbon King back to Paris. And, in fact, their panic, grossly exaggerated as it was, was so far justified, inasmuch as the last act in the burgher revolt which had begun some two centuries before and had been laid in abeyance by the trickery of the "glorious Revolution" of 1688—the English have a "genius for compromise," in vulgar parlance, cheating and trickery—was now about to take place. The victor of Waterloo crouched behind bulletproof shutters at Apsley House; the King, venturing out in his coach to attend the Lord Mayor's banquet, was greeted with stones and brickbats and had to turn back; distracted Peers of the Realm were seen perilously balancing themselves on the roofs of their Mayfair houses to escape the crowds which proposed suspending them from lampposts. Birmingham was working day and night forging arms; the plans of mobilization of a popular army were complete to the last detail, and so was the military plan

of attack for the capture of London. In the words of Carlyle, "every arrangement had been completed to cut the throats of all the gentlemen in Westminster." The War Office reported that it could not answer for the loyalty of the troops. And so the Reform Bill was passed by an almost empty House. The third English revolution managed by the narrowest margin to be "bloodless"—thanks to the wholesome terror inspired by the French Revolution.

The outcome was no more, and rather less, than that of any Liberal bourgeois revolution. All it accomplished was to break, formally at least, the immemorial exclusive monopoly of power and government of the English landed gentry. Rotten boroughs were abolished and parliamentary representation was acquired by the new industrial centers, Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield, etc. The acquisition of political power merely registered the acquisition of growing economic power. Although the franchise was considerably extended, one adult Englishman only out of six had a vote. The old rulers of England, despite their defeat, exercised, as always, their "genius for compromise" (read "trickery"). Every possible fraud was astutely slipped into the Bill to limit as much as possible the enfranchisement of the middle classes. So effectively was their genius exercised that twenty years after the passing of the Reform Bill the government of Lord John Russell was exclusively aristocratic, and, as Mr. Herbert Paul remarks (*History of Modern England*), "consisted of too few families. The Privy Seal was the Prime Minister's son-in-law. The Colonial Secretary and the Chancellor

of the Exchequer were brothers-in-law. The Home Secretary and the Colonial Secretary were cousins." The old dynasties of the Cecils, Russells, and Stanleys continued to reign over England till supplanted by the dynasty of the Chamberlains.

But the advent of Liberalism marked nevertheless a peculiarly English epoch and a far-reaching transformation in the very national character of England. So truly was the Liberalism which made its official entrance on the political scene in 1832 the direct offspring of the Puritanism of Revolution and Civil War (and *not* of the "glorious revolution" or Magna Charta, or "unbroken evolution," as the English historical myth labors to show) that it has remained indissolubly associated with "the Nonconformist conscience." It was in fact a variety of the Christian religion. All political issues were translated by it into moral terms, every scheme of thrift and acquisitive rascality had thenceforth to be couched in the language of righteousness. By their defeat, the old rulers of England in reality added a new invaluable weapon to the armory of their "genius for compromise," "bye-ways and crooked ways." Liberalism and the Nonconformist conscience taught them a new language.

They showed little gratitude. The depths of rancorous hatred with which Liberalism was detested by the traditional rulers of England appears to us incomprehensible. Gladstone, a thorough-going reactionary, might have been Cromwell, Robespierre, or Stalin, so purple was the ire which his very name aroused—and still arouses in true-blue Englishmen.

Highborn ladies walked out of a drawing room with their noses in the air on seeing a portrait of Gladstone on the wall. A brisk trade was carried on by an enterprising pottery manufacturer in chamber utensils internally adorned with pictures of the G.O.M. Why this fury of detestation? Gladstone was, according to Victorian standards, eloquent, and certainly swept away his popular audiences; he indulged in the obnoxious, and at that time unusual, habit of actually addressing his constituents. When carried away by flights of eloquence, and "intoxicated with the exuberance of his own verbosity," he so far forgot himself as to allude, in a purely rhetorical manner, of course, to the exploitation of the working classes by the wealthy rulers of England. It needed no more to cause the said wealthy rulers, and what they were in the habit of terming "public opinion," to see visions of the guillotine and red revolution.

Their fears were, of course, absurdly exaggerated. But such was their nature. Such is the nature of the representative rulers of an imperial race: they are at heart cowards. The consummation of the Liberal revolution was merely the official recognition of the fact that the English burghers had come to share with the traditional aristocratic rulers the domination of England, that they too had become members of an imperial race as a consequence of the Industrial Revolution.

Chapter Four

THE RISE TO POWER

LIKE every subsequent development of industrial capitalism, the economic revolution which bestowed upon England her dominating position was the outcome of numerous and diverse contributing circumstances. But the primary factor which gave occasion to it was the enormous influx of wealth into England which resulted from the looting of India. As Marx has pointed out, "as a prelude to capitalist accumulation there has been an accumulation which is not the outcome of the capitalist method of production, but the starting point thereof" (*Das Kapital,* 24.1.). Feudal landed property does not dispose of large amounts of fluid wealth seeking investment; the surplus profits of trading burghers found their way into further investments in trade. Without large amounts of floating and idle capital, no set of circumstances could have given rise to industrialization.

That indispensable condition was furnished by the huge influx of wealth which came to England in the hands of the adventurers from India. "Very soon after Plassey," says Mr. Brooks Adams (*The Law of Civilization and Decay*), "the Bengal plunder began to arrive in London, and the effect appears to have been instantaneous, for all authorities agree that the industrial revolution, the event which has divided

the nineteenth century from all antecedent time, began with the year 1760." The century of Spanish world domination was the result of the plunder of Mexico and Peru. The century of British supremacy was similarly the result of the plunder of India.

England had been, until the stream of gold from India began to pour in, a relatively poor country. Though she was rich in natural resources, they lay fallow through lack of skill to use them. English rulers were perpetually pinched for money. Queen Elizabeth had an income from public revenues which most society women of the present day would regard as black destitution. Her reluctance to go to war, and English abstention from warlike enterprises generally, were to a large extent due to poverty. Parliaments were summoned by kings owing to desperate lack of cash. The Commonwealth, which organized the country's finances more efficiently than any previous government, and had a better opportunity to do so owing to the wholehearted support of the burghers, collapsed eventually through lack of money. It had to contract a fatal alliance with the Scot Presbyterians because it had insufficient means to carry on the struggle. The gains of the merchants were not large. They were dependent, to raise money for their trading ventures, on the Lombard bankers, who controlled the City of London.

The story of the English conquest of India, as currently diffused by popular and school histories, is a considerably garbled misrepresentation. The idea of expanding the trading settlements on the Madras coast into an Indian empire was first conceived by

the local French commander. The French tried to oust the English from the coast; they were the aggressors. Unsupported as they were by their home government, and not holding to the same degree as the English the command of the sea, they were worsted. But the English conquest did not really begin from the Madras coast, but in Bengal. It was not a military struggle with the French so much as a set of intrigues with native rulers. The one battle of Plassey decided the fate of India. But the account of that "decisive battle of the world" currently presented is a fairy tale. It is introduced by the thrilling story of the "Black Hole of Calcutta," in which the English prisoners of Suraj-ad-dowla were confined and a number of them perished, thus imparting to Clive's attack at Plassey the noble moral character of a punitive expedition in retribution for revolting cruelty. It has been seriously doubted whether there ever was any "Black Hole of Calcutta." There is no record of the story in Bengal. The whole particularized legend derives from tales narrated considerably later in England by "survivors." All prisons in India were called "black holes," and they were used in the same manner by native rulers and by the English. The Subahdar put his English prisoners into a "black hole"; and doubtless many perished in the heat and insanitary conditions which were slightly worse than those of English prisons at the time. No doubt "survivors" did not give too favorable an account of their experience when they retailed their travelers' tales over their port wine in England. The battle of Plassey, similarly adorned into a heroic epic, with Clive

meditating in solitude his bold resolution and even being visited by a dream, after the best epic tradition, "was in reality won before it was fought" (R. Reynolds, *The White Sahibs in India*, p. 21). Everything had been settled beforehand at the Bengal Court by the judicious distribution of bribes, by *agents provocateurs*, who had arranged for a palace revolution and for the wholesale desertion of the Subahdar's troops. The main body, under a certain Mir Jafar, expensively bought by Clive's agents, took no part in the action and walked off the field. The great battle was, as James Mill himself is compelled to admit, a mock conflict and "nothing but a distant cannonade." The English casualties totalled twenty killed and wounded. The whole subsequent conquest of India was a matter of much intrigue and little fighting. Sir Charles Napier wrote concerning the annexation of Sind: "We have no right to seize Sind, yet we shall do so, and a very advantageous, useful, humane piece of rascality it will be." *The Oxford History of India* does not pursue the subject of the conquest in great detail. It contents itself with remarking: "The chiefs were fleeced and treated unfairly, but it is needless to pursue further the unpleasant subject."

The exploitation of the conquest was, however, the exact equivalent of the exploits of the Spanish conquistadores in Central America. "A gold-lust unequalled since the hysteria that took hold of the Spaniards of Cortes' and Pizarro's age filled the English mind" (E. Thompson and G. T. Garrett, *Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India*). Bengal in particular was "bled white." Contracts for textiles and

other native goods at nearly fifty per cent below the current rates were exacted from the Hindu master-weavers and dealers, and if they hesitated to sign them, they were stripped and flogged. The rice and tea production of whole districts was acquired at a nominal price, and resold to the people at exorbitant rates. Such transactions resulted in wholesale famine and in the death of ten million souls, or about a third of the population of Bengal. The collecting of exactions was farmed and the contracts traded from hand to hand. One example mentioned at the trial of Warren Hastings shows that a certain Sullivan, having been sent by the Company to collect the opium harvest from a given district, sold his contract at once to a man named Binn for £40,000; Binn resold it the same day for £60,000 to another man, and the eventual collector made a large profit. The management of the East India Company exhibited, according to Macaulay's admission, "all the trickery and corruption of a Grampound election." The directors, Sheridan said, combined "the meanness of pedlars with the profligacy of pirates." Besides mulcting the native potentates of every rupee they could extract from them after they had dispossessed them of their domains, the Company exacted blackmail from those they had not yet dispossessed, "for protection." "The Chief Justice," Sheridan said, "did not disdain to scud about India like an itinerant informer with a pedlar's pack of garbled evidence. . . . While the executive power of India was perverted to the most disgraceful inhumanities, the judicial authority also became its close and confidential associate." In com-

pleting the treaty of Chunar, Hastings received from the Nawab a present, or rather, a bribe of £100,000. The Hindus were treated, as they have been ever since, as "niggers." Nearly a hundred years later, Cobden said that, from the letters he received, "it seemed as if every subaltern had the power to hang or shoot as many natives as he pleased, and they spoke of the work of blood with as much levity as if they were hunting wild animals." There is no indication that the behavior of the Sahibs was more civilized in the eighteenth than in the nineteenth century. The classical method of dealing with any insubordination among the sepoys (native troops in British service) was from the first to blow them in batches from the guns.

In extenuation of the methods of barbarism by which the conquest of India was achieved and of the utter corruption of the administration, it has been adduced that those were the methods which the population of India was accustomed to endure from their rulers. The plea can be shown to be false. Macaulay himself is compelled to admit that the Hindus "had been accustomed to live under tyranny, but never under tyranny like this." No Tartar invasion ever produced such wholesale ruin as did the English conquest. Never before had whole provinces been depopulated by recurrent famines, which were due to plunder and not to any niggardliness of nature. Never at any time, even during the native wars, had whole districts been reduced to a wilderness by the destruction of native industries. When profitable railways began to be built in India, the ancient system of

waterways and irrigation was allowed to fall into ruin and the means of sustenance of whole agricultural populations destroyed. Before the British occupation all landed taxes were thirty per cent lower than they have ever been since. Under the Moguls taxation fell on the rich, and was largely drawn from death duties; under British rule, the burden has invariably fallen more heavily on the poor. There was corruption and bribery before, but never on the scale which made England the wealthiest country in the world.

Plunder was not only levied by the Company, but by every official, from the lowest to the highest. Young men of every class, often almost boys, flocked to India as clerks or enlisted as mercenaries. "Animated with all the avarice of age and all the impetuosity of youth, they roll in one after another," Burke said, "wave after wave, an endless flight of birds of prey and passage." "The servants of the Company," writes Macaulay, "obtained, not for their employers but for themselves, a monopoly of almost the whole internal trade. They forced the natives to buy dear and sell cheap. . . . Every servant of a British factor was armed with all the power of his master, and his master was armed with all the power of the Company. Enormous fortunes were thus rapidly accumulated at Calcutta, while thirty millions of human beings were reduced to the last extremity of wretchedness." Every clerk, corporal, or trooper, returned to England after a few years swollen with wealth which beggared the paltry revenues of the ancient landed aristocracy. The *nabobs,* as the new rich were called, bought estates and, if ambitious of

political power, "rotten boroughs," the price of which rose from about £2,000 to £5,000, and sat in Parliament. A new *de facto* ruling class arose in England. If the "system of oppression, corruption, breach of faith, peculation, and treachery" (Sheridan) which brought the new wealth to England called forth eloquent denunciations from men like Burke and Sheridan, and aroused the moral indignation of the poet Cowper, and later of Wordsworth; if Hastings was brought to trial and Clive's rascalities were made the subject of a parliamentary enquiry, the revelations of which led him to blow out his brains, it was because the old privileged ruling classes of England found themselves to a large extent supplanted by a new power, and the Lancashire textile industries were at first threatened with ruin by the flood of cotton goods from India. The rapacity, brutality, and tyranny of British rule in India was not much less in the late nineteenth century than it had been in the days of Clive and Hastings; the atrocities perpetrated by it in 1930-1932 are probably greater. But those later sequels of the conquest have been sedulously censored, hushed up, met with flat official denials, with the bold lying of a Sir Samuel Hoare in Parliament, and they have been fulsomely tricked out as edifying moral and patriotic fables. When the system of imperialist exploitation had long become firmly established, the criminal rascalities of a Cecil Rhodes no longer held any danger of his being publicly impeached as were at first the conquistadores of India. The latter suffered exposure because the interests of the old ruling classes were threatened.

The looted gold was to be the foundation of a period of English world supremacy, as the gold of Mexico and Peru had been that of a century of Spanish supremacy. But there were important differences between the two cases. The Spanish West Indies had been seized in the name of the Spanish Catholic Kings; the East Indies were seized by a private company of adventurers. The West Indies bullion flowed directly into the coffers of the Catholic rulers, and found its way thence for the most part into those of the Church. The rest of it was squandered in continental wars and in glory and splendor. It was spent, and as soon as it was spent, so were the glory and splendor. The East Indies gold was invested.

Joint-stock enterprises, to which English merchants had long been used, had come into particular public notice, and despite the crash and scandal of the South Sea Bubble, innumerable imitation concerns drew the general passion for gambling and speculation by the offer of attractive interest on investments. The East India Company itself was a joint-stock company. The *nabobs,* even after buying estates and "rotten boroughs," had idle surplus money. The Indian loot became capital, and found its way into investments in shares of the developing home industrial enterprises. The cotton mills of Lancashire, which had at first been threatened with ruin by the imports of cheap Indian cotton goods, planned their revenge by exporting their own cotton goods to India, to be forced upon the Hindu population at exorbitant profits, Lancashire and the Company gradu-

ally learning to draw double profits from judicious co-operation.

There was nothing in England's earlier economic conditions to suggest the industrial supremacy on which her domination was to be founded. The relative economic well-being of English merchants had derived from trade, not from production. In every form of manufacturing production, the land of the Industrial Revolution had remained until quite late a distinctly backward country, compared to the old civilizations of the Continent. Manufactures and industries developed in Moorish Spain, which long supplied the world with steel weapons, leather goods, textiles, and paper. Italy, taking over many eastern industries, was for a long time the supply shop of Europe, and her enriched manufacturers and merchants became its bankers, the "Lombards" carrying their activities as far as the City of London. France later developed her own monopolies in textiles; and in the eighteenth century had a richer foreign trade than England. Germany was the acknowledged home of mining. England remained meanwhile dependent upon other countries for finished products. English wool had to be sent to Ypres to be treated and dyed. Tin was extracted and marketed in England in the seventeenth century in much the same manner as when it had been sought there in the time of the ancient Phoenicians. Mining processes were primitive. Foreign workmen had to be imported to carry out any important building enterprise and even to instruct and assist the English in shipbuilding.

Political events on the Continent, and in particular the religious wars and persecutions, led to repeated and large influxes of foreign artisans and manufacturers fleeing from the scourge of Catholic persecutions—Jews from Spain and Portugal, German miners driven from their country by the religious wars, Flemings escaping from the terrorism of the Duke of Alva, and many thousands of French Huguenots fleeing from St. Bartholomew's and later from the persecutions consequent upon the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. The latter idiotic effect of the pious Catholic influences which prevailed at the court of Versailles under the "reign" of Madame de Maintenon constituted a turning point in the economic history of Europe. French manufacturing production, especially in textiles, had been beyond comparison ahead of that of England. After the revocation, the balance was reversed by the bodily transfer of that advantage from one country to the other. The two Protestant countries, Holland and England, afforded natural havens to the refugees. Like Puritanism at the time of the English Civil War, and from the same causes, Protestantism was associated on the Continent with the manufacturing classes. Religious sentiment caused the refugees to be received by the industrial population of England with a sympathy which extinguished feelings of acrimony towards "foreigners" or of jealousy towards competitors. The refugees brought with them their industries. Mills, looms, glassblowing factories, potteries began to spring up everywhere.

The industrial transformation of England began

to manifest itself most conspicuously in the textile industries, and more especially in the working of American cotton in Lancashire. The competition from Indian imports, which for a time threatened the industry, acted later as a stimulus to it through the investment of the "nabobs'" capital and by encouraging the application of mechanical devices and improvements which, by reducing the cost of labor, enabled the English products to compete with the Indian imports.

The mechanical power in the new factories was derived from water. But this was subsequently displaced by more efficient sources of power. The exploitation of coal, which had become neglected in proportion as the deeper levels of the seams rendered it more difficult, began to be improved. The need for coal grew as the supply of wood and charcoal became exhausted. The ways and means of keeping warm during winter presented a real problem in districts at a distance from the coal fields. Suffering from cold was considerable in seventeenth-century England. The large forests had been more rapidly exhausted than in Continental countries of wider expanse. There were considerable wooded areas—England was, as now, a country of trees, picturesque at the expense of utility—but they were the sacred preserves and parks of the English aristocracy, inviolable even though the people should die of cold. Greater even than the problems of the extraction of coal were those of transport and distribution. Road transport was out of the question. A system of canals was

elaborated which partially, yet inadequately, served to meet the difficulty.

The first important development of the improved supply of coal, was its use in place of charcoal in the production of steel. The harnessing of steam as a source of mechanical power first took place in England in relation to coal-mining, to facilitate the working of pumps. From that first beginning the application of mechanical motive power rapidly extended to the operating of bellows for blast furnaces, the supplying of power to mills, and eventually to coal transportation. A new power was born which was to revolutionize world economics.

A factor in the development of mechanical ingenuity was undoubtedly the interest in science which from the seventeenth century onward distinguished England and gave rise, under the Restoration, to the Royal Society. English science, which has produced Harvey, Newton, Boyle, Priestley, Faraday, Darwin, is the most substantial and unsullied glory of England's contribution to civilization. The development of scientific pursuits was impossible in Catholic countries. Where the Catholic Church was supreme, all science was simply abolished by the ukase of ecclesiastical authority. In Protestant countries, on the other hand, scientific interest and inquiry was in full accordance with the principle of private judgment. Scientific development, accordingly, while nonexistent in Spain or the Holy Roman Empire, flourished in Holland and in England, and, after the eighteenth-century deistic revolt against Christianity, in France. Of those three countries, England was the most favor-

ably situated. It was richer and more leisured. It moreover presently appeared that scientific research was susceptible of highly profitable practical applications, which appealed to acquisitive English burghers. In the age of "Progress" science became enthusiastically favored and exalted, while, by a curious paradox, it remained, like trade, excluded as an element of education and culture becoming the character of a gentleman.

While the conquest of India provided the foundation stone of English industrial capitalism, the subsequent expansion of the Empire was the consequence, rather than the cause, of economic control. It was an unremitting pursuit of markets and raw materials.

The acquisition of England's lion's share in the partition of Africa presents an even more sordid and disreputable century-long story than the conquest of India, and was from the beginning in keeping with the ignominious climax of the Boer War. In 1795, the Batavian Republic having been established in Holland, and the Stadtholder, the Prince of Orange, having escaped to England, a fleet of eight ships under the command of Sir George Elphinstone, and carrying troops commanded by Major General J. H. Craig, put in at False Bay. The Dutch colonists readily granted the strange visitors' request to revictual, and showed them every civility. The English commanders were dined and wined by the Governor and Council. On being politely questioned as to their intentions, they replied that they desired to offer the Dutch colonists, who were still ignorant of the course of events in Europe, protection against a pos-

sible attack from the French. The governor thanked them for their solicitude, but assured them that they were quite able to protect themselves. The English insisted with their offer of services, and protracted parleys took place, in the course of which the Dutch governor endeavored to draw invidious distinctions between "protection" and annexation. An American ship, the *Columbia,* which arrived meanwhile, bringing mails and newspapers, was seized by the English, and the papers and correspondence, which would have informed the colonists of the true situation at home, destroyed or mutilated. A fragment of newspaper, sufficient to reveal to the government of the colony the misrepresentations of the English, reached the Dutch authorities. They requested Admiral Elphinstone to leave. He replied by landing troops, seizing Cape Town, and hoisting, not as his instructions directed, the flag of the Prince of Orange, but the British flag. The Dutch colony was officially restored to Holland by the treaty of Amiens in 1802, but was seized once more in 1806, after the brief truce, and in 1814 was sold to England for £6,000,000 by the fugitive Prince of Orange who had, of course, not the slightest right to do so.

The rest is a story extending continuously over a hundred years of petty persecution, gross injustice, and bad faith whereby the Dutch were elbowed out and driven by exasperation to trek northward, escape from English oppression, and establish themselves anew in settlements of their own. They were pursued. The English armed the native tribes to attack them. Missionaries were particularly active in

inciting the natives against the refugees. A ceaseless campaign of slander was carried on in the English press about ill-treatment of natives by the Boers, which shocked the humanitarian feelings of righteous England as delightfully as later did stories of communism of women and the eating of children in Russia, and were almost as fanciful. Slavery among the Boers was purely domestic, and the scandals of the West Indian plantations were unknown among them. Finally the Boer republics were officially recognized, the frontiers delimited by a commission, and the English government solemnly bound itself not to supply arms to the natives.

The ink was scarcely dry on the treaty of Aliwal when the diamond fields were discovered in territory which England herself had recognized as part of the Orange Free State. The place was seized. Lord Kimberley, the governor of Cape Colony, gave his name to the settlement. The Dutch were expelled. Froude gives the following account of the events:

"They did not resist, but yielded in protest to superior force, and from that day no Boer in South Africa has been able to trust an English promise. The manner in which we advised or allowed our representative to act was insolent in its cynicism. A treaty but a few months old was staring us in the face. Our conduct would have been entirely intolerable if we had rested simply on superior force—if we had told the Boers simply that we must have the diamond fields and intended to take them. But we poisoned the word, and we justified our action by posing be-

fore the world as the protectors of the rights of native tribes."

The annexation was in fact explained by giving it out that the land on which the diamond fields lay belonged to a Griqua chief called Waterboer. "It was proved afterwards, in a law court held at Kimberley before Mr. Justice Stackenström, that the Griqua chief had never possessed any right on the territories at all." The whole story was simply a frame-up. "The annexation has been a swindle." But the representative of Her Britannic Majesty went further. "Tearing to pieces the shreds of the now useless treaties, he entered into relation with all the native chiefs on the borders of the republics, inviting them to become British subjects and promising them to protect them against the Dutch. Tens of thousands of guns and rifles were distributed in two or three years among the surrounding tribes as a direct menace to the Dutch, who had now a semicircle of armed men drawn round them from Kimberley to Zululand." The wagons bringing the rifles up to Kimberley boldly passed through Dutch territory. A Dutch magistrate once stopped a load of the illegal traffic. The Kimberley authorities had the effrontery to send to Bloemfontein to have the rifles returned together with compensation for their detention, giving the government of the Republic forty-eight hours to fulfill the brazen demand. "The President was ill at the time and unable to look after the business. His Council paid the money, but paid under protest, with an oldfashioned appeal to the God of righteousness, whom, strange to say, they believed to be a reality." Whether the fatal

blow which the outraged Dutch farmers were eventually able to deal to British prestige be regarded or not as an answer to that "oldfashioned appeal," poetic justice was certainly not lacking in the ultimate issue.

After the opening of the Suez canal, which England sought by every means to oppose and sabotage, and the acquisition of a large proportion of the shares by Disraeli, it appeared desirable to gain possession of Egypt. The Khedive was encouraged to squander the money which had been lent to him, and England stepped in "to protect the interests of the bondholders," and to "defend the authority of the Sublime Porte." A patriotic rising, which there is good reason to believe was fomented by English *agents provocateurs,* took place against the foreign penetration and tutelage. To "protect the Khedive," England bombarded the civil population of Alexandria, rushed an army to Cairo, and took possession of the country. Solemn official declarations were made that the occupation was merely temporary. Lord Hartington declared to Parliament, in 1882, that the British occupation would be over in six months. It was repeatedly declared that the British army of occupation would be withdrawn "within a few months." Ninety-two such solemn official declarations have been counted. In 1887, an Anglo-Turkish Convention was signed by Sir Drummond Wolff, though not ratified by Parliament, in which England undertook to withdraw all her troops within three years. The pledge was only partially redeemed forty years later, by setting up a puppet government, when, after the World

War, the general revolt of the Egyptian people made it appear likely that England would lose the country altogether.

The other portions of the British Dominions, Australia, Tasmania, New Zealand, being unclaimed lands peopled only by races of primitive culture, were annexed without opposition. The first two were for a long time exclusively used as penal settlements. The miserable natives, the last survivals of the dawn age of the human race, were disposed of in Tasmania by shutting them up in concentration camps, where the last of them soon perished. The Australian aborigines were shot down like rabbits at pleasure parties as a form of sport and were supplied with food poisoned with rough-on-rats.

In New Zealand the native race was one of the most superior among what are complacently termed savage races. After acquiring vast tracts of land from them in exchange for a few blankets and cakes of tobacco, the missionary settlers were called upon by the Maori chiefs to regularize the relation. When the British flag was officially hoisted in the Bay of Islands, a formal treaty was signed at Waitangi with all solemnity and religious appeals to God, providing for the transfer of any native land to be subsequently acquired in full legal form, with the agreement of all parties concerned (ownership being, among the natives, tribal) and adequate compensation. No sooner was the treaty of Waitangi signed than it was currently broken and disregarded. The Maori formally protested; they were scoffed at and ignored. They declared war. The terrified settlers howled to the

home authorities for help; British regiments were sent out. The war lasted ten years, and so effectively did the Maori more than hold their own against regular British troops, that eventually a settlement was reached by negotiation, and the Maori had to be accorded more favorable terms than any other colored race has obtained in a British colony.

It is not here intended to suggest that the manner in which British imperial expansion has taken place has been more fulsome, brutal, and unscrupulous than that in which the imperialistic enterprises of other nations have been carried out—although the cynicism and dishonesty of British imperialism have been exercised on a more extensive scale and have set an example of unscrupulousness which has never been surpassed, if indeed it has been equaled. But all colonial imperialism is vile. The Spaniards, the Dutch, the French cannot afford to throw stones at England in this respect. The Japanese and Signor Mussolini are fully justified in appealing to the example set by England in excuse of their lawless and brutal aggressions. But the *tu quoque* argument is, in any case, the worst possible argument. What it is here intended to point out is not the unsurpassed shamelessness of the methods that have gone to the building up of the British Empire, but the fact that when that long and continuous series of dishonorable trickery, breach of faith, and cynical unscrupulousness is put forward as an object of pride and an example of honor, when England is represented in the exercise of her imperial rule as the dispenser of justice and humanity, the mendacity of such declarations sur-

passes the fulsomeness of the crimes and trickery they cover. Other imperialist enterprises have been as brutal and as unscrupulous as England's. But what no other nation has quite succeeded in imitating is the unctuous moralistic language in which the rapacity and bad faith which have attended England's aggressions are currently clothed. They are declared to have been "a great task committed to us by Providence." Preaching on "Christ and the Empire," the Archdeacon of Manchester declared only the other day that "if one studied the British Empire one clearly seemed to see in it the hand of God and the forging of an instrument for the carrying out of His will. . . . We had never risen to the realization of what was God's purpose in bringing the Empire into existence."

Chapter Five

GENTLEMANLY ENGLAND

THE distinctive type of the English gentleman is of relatively recent date. It is, in fact, coeval in origin with English power itself. In Plantagenet, Tudor, or Stuart times that familiar type was, as already noted, as yet unevolved. In the Georgian age, the English gentleman had acquired many of those traits which are wont to be associated with his character. His ideal of life was to do himself well and to have no bothers. Material comfort and mental contentment, rather than splendor or adventure were his practical aims. He flattered himself upon his common sense. Stability and security were the broad social and political requirements indispensable above all others to the enjoyment of his limited ideals. Comfortable, squirearchical England, governed by gentlemen devoting themselves to protecting the interests of their property, was already beginning to resemble that Victorian England which was about to excite the admiration of a bourgeois world.

But there were nevertheless profound differences between the English gentleman of the eighteenth century and his Victorian progeny. The former's common sense went to the verge of cynicism. His realism was frank and outspoken. He usually called things by their names, and Dr. Johnson's dictionary, unlike

older ones, did not quite cover a gentleman's vocabulary. Was not the whole of this England, made fit for gentlemen liking to do themselves well, with its packed House of Commons and rotten boroughs, its Indian loot, its Colonial dependencies which served to rid the country of poachers interfering with gentlemen's pleasures, of horse thieves, and confounded Dissenters—was it not a huge piece of rascality? Why, to be sure it was. English gentlemen of the age of Walpole and Chesterfield would have been the last to pretend to deny it. What of it? The world was not a Utopia, a Cloud-Cuckoo-Land. You might say what you liked, England was the most comfortable place for gentlemen liking to do themselves well. The common people gave little trouble so long as one did not indulge them in education. English servants were the best in the world, the only truly servile servants, even should they be corrupted by Dean Swift's rascally counsels. A damned comfortable country for gentlemen! And what more would you want? English gentlemen were practical; they did not carry their heads in the clouds; they were not dreaming moralists and idealists like the confounded psalm-singing Dissenters.

The mind and character of an English gentleman manifested themselves in the eighteenth century by stark, sceptical cynicism. The familiar, bored, *nil admirari* attitude, the studied understatement of the well-bred Englishman, are largely a pose. But that affectation is founded upon deep roots which were more visible in the eighteenth than in the nineteenth century. The English gentleman's cynicism and scepti-

cism were not those of the Frenchman, which mostly served as an excuse for entertaining epigrams and as a substitute for wisdom. English cynicism was made of more desiccated stuff. The cultivated English gentleman believed in very little, had no high-flown enthusiasms, let alone abstract ideals. He did not go quite as far as Molière's Don Juan, who believed that two and two make four. Such a rash generalization might be disputed. As to the whole religion business, it did not trouble him overmuch except as a political badge. Swift and Sterne were parsons. The eighteenth-century English gentleman was the very antithesis of the bourgeois Puritan. One thing he did believe in: he believed in doing himself well. The purpose of government, of that glorious English constitution which nothing could better, was to protect his property, that is to say, to enable him to do himself well and to secure him against being bothered by people with ideas. He therefore did genuinely love this England so perfectly designed for gentlemen. It was a glorious country. And if anything could move him from his unsentimental cynicism it was "this blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England," which safeguarded the property of gentlemen and defended them from bother. For *that*, for his property, he would fight tooth and nail. In him were the roots of that ardent English patriotism, deeper than the vain and flashy sentiments which pass for such in "less happier lands."

The Reform Bill of 1832 brought about a complete and momentous change in the situation of English gentlemen, seemingly quite disproportionate in its ef-

fects to the provisions or immediate political consequences of that measure. The new industrial magnates of Manchester and Birmingham became eligible to membership of London's most exclusive gentlemen's club. In somewhat the same manner as the clerks, shop assistants, and rankers who, during the World War, joined the gentlemen's messes, had to be regarded as "temporary gentlemen," so the moneyed intruders had, in self-respect, to be recognized as gentlemen. The term lost its proper meaning, became a theme of metaphysical discussion, and half Victorian literature became devoted to defining and illustrating it. The genuine gentlemen, on the other hand, had to modify and mend their ways in many respects, like the Duke of Wellington who, in the presence of Queen Victoria, had to curb his soldierly and gentlemanly habit of swearing like a dragoon. A certain embarrassed reserve and shyness became a trait of repressed English gentlemen. Even though gentlemen managed to retain, on the whole, the whip hand in the government of the country, those confounded tradesmen had, there was no denying, become a power in the land. With a Parliament which no longer depended upon patronage, but on an electoral franchise which grew more and more widely extended, the middle classes, public opinion, and, worst of all, the Nonconformist conscience had to be taken into account.

The outcome of that political change was one of the most remarkable transmutations which has taken place in the accepted standards of the ruling classes, and consequently in what is termed the "national

character." The cynically realistic Georgian English gentleman became a Victorian gentleman. Restoration, Georgian, Regency England changed her face, and became Victorian England—the most complete transformation, in appearance, which a pre-eminently conservative country has ever undergone.

Victorianism, in its most conspicuous traits, has been set down to a variety of causes and personal influences, such as that of Queen Victoria or of that insufferable German prig, the Prince Consort. Or again, the remarkable and almost sudden transformation which took place in the beginning of the nineteenth century, a transformation which amounted to a refashioning of the English mind, has been vaguely accounted for by the "progress of public sentiment and opinion." It has been represented as an evolution of the English national "character." But no such "progress" or "evolution" ever takes place spontaneously and without adequate causes. While the Puritan classes in New England were enacting their "blue laws," and moral righteousness ran riot across the Atlantic, Georgian England was running riot in a distinctly different direction. Yet the same classes, imbued with the same virulent virtue existed in England, as a numerically superior force, as in America. But in England they did not as yet constitute an electorate; they had not yet "completed every arrangement for cutting the throats of the gentlemen in Westminster." Victorianism blossomed out almost suddenly at a time not so very far removed from the very un-Victorian epoch of the Regency. Up to the time of that sudden blossoming, the aristocratic classes of England

had been in the habit of scorning and deriding the "hypocrisy" of the Puritans in as free and vehement terms of contempt and ridicule as have ever been applied by benighted foreigners to "English hypocrisy." That hypocrisy is nowise a natural and native constituent of any supposed English character. It was introduced into the national mentality owing to purely social and political causes.

The whole conception of Victorianism, as the characteristic of a particular period now happily passed, is largely false and fictitious. The national mentality underwent a profound change when the immemorial absolute rulers of England found themselves obliged to share their power with the bourgeois classes. The change which then took place has not been confined to a particular epoch. It never came to an end. Superficial and minor changes are, of course, always taking place in the social aspects and outlooks of a nation. But the change which England underwent with the accession of the traditionally Puritan middle class to power has not at any time become obliterated. It operates at the present day. England is still in the "Victorian" age.

An aristocratic ruling class does not, in reality, modify to any profound degree its mode of living and its moral standards when called upon by circumstances to conform to the standards of another class. At the time of the spread of the Christian Church in barbaric Europe, the barbarian chieftains and princelings found it highly advantageous to enlist the proffered support of the powerful and efficient Church organization. They readily accepted Christianity.

They found no difficulty in professing conformity to its peculiar moral notions. But they did not, in fact, change their mode of life. From the time of their "conversion" in barbaric ages until the last days of feudal domination and after, the life and manners of aristocratic classes remained what, in terms of Christian ideas, is called dissolute and immoral. The "conversion" of the aristocratic rulers of England to Puritan bourgeois standards constitutes no exception to the rule. For a considerable time at least, gentlemanly and ladylike English society continued to conduct itself much as it had been wont to do before. English gentlemen by no means cut down their allowance of port wine in the Victorian era. English ladies did not, as a rule, drink in pubic. But Victorian ladies consumed an incredible amount of sherry and Marsala in their bedrooms, and commonly kept a secret supply of gin for emergencies. The disposition to lubricity which Saint Boniface had noted as characteristic of primitive Merrie England appears to have always been a mark of the English. The rulers of England remained, like true gentlemen disposed to do themselves well, above petty bourgeois "morality." Adultery thrived in normal profusion. England appears to have always led the civilized world in the number of illegitimate children, and she almost retains the record at the present day, being outclassed only by Germany. The organization of the more lively amenities of life was in Victorian England, like all things catering to the comfort and pleasure of gentlemen, more complete and elaborate than anywhere else. English lubricity effloresced in the nineteenth century

in particularly nasty and morbid forms of pruriency. Foreign visitors came to London to marvel at the ingenious eccentricities of English vice. The haunts of wealth and fashion abounded in "massage" establishments. In the 'nineties a lady advertised in the society papers her method of treating young ladies of refractory temper or suffering from "vapours" by the use of flagellation. Circulars were issued illustrating the apparatus and inviting gentlemen to satisfy themselves of the thoroughness of the method, which could be applied at the advertiser's residence for the modest sum of half-a-guinea, and for a guinea at home. The curious depravity of English gentlemen surprised other nations. For example, a noble scion of the peerage offered a considerable sum to the hangman in order that he should hitch up somewhat the skirts of a condemned woman while about to hang her.

But to the natural habits of their caste a strictly enforced provision became now attached to the public life of English gentlemen. A new law, more rigorous than any enacted by Parliament imposed upon them the absolute obligation of respectability. No breath of public scandal which could afford a handle to the vulgar bourgeois could be tolerated. The amenities of aristocratic life must not incur the humiliation of gratifying the curiosity of the prim bourgeois ladies who eagerly scanned the newspapers in the hope of discovering shocking revelations about the goings-on in "high life," and gloating over the more spicy details. The penalty for being found out was as mercilessly applied as when, in a herd of animals, an

ailing member is worried and gored to death. Women notorious for the popularity continued to frequent the highest, and even royal, circles without any invidious distinction being made against them, even though the delectable character of their private lives was known to everyone. But from the moment the open secret was so much as hinted at in public, the popular leader of fashion became a pariah. The charge of illicit sexual relations could, if made public, be used to ruin completely a man's public career, however brilliant. A whole organization of private detectives was at one time maintained by the Tories with the object of obtaining, if possible, evidence of sexual irregularities on the part of Mr. Gladstone. Noblemen of the old school would generally make no pretense, in confidential privacy, of denying the wide diffusion of classical tastes in a nation which prided itself on being the last refuge of Hellenism. But the charge could nevertheless be used to unleash the most hideous persecution against an unpopular person, as in the ferocious witch hunt against Oscar Wilde. Or again, cheating at cards was common enough, and usually overlooked with gentlemanly good nature. In the notorious case of Gordon Cumming, the habitual practice on the part of the accused had been commonly known for years among the habitués of the exalted circles he frequented. This made no difference to his popularity in the Marlborough House set. But publicity entailed the most ruthless and savage ostracism.

Hence the sweeping net of English libel laws and their ferocious application. Escape from the conse-

quences of a charge of libel is not possible, once it has been brought, for "the greater the truth, the greater the libel." To refer by name to any living person of social standing is dangerous. The protection of the ruling class's respectability is thus secured by a unique system which ingeniously and characteristically combines the severest censorship of the press with the complacent profession that there exists no censorship in England.

Faced with the inevitable necessity of sharing with the pious burghers the political power of which they had hitherto held the monopoly, the aristocratic rulers adopted a policy which they have employed again and again in similar situations—the same which they are today using in India. They formed an alliance with their rivals by giving in the new dual combination of power the greatest possible prominence to propertied interests, thus establishing in conjunction with them a bulwark against more dangerous elements and tendencies. The new ruling class, and the new gentlemanly character which represented it, were thus the result of a synthesis of the aristocratic and burgher tradition. Not only had the original gentlemen to adapt themselves to the conditions of the modified balance of social and political power by external conformity to the moralistic and religious character of the bourgeois mind, but the new rich of industrial capitalism, the Middle Class, were promoted to the rank of gèntlemen.

The latter transformation was chiefly effected by means of the institution of the public schools. The term applied to the most exclusive and expensive of

private schools is apt to perplex Americans. It should be recalled that the education of English gentlemen used formerly to be imparted privately, at home, by tutors—usually by the chaplain. The custom which grew in the eighteenth century of sending scions of the nobility to boarding schools was therefore a change from private to public education, and the institutions in which it was imparted became known as public schools. The great English public schools, such as Eton and Winchester, date as a matter of fact from the fifteenth century; Harrow and Rugby from the sixteenth. They were, like all English educational institutions, ecclesiastical foundations. From being originally intended for the manufacture of priests, they became adapted to the manufacture of gentlemen. The public schools, like the universities, continue, however, to be conducted by priests. The cultural instruction which they impart consists of the grammar of extinct languages and attendance at chapel. Together with those accomplishments is inculcated an ecclesiastical horror of science and of any form of theoretical and rational thought. English scholarship, ground smooth in the mill of Renaissance grammar, is at its best the most polished in the world. The misuse of a Greek quantity ranks, in the light of its rigorous standards, as a major crime sufficient to blast a man's career and to place him outside the pale of the republic of letters. On the other hand, the pronunciation of French, or any other modern—and for that matter, ancient—language with a plausible and recognizable accent is a scarcely less pardonable crime. Foreign idioms may be used

only in a completely Anglicized form, irrespective of the capacity of the user to employ them correctly.

That scholarly perfection, prized not so much for its own sake as for providing a certificate of an Eton and Oxford upbringing in the company of the scions of the nobility, is nowise inconsistent with a complete and phenomenal ignorance of the rudiments of science or any form of concrete knowledge. It is indeed accounted good form to parade that ignorance with some ostentation. Any incidental reference to an elementary scientific fact should, in the best tradition of English public-school and university education, be accompanied by a modest disclaimer of any knowledge on the subject. England, whose most eminent cultural contribution has been her share in scientific advance, is in its general culture the most unscientific of countries. A wide range of ignorance is indeed as much the mark of perfect English education as a priggish acquaintance with scholarly tradition. Cultivated Englishmen pride themselves upon their ignorance on any matter that may be recognized as outside the orbit of English tradition, and at the mention of, say, an American author or a geographical name, even that of a place within the British Empire, will take pleasure in the triumphant tone in which they will declare: "Never heard of it."

The scholastic aspects of English public-school education are, however, of trifling importance. The English public schools are institutions for the manufacture of gentlemen, a process which they carry out with admirable efficiency. The social revolution necessitated that tradesmen's sons should be con-

verted into gentlemen. And so successfully has the alchemical operation been effected that a gentleman has come to be definable as the product of the public schools. Were some cataclysm to abolish English public schools, the race of gentlemen would become extinct. The manufacturing institutions became carefully adapted, and brought into closer harmony with the spirit of their new burgher patrons, that is, they became more religious, as well as more snobbish and exclusive. As expressed by Dr. Arnold of Rugby, whose writings offer a matchless storehouse of solemn silliness, the aim was no longer to produce gentlemen merely, but Christian gentlemen.

The keystone of public-school education is the game of cricket, a rite quite unintelligible to mere foreigners, which consists in throwing balls at a stick and winning the battle of Waterloo. The sporting spirit and teamwork which the proceeding is reputed to foster is nought else than the *esprit de corps* of the old English ruling classes, whose whole collective action and interests had been centered on the preservation of their entrenched privileges against encroachment. In much the same manner as youthful playing at soldiers reproduces military discipline, the English public schools reproduce the cohesion and freemasonry of English gentlemen upon which the unique power of the rulers of England was founded. The playing fields of Eton are the grounds where the game of playing at being the ancient English ruling class is practiced by young gentlemen. They acquire the all-important knowledge of what is "done" and what is "not done." Th

unwritten code of things "done" and things "not done" extends, and indeed has reference chiefly, to mental activities. A synonym for things "not done" is the term "ideas." The vocable serves to refer politely to indelicate matters. The whole of public school education is expressly designed to exclude "ideas." The grammatical study of extinct languages ingeniously combines the acquisition of literacy with the complete elimination of any ideological content which letters might be prone to convey. So that literature is never taken too seriously in England. Reading is discouraged because books are occasionally liable to impart "ideas" to the youthful mind. The game of cricket, and the cult of sport generally, avowedly achieve the purpose of combating the germination of "ideas." The English popular press, especially during grave political crises, is careful to subordinate politics to divorce-court proceedings, breach of promise cases, street accidents, murders, and above all, sports, thus minimizing the danger of people entertaining "ideas." During an acute European crisis in which, for a day or two, peace hung in the balance, the London newspaper posters carried in huge letters the words ENGLAND IN DANGER. But the alarming announcement had reference to the score of the English cricket team playing in Australia. The much admired coolness of the English in a crisis, a characteristic not shared by other members of the Anglo-Saxon race across the Atlantic, is mainly the result of the solicitous care with which their cerebral organs are protected against the impact of "ideas."

In the public schools, "ideas" constitute, like "sneaking," a disloyal departure from the mental standardization which is a condition of the solidarity and *esprit de corps* on which the gentlemanly pattern is founded, and which is incompatible with cerebral disturbances that would open the way to the dangers of so-called natural inequality. That all-important *esprit de corps,* currently known as "the old school tie," is further promoted by the practices of monitorial tyranny, of "fagging" and "ragging," and of corporal assaults on the younger boys' backsides. "The segregation common to our public schools," which inculcates by such means the sharp distinction between a public schoolboy and a cad, is, as the headmaster of Felsted recently explained, "all that St. James meant when he used the words 'unspotted from the world.' "

But the unspotted "old school tie," like the feudal caste exclusiveness which it revives, is intended to set a pattern to a nation of gentlemen. Expanded and adapted to the wider scope of an aristocratic-burgher society and translated into the language and financial purposes of patriotism, the *esprit de corps* of the old aristocratic rulers and of public-school cricketers, finds expression in the basic formula: "England, right or wrong." The cynical immorality of the maxim, boldly setting, as it does, the interests of English property and the share market above the eternal verities of moral truth, is only apparent, for nothing in the education of Christian gentlemen can lead them to suspect any divergence between the interests of the City and the

moral purposes of the universe. In the scheme of English public-school education a transvaluation of all values is effected, more sweeping than that of Nietzsche. For all values, moral, esthetic, intellectual, are reduced to one single category: there are things which are done and which are English, and things which are not done, and which are un-English. The latter epithet covers, with that restrained understatement which is peculiarly English, all the terms of invective included in the minatory litanies of the Catholic Church in pronouncing anathema. The withering condemnation of the term "un-English" scorches with its frigid fire all things that are not of good repute on the playing fields of Eton, and all "ideas" pregnant with the pestilent germs of un-English thought.

By that simple scale of values all judgments, sentiments, emotions of the English mind are standardized. By it English opinion is formed without the aid of tedious and uncertain processes of thought. By it literary and artistic evaluations are unerringly determined. With a faultless flair, English criticism and "public taste" scents out, in whatever thicket of specious disguises they may lie concealed, the secret tracks of un-English sentiment and automatically claps on all such offensive literary expression the extinguisher of deadly and dignified silence.

One of the most remarkable and sudden transformations in literary history reflects the change which took place in the English mind about the time of the passing of the Reform Bill. The English literature that followed, in the nineteenth century and after,

might be that of another people and another race. It had previously been human; it suddenly became English. There was, up to the end of the eighteenth century, nothing to forebode the change of which modern English literature was the outcome. It is more than doubtful whether Fielding, Smollett, Sterne, Swift, Defoe could have found a publisher in the Victorian age. An English parson violently denounced only the other day Goldsmith's play, *She Stoops to Conquer,* as immoral, and declared that its performance ought not to be permitted. "English literature," Andrew Lang remarked, "had been at least as free spoken as any other from the time of Chaucer to the death of Smollett. Then, in twenty years at most, English literature became the most pudibund, the most respectful of the young person's blush, that the world has ever known." Nor has its respectful attitude been by any means confined to consideration for "the young person's blush." English literature, since it became a mirror of the transformation which England herself and the English mind underwent at the beginning of the last century, has respected every prejudice, priggery, patriotic and moralistic fiction, superstition, and pretence of the public-school age, and of synthetically conditioned and complacent English gentlemen. In an article on Balzac, probably the greatest novelist of all time, Professor George Saintsbury has the following exquisite remark: "He produces as a rule in his readers the sensation familiarly described as 'uncomfortable.' " Balzac, in fact, was a realist, not in the sense of any research, as in Zola, of the less

pleasant aspects of life—on the contrary, Balzac was a romantic and a humanity-loving realist—but in the sense that his characters are real men and women and the life which he so masterfully describes is real life. But one may safely venture to assert that in the whole of English nineteenth-century creative literature will not be found one work, one page, one sentence that may produce in the English reader the "uncomfortable" sensation of contact with reality. Like the synthetic world of respectability around him, the English gentleman required that his reading should be "comfortable," that it should not produce any unpleasant jar in the standardized scheme of values and outlooks so skilfully fashioned by all the educative influences which had molded him. The Victorian age of English literature, prolonged in the restrained public-schoolboy emotions of Galsworthy's novels, and in the somewhat infantile sentimentality of Mr. J. B. Priestley, poured a stream of gooey molasses of moral purpose iridescent with the purple asphyxia of synthetic sentiment and emotion. Yet in the didactic survey of English literature the eighteenth-century novel is discreetly disposed of with chronological catalogue notes, and the young idea is enthusiastically invited to pasture at leisure in the mush of Victorian glory, where Thackeray and Dickens are enthroned above the swamp of sticky three-volumed gentility. Neither Thackeray nor Dickens ever drew a human being or a situation that was not falsified by moral purpose or the social outlook of an artificial age. The nearest that Thackeray ever came to offering the presentment of a

woman was in Becky Sharp; and he is under the obligation of apologizing profusely for doing so and of assuring the reader of his moral reprehension. The "great Victorians" were the English contemporaries of Balzac, Stendhal, Flaubert. But they were insulated from them and from all "uncomfortable" realities by an ocean of moral pretense and entirely factitious sentiment far more protective than any silver streak.

What is termed "Victorianism" did not, however, come in with Queen Victoria, nor did it go out with her. The following pearl of criticism is not from a Victorian, but from Mr. Basil de Selincourt in a last year's *Observer*. "The novel," says Mr. de Selincourt, "is a special English responsibility, since, despite all distortions of hypocrisy, the English race has realized and established a pattern of sexual happiness which has not otherwise existed in the world." Mark the "responsibility"—but comment is silenced before the serene pearls which alone English oysters can exude. "Victorianism," despite all misrepresentations of it as a transient affliction now happily supplanted by bright young people, will not pass away except with England and her public schools. Another among the most distinguished contemporary English critics remarks thus concerning Mr. Somerset Maugham: "Like so many men whose education is part English and part Continental, he never succeeded in achieving that serenity of spirit and mind which is one of the blessings of an undefiled English public-school education."

Those blessings are what imparts to the English

mind the peculiar segregated, almost provincial, character commonly mistaken for the effect of geographical insularity. It is not, however, the outcome of aquatic, but of cultural and psychological, barriers. The simple reduction of all values, intellectual, moral, religious, to the common denominator of things English or un-English, that is to say, things conducive to the pecuniary and mental comfort of English gentlemen, and things prone to disturb their sense of pecuniary and mental stability, inevitably narrows down the scope of the English mind.

The public schools are not the sole, though they are the most important, means by which the English mind is clipped down to a uniform standard. The rounded system of mental mutilation includes other, indeed all, English institutions.

The gentlemen's agreement between the aristocracy and the pious moneyed bourgeois placed the Church of England upon an altered footing. The parson crept out of the servant's hall to which Georgian realism had relegated him and took supreme charge, not of the public schools alone, but of the national mind, in a manner which the Inquisition of Catholic Spain never achieved. "The first half of the nineteenth century," states a historian, "was theological." But there is little apparent justification for the chronological qualification of the statement, and any difference in degree between the period mentioned and subsequent English times is at most relative. On picking up at haphazard a number of *The Times Literary Supplement*, eleven out of thirty-eight entries for reviews are found to

be theological, and among the rest theology reappears in the form of science, social science, travel, biography, art, and archeology. English Goddery is a phenomenon which stands alone in the modern world and has to be accepted without discussion, like the ears of donkeys. Nowhere is the necessity of religion so real as in England. Without religion it would not be possible to clothe the purposes and interests of the City of London in the language of moral edification, nor could English public schoolboys act exclusively from moral motives. Without religion English hypocrisy would not be possible.

The revival of the Church of England was necessary, not only as a bulwark against Liberal Nonconformity, but as part of the system by which, in industrial England, the feudal structure was preserved. That preservation rendered an ecclesiastical and episcopal establishment indispensable. It likewise required the sanctification of monarchy. Without monarchy and an episcopal established Church —two aspects of the same institution—there could be no House of Lords, and the entire fabric of commercial and industrial England built upon feudal foundations would collapse. Liberal financial interests, however Nonconformist in their tradition, are no less deeply bound up than the die-hardest aristocracy with the preservation of that medieval ritualism, which imparts to Bank of England notes a guarantee of security and stability at least equal to that derived from the gold reserve. Before the Reform Bill anything resembling the neurosis of English Basileolatry was even more completely un-

known than Victorian Goddery in England. Carlyle describes how he happened to come upon King William IV riding in a glass coach through almost empty streets to get himself crowned at Westminster, and how the ludicrous spectacle caused the philosopher to laugh till it hurt. The English populace thought little at the time of throwing rotten eggs at sacred Majesty. Indeed, the whole hysterical idolatry of royalty is a product of the democratic age. There is nothing paradoxical in the fact, for the chief function of monarchy is to serve as an invaluable bulwark against democracy.

Royalty, Church-of-Englandism, and the public schools are the interlocking parts of a system which fastens on the English mind a conditioning control more effective and more complete, because more subtle and insidious, than any crude regimentation of Fascism. That mental conditioning renders the overt establishment of Fascism in England superfluous and improbable. By its means the ruling interests of Property are invested with a religious character and moral value which it would be blasphemy to doubt, while religious and moral values are, on the other hand, reduced to terms of loyalty to the interests of Property. It is therefore not surprising that English patriotic sentiment differs wholly in quality from its cruder homologues among other nations. Their patriotism is lay and secular. English patriotic loyalty is a moral and religious sentiment which is proof against the heaviest increase in the income-tax. Failure to feel patriotically constitutes a turpitude which strikes at the founda-

tions of the moral nature of man. That any Englishman should deviate from the straight path of religious reverence towards the interests of the owners of English property is so inconceivable a moral depravity that even the most abandoned and intelligent pauses before burdening his conscience with such iniquity. That foreigners should occasionally fail to think of England with that deep reverence which the subject calls for is an inevitable consequence of the moral darkness in which they dwell. But the most abandoned Englishman, be he a Communist even, is held back by that still small voice which checks every man on the edge of the abyss of crime and saves him from analyzing too closely the objects and motives of English policy.

The Church of England is primarily "of England," and only by logical derivation of God. The distinction constitutes no difference, God being, *ex officio,* a member of the English government. Religion as a whole is but a form of loyalty to the interests of English property. Cecil Rhodes, who typified enterprising English patriotism, gave to the traditional policies of Chamberlain governments an alternative formulation. The great predatory imperialist was, we are told, "full of reverent admiration and devotion to our Saviour, whose divinity he said it was not necessary to prove—the life was enough—'a perfect example for all time of what you would call a great English gentleman.' " The view is confirmed by the Bishop of Portsmouth, who recently stated that "the first public-school man was

born in Nazareth, and his name was Jesus Christ; the second was his disciple, St. Paul."

Such grave declarations could emanate from English minds only. It would be extravagant to suggest that they represent the views of all Englishmen. They are cited in an English liberal publication for the entertainment and exhilaration of its readers. But they are, in substance, exactly matched in the editorial and other columns of the same publication.

What is peculiar to England is not the ferocity, or the unscrupulousness, or the mental limitations of its reactionaries. Raving reactionaries are to be found everywhere. But there are everywhere else minds capable of throwing off the conditioning effects of reaction, and of being completely disloyal to it. Not so in England. His Majesty's loyal Opposition is—loyal. And not official parliamentary opposition alone. There are rebels in England, in revolt against the fictions of the conditioning English fabric whereby loyalty to that fabric is secured. But their revolt stops short of ultimate logical conclusions, because to go one step farther would be un-English. The acute remark of the distinguished critic of Mr. Somerset Maugham, who detects that the novelist's mind is marred by not having been afforded wholly and solely "the blessings of an undefiled English public school education," is entirely correct. Whenever, in contemporary English thought, any evidence is forthcoming of actual contact with realities, of logical honesty undeflected by moralistic or merely patriotic sentiment, it will invariably be found that it emanates from some person whose Englishness is

not strictly "undefiled." The culprit is either an Irishman, or a Scotchman, or an Australian, or his Englishness has been contaminated by too protracted a residence abroad. Such slaves of their natural rational faculties cannot breathe in England.

They who dwell in England, even though they have not enjoyed the blessings of an undefiled English public school education, absorb those blessings unremittingly at every pore. Into the English soul those blessings enter with every human intercourse, with every printed word of the newspaper press, of all English literature posterior to the battle of Waterloo, with the polished voices of B. B. C. announcers and lecturers, with the censored lines of stage actors and the patriotic jocularities of variety-show humorists, with the homilies of parsons, with the pronouncements of politicians, tory or radical, in Mayfair or in Bloomsbury, in the City or in Kensington, in the language of Oxford or of Billingsgate, with every sound and every sight that impinge on the senses, till the conditioned mental faculties, cut off from all breath of reality and natural reason, are chocked in the mephitic atmosphere of the factitious gaseous concoction.

Hence it is that English loyalty and complacency are not only unique in their placid delirium, but in the unanimity with which they are manifested. So that any doubt cast on their being well founded must needs, Burke notwithstanding, indict the whole nation.

The hypocrisy which was at one time the butt of English gentlemen's scorn was adopted by them. Not

only was it necessary in order to protect gentlemen's private lives from the vulgar and prurient curiosity of peering tradesmen's wives, but, even more, that a moderating control might be exercised on the subversive tendencies of liberalism by assimilating, in their linguistic vesture at least, the objects of English policy to the high moral ideals of democracy. That hypocrisy thus extended far beyond the "pattern of sexual happiness which has not otherwise existed in the world," to all political outlooks and actions, and indeed to every operation of the English mind. Doubtless that simulation of virtue and dissimulation of rascality was, in some of the earlier stages of its development, conscious and deliberate, as are, according to the Lamarckian view, all organic characters in their incipience. But with the perfecting of the conditioning system, of the standardized manufacture of English gentlemen in the public schools, what at one time was necessity became nature, and English hypocrisy became so exorbitant, so certifiably monstrous, as to transcend the definition of the term.

The worst, the most abominable thing about the English is that they are nice. With the unaffected confidence of true comradeship they will bare to you their inmost mind by confiding without disguise their views about the weather and the latest score in the test match. The charm of that spiritual confidence is the mark of that freemasonry and teamwork spirit which in English public school education reproduces the traditions of solidarity of the ruling class.

But the function of that solidarity, so charmingly

and irresistibly manifested in the decency of English personal behavior is precisely to promote the effective operation of a collective behavior which repudiates any distinction of right or wrong in the pursuit of its purpose. Edmond de Goncourt remarked that the English, taken individually, are decent, while, collectively, they are scoundrels. The paradox is in truth the key to that perplexing dualism of the English character which baffles many an observer. A writer in a recent paper informed its readers that the first impression on personally meeting Mr. Neville Chamberlain is one of surprise at the discovery that he appears human. Incredible as the information may sound, there is no reason to doubt its accuracy. There is no incompatibility between the humanity of English gentlemen and the rascality of England. Were the English Jesuits, they would say that the end justifies the means. But the English are not Jesuits. To suggest, as has frequently been done, that the dualism, or duplicity, of the English mind arises from its being divided into conscience-tight compartments, is not accurate. There is no occasion for such hermetic partitions where all values are simplified by reduction to the one uniform standard of what, in strict accordance with the interests of the English ruling class, is by them accounted of good repute. Alien to the English mind as is mere abstract logic, the felicitous combination of high purpose and base cunning, of good intentions with unscrupulous will to evil, follows logically from all the principles of public-school education and its repercussions throughout the mental

world in which moves all English thought. Far from its being the effect of any dualism, it is, on the contrary, from its serene and harmonious uniformity that is derived the fundamental dishonesty of the English mind.

Chapter Six

SERVILE ENGLAND

"THE greatness and empire of England," Disraeli said, "are to be attributed to the ancient institutions of the land." Throughout the somewhat haphazard growth of those ancient institutions no account whatsoever was taken of the "villeins," as they were at first called, the "lower classes," or "common people," as they were later spoken of. When the eighteenth-century Whigs enlarged upon England's admirable "liberties," and her "glorious constitution," it did not even occur to them to give a thought to the conditions of the "lower orders." The French Anglophiles, who were inspired by the complacent enthusiasm of English liberals, scarcely noted any more clearly than did their English inspirers the fact that the "liberties" of the glorious English constitution were entirely confined in their scope to the well-to-do classes. Voltaire, one of the ardent admirers of those "liberties," did, however, note that a yokel who repeated the paeans of the "gentry" on the subject was next seen by him behind the bars of a prison where he had been lodged after being seized, as in an African slave raid, by the press gang, to serve in His Majesty's Navy. In old agricultural England the general condition of the field laborers under the paternal despotism of the resi-

dent squirearch, while the slightest breach of the latter's privileges was ruthlessly punished by hanging or by selling the culprit for five shillings to overseas planters, did on the whole compare favorably with that of the Continental peasantries, albeit the contrast set forth by Arthur Young rested upon a considerable amount of misunderstanding.

Conditions became entirely changed with the development of industrialism, when the simple yokels were driven off the land into the pens of the factories. As early as 1795, James Fox was able to declare in the House of Commons that "we are reduced to such a point of misery that not one man in ten is able to earn sufficient bread for himself and family." It may be stated without fear of exaggeration that never in any part or period of the world has there existed such a mass of utter degradation and inconceivable misery as England had to show during the first sixty or seventy years of industrialization. Bondslavery in the ancient world, the penal galleys of old or more recent times had never afforded such a spectacle of wholesale horror. Bondslaves were valuable property and their lives were protected; there were no women or children in the galleys. The factories and mines of England, at the time when she was rising to undreamed-of heights of economic wealth and power, were worked with the cheapest labor obtainable. Child and female labor was used by preference wherever possible. Families were bred with the express intention of increasing by a few pence the miserable pittance constituting family wages. Almost as soon as they could

totter, children were enslaved to the machines by the side of which they lay down exhausted after working sixteen or eighteen hours or more. The working herds were regarded as living machines existing solely for the generating of physical labor at the lowest cost. They were worked to death. The supply was unlimited. Animals, possessing a market value, were treated with a greater degree of consideration.

It is a notable fact that the living hell of those conditions scarcely excited any comment or attracted attention in moral and religious England. The "humanitarians," the "philanthropists," appeared to be totally unconscious of the monstrous atrocities which filled the land. Wilberforce and Clarkson who, fired with religious zeal, devoted their lives to the cause of emancipating the Negro slaves in West Indian plantations, were wholly uninterested in the thousandfold greater horrors of the slavery at their own doors. They were quite unmoved by it, and regarded the condition of the working classes as perfectly natural and normal. Owen, Cobden, and Bright lived in a theoretical dreamland and were concerned with the production of more wealth. They viewed an unspeakable hell, such as had never before been seen on the earth, and remained absolutely unconcerned, while they delivered in noble language lofty sentiments about "freedom" and social organization. Owen was concerned with "co-operation" for the more effective productiveness of labor. Cobden and Bright appealed for a wider franchise which should elect to Parliament "liberals"

and "radicals" to bring about legislation favoring trade and a greater production of wealth. At most, "machinery" was deplored as the cause of misery and the decay of agriculture.

The brutalized workers were scarcely better able than the liberal discoursers to understand their position. They broke at times into blind revolt, but only when maddened by hunger and despair. Repression was ruthless. Any form of combination among the workers for the purpose of bargaining over wages was set down as a form of criminal "conspiracy" and "sedition." The Combination Acts of 1799 and 1800 were designed to extend to the utmost the powers of repression. The mere suggestion of combined action or conversation between workers as to their conditions was treated as a seditious act. In 1834, for example, seven laborers found guilty of the crime of conspiring by agreeing not to accept a lesser wage than six shillings a week were condemned to be deported to Botany Bay. "Order" was maintained among the workers by military force; barracks were constructed in the industrial centers to keep permanent garrisons on the spot. The new system of Yeomanry or Volunteers, professedly established by Pitt in view of a danger of invasion, was in reality organized with the object of overawing the workers and coping with any revolt on their part. It was in fact an early form of Fascist assault troops. The ruling classes armed themselves against the workers.

The conditions of industrial slavery in England set the pattern of all subsequent industrial slavery

in the capitalist age. They continued in all their primal horror until the middle of the nineteenth century. Improvement began to take place when expanding industrial enterprise passed from a stage of individual ownership to one marked by the greater prevalence of joint-stock companies. Curiously enough the conditions of employment became more humane as the unseen employer became more impersonal. In the earlier stages of industrialism, enterprises had mainly been conducted by private owners or firms, who were in perpetual fear for their engaged capital and were often at their wits' ends to raise ready money. With the development of banks and the spread of the habit of investment in industrial shares, together with the enormous growth of returns, anxiety to keep down wages to the barest minimum and to extract the last ounce of labor out of workers became less acute. The condition of the workers thus improved through no effect either of benevolent legislation intended to that end or of any action on their own part. It thus came about that, in the second half of the nineteenth century, the period of England's full-blown industrial hegemony, it could be claimed that the standard of living of English workers was better than in most Continental countries.

Repressive legislation gradually relaxed. It was of no small importance to industrial interests, in their struggle against the privileges of the old landowning rulers of the country, to obtain the enormous electoral vote represented by the working masses. The liberal courting of that source of political power

dates from as early as the time of the first Reform Bill. Like the French liberal bourgeoisie at the time of the revolution, the English bourgeois industrialists enlisted the co-operation of the workers by the use of misleading vocables such as "the people" and "liberty." Had the fighting for which every preparation had been made in 1832 become necessary, it would have been, in England as in France, the "people" who would have done the actual fighting for bourgeois "liberties." The English industrial liberals went, however, somewhat farther than the French bourgeois in obtaining the assistance of the "people." They made specific promises to them, such as manhood suffrage and the abolition of the means tests. As soon as the political power they desired was obtained through the passing of the Reform Bill, they coldly turned on the "people," advocated repressive measures in the interests of "law and order," and completely set aside their promises.

It was largely as a result of the general rage and indignation caused by that first barefaced breach of faith that the earliest attempts at organized self-defense arose among the English workers. The tentative beginnings of trade-unions date from that time. The Chartist movement aimed in its demands at nothing more than had been formally promised by the bourgeois liberals on their first accession to political power. Those beginnings of servile revolt in England were for the most part utterly blind, uncomprehending, and lacking in organization. They were put down by ferocious repression.

English trade-unionism was naturally the oldest

organized labor movement in point of date, England being the oldest industrialized country. That it is the senior labor movement is, however, a very different thing from its being, as English radicals are prone to suggest and assume, the leading one. It did not, in point of fact, develop, with varying fortunes, until the period of greatest English prosperity, in the second half of the last century, and did not attain to full organization or real importance until the last decade, with the formation of a parliamentary labor party. The English labor movement is, of all workers' organizations, that which has throughout its existence been most closely linked with parliamentary politics. The aims of English trade-unions, which consisted, during the greater part of the movement's history, of small bodies of single trades having little or no relation with others, and no inkling of co-operation with them, were specific concessions having reference to local conditions. The far-off dream and ideal of English trade-unionism was the eventual coming to power of a Labor government. That consummation was regarded by the English trade-unionist workingman as the realization of Utopia in this world, the final goal of all conceivable aspirations. The approach to that Utopian dream was gradually effected by close alliance with bourgeois liberalism, whose own political interests came to be largely dependent upon the workers' vote—hence the coming into existence of a parliamentary Labor party automatically brought about the disappearance of the parliamentary Liberal party.

The Lib.-Lab. combination dates from the earliest

phases of the English Labor movement. The latter had thus from the first a marked character of collusion with those very interests—of the industrial capitalist classes—against which the trade-union organization was intended to defend the workers. In that political atmosphere a class of "labor leaders" arose who were to a far greater extent politicians than labor leaders. Capitalist owners found it an enormous advantage to deal, in any conflict and negotiation, with such professional labor politicians, having personal interests and ambitions, than with the workers themselves. They thus found it very much to their interest to favor trade-unionism, which supplied an admirable means of managing the working masses. The ruling interests were the first to impress constantly upon the workers that their first duty lay in loyalty to their unions and to their "leaders." The English Labor movement became in fact one of the most effective instruments against anything savoring of the nature of revolution. The efficiency of that antirevolutionary instrument became so perfected through the gentlemanly solicitude shown by every reactionary for the economic comfort, social advancement, and entertainment of "labor leaders" and the tactful fostering of their influence in any delicate situation that the English Labor movement is now more practically efficient as an instrument of undefiled reaction than anything devised by the crude methods of the Nazis.

The great English Labor movement, the dean and leader, as it still imagines itself to be, of workers' movements, was at various times exposed to becom-

ing infected by lesser working-class movements on the Continent. But the danger was never real. The perfection with which the conditioned English mind, be it that of a worker or an intellectual, is protected from the un-English mental stuff known as "ideas" secured its immunity. "I say with confidence," Disraeli could justly declare in the House of Commons, "that the great body of the working class of England utterly repudiate such sentiments. They have no sympathy with them. They are English to the core. They repudiate cosmopolitan principles, they adhere to national principles."

Nevertheless the English workers did, in the first decade of the present century, become infected with foreign ideas imported from less happy lands where the admirable English trade-unions organization had assumed the degenerate form of combinations actually intended to defend the workers' lives and livelihood. The heyday of English monopolies had passed, and English capitalist enterprises were compelled to have recourse to ever more strenuous exploitation and wage cuts in order to safeguard dividends. Strikes resulting from the growing misery of the men were becoming frequent. In those conditions, syndicalist ideas from France, and the doctrines of the I.W.W., disseminated by Tom Mann, defiled the purity of the workers' national principles. The quite un-English notion appeared to dawn for the first time in their minds that the vital interests of the working classes and those of the ruling classes were not identical. The suggestion was made that their petty trade-unions were utterly futile and out-of-

date, and that only combined action on the part of an organization including all workers could hold out any hopes of effective resistance to exploitation.

There is no telling to what serious trouble such un-English ideas might have led had their germination not been fortunately cut short by the outbreak of the war. The supposed menace of Social Democracy in Germany had been an important factor in hastening that outbreak. In like manner the momentous decision of English rulers to participate in the conflict was made easier by the opportunity it afforded to create a diversion from the dangerous spread of elementary intelligence among the workers. The further effects of their incipient education were conveniently postponed to the postwar age.

The peculiar nature and character of "revolutionary" England, as represented by the English Labor movement, may best be gauged by a consideration of the most daring deed of that working-class movement—the General Strike of 1926, the nearest approach to action taken by the English people since the days of the Civil War. One is left in doubt whether to regard it seriously or as a joke, whether to weep or to laugh. By both the ruling classes and the workers, but more particularly by the former, the performance was regarded with comic seriousness. In the eyes of Mr. Winston Churchill, Baldwin, Joynson-Hicks, Neville Chamberlain, and Company, England stood for nine days on the brink of red revolution—or at least so they found it expedient to declare. As a matter of fact, the actual decision to stage the mock revolution was not taken by the

trade-unions, but by Mr. Baldwin and his government. To the dismay of the Trades Union Council, the unions had voted to support the coal miners, who were driven desperate by a long-protracted course of sham negotiations, trickery, and bad faith, and whose refusal to accept further wage cuts had been met on the part of the owners by a lockout. But it was understood that the whole matter was in course of being adjusted by more negotiations, conferences, and trickeries between the T.U.C. and the government, and there appeared to be every hope that the miners' inadequate supply of bread was about to be made up by a fresh supply of promises. The Miners' Industrial Committee secretly offered to Baldwin, who openly acted for the owners, extreme concessions, including the acceptance of wage cuts which had not been accepted by the miners. The T.U.C. helped to their utmost power the perpetration of the betrayal of the men, and after abject conferences with the government, retired to their quarters to await the answer, beguiling the tedium of the vigil by singing "Lead, kindly light"!

But Baldwin and his honest gang of gentlemen decided that it would be more satisfactory to settle the whole matter once and for all with machine guns, if need be, instead of by constitutional methods. They believed in direct action. A pretext was found in the refusal of the printers employed by the *Daily Mail* to set up a leading article which, it appears, surpassed even the sheet's own record of virulence, reactionary rage, and incitement to violence. The printers' action was clearly an act of sedition. When

the cringing Labor "leaders" again timidly knocked at No. 10, Downing Street, the door was banged in their faces.

The General Strike, already voted by the unions, automatically began. Mr. Winston Churchill, who prides himself upon the felicity of his literary style, showed that he could outdo the *Daily Mail* in scurrilous mordacity, and issued a *British Gazette* illustrated with cartoons from *Punch,* picturing a hard-faced John Bull intimating with stern and dignified righteousness to the workers of England that he would stand no nonsense. Regiments of the Guards in full battle kit, and accompanied by long lines of sinister armored cars marched through the City, the heart of patriotic England, to the wild enthusiasm of cheering stockbrokers.

The workers meanwhile also turned out and organized—football and cricket matches. They cheered the police for abstaining, for the instant, from knocking them on the head. The manifestation, both among the workers and the general public, of the admirable "good humor" characteristic of the English people elicited general comment. It would not be hard to find a less euphemistic expression to describe the attitude. British Labor showed that it could, in the words of Mr. G. D. H. Cole, "run a revolution in the spirit of a friendly game of cribbage."

Despite that inane "good humor," the general stoppage was thorough and complete. Indeed, the Labor "leaders" of the executive Trades Union Council, terrified lest the General Strike should be

successful, were amazed and distracted at its disciplined extent. They at once set to work to find some means of calling it off. "Is the strike collapsing?" one of them was asked by a reporter. "No." "Is there any indication that it is likely to collapse?" "No." "Then, why do you wish to call it off?" "Because it is going too far." The *Daily Herald*, the organ of the T.U.C., encouraged the workers thus: "Trust your Leaders! Never was this more necessary than now. It is indispensable to success. Heed none who speak ill of those in command." Those in command began by writing a letter of humble apology to Mr. Baldwin for the action of the *Daily Mail* printers, repudiating it. They published in their special strike newspaper, the *British Worker*, an emphatic denial that any "official or unofficial overtures have been made to the Government by any individual or groups of individuals, either with or without the sanction of the General Council." They lied. MacDonald inadvertently stated at the same time to an American journalist that "he was keeping in continual touch with the Government, and was hourly in conference regarding the settlement of the strike." Sir Herbert Samuel daily joined the "leaders" in friendly conference, assisting them with his advice. The Trades Union Council were, to their regret, unempowered to call off the strike without first conferring with the representatives of the Miners' Federation. The latter were as yet insufficiently versed in the methods of English politics After coldly questioning the embarrassed "leaders," the miners reaffirmed in a written statement their

men's determination to carry on the strife. Again the "leaders" took occasion to lie. They published the statement in their strike paper, omitting the sentence in which the resoluton of the miners was reaffirmed. They were resolved to call off the General Strike at any cost. In their parleys with Sir Herbert Samuel, the representative of the Government, they sought to obtain some crumb of assurance or guarantee that might serve at least to save their faces before the workers. They were told that the Government would accept nothing but unconditional surrender. Knowing this, they betook themselves to Downing Street, the general stoppage being now more complete than ever and the workers' "morale" and confidence being greater than on the first days of the strike. Before admitting the "leaders," Baldwin left them standing for half an hour on the door mat, and sent a subordinate to ascertain whether their business was unconditional surrender. This being admitted, the "leaders" were introduced before a full meeting of the cabinet of all the reactionary talents. They endeavored to obtain at least some sort of verbal assurance that there would be no victimization. Baldwin bluntly replied that he would give no sort of assurance or commitment of any kind. Once more the "leaders," in hurriedly calling off the strike, lied. The betrayal was announced under the heading "General Council Satisfied that the Miners Will Get a Fair Deal." The lie was repeated in various forms—"The Unions can be satisfied that an honorable understanding has been reached"; "It was part of the understanding on which the General

Strike was concluded that there should be no victimization of either side," etc.

No sooner was the strike called off than the Government and owners, flushed with victory, began to indulge in an unparalleled orgy of victimization. Reinstatement was refused, blacklegs were engaged, wages were cut down more drastically than had been originally proposed. Whereupon Neville Chamberlain, then Minister of Health, prevented Boards of Guardians from taking any steps to afford any relief to the wholesale distress and misery that covered the land. The miners were literally starved into submission.

The foregoing facts concerning the British working classes' quite unimportant single experiment in revolutionary action are here recalled solely with a view to a better understanding of the peculiar character of "radical" sentiment in England.

It is a general historical law that popular revolutionary action, even when resulting in defeat, is never in vain. It forms part of the education by experience which is the only effective form of social education. Revolutionary action, however abortive, sows the seed of increased strength and clarity for the next effort, and renders it inevitable. But the law does not hold good of England's peculiarly English revolutionary action. In his admirable book on *The Post-War History of the British Working Class*, Mr. Allen Hutt concludes with the declaration that "The General Strike has made a united working class." It emphatically did not, but produced on the contrary the exactly opposite effect. It broke utterly what

spirit the English working classes had ever shown before and during the General Strike. It led them to repudiate the clarity of ideas which had, for a moment, enabled them to contemplate such action. Indifference and apathy succeeded to the momentary clarity which those ideas had imparted. Trade-union membership dropped by leaps and bounds. What unity had been achieved was again completely rent in a return to petty groups and the pursuit of petty aims. Those effects were not the transient immediate effects of defeat. They have continued to this day, and the British working classes have reverted to the good old English traditions of their fragmented and futile trade-unionism and impeccable servile constitutional loyalty.

Far from being ignominiously discredited by their unqualifiable conduct, the egregious "leaders" have become more firmly consolidated in their power than ever before. From the General Council of the Trades Union, they have been raised to those MacDonald Labor governments whose record is notorious. From being the servile tools of the governing classes, they now outdo the most unscrupulous of their political employers in their no longer disguised promotion of reaction.

Of that "unity," both national and international, which is the first requirement of any Labor social action, and which Mr. Hutt says was brought about by the General Strike of 1926, the British Labor party has, ever since, been the consistent and most determined opponent. The Socialist party has repeatedly sought to realize the modest aim of "unity

within the framework of the Labor Party and the trades unions." Such indecent attempts were virulently denounced by the labor "leaders," who admonished those "who are tempted to prefer a spurious unity with small forces outside the Party to a real unity with great forces within it." The *Daily Herald* described the Socialist and other radical parties insidiously seeking to bring about unity of the working class as being "lined up against Labor," and encouraged the workers to "place Party loyalty in the forefront of their political activities." The upshot of those attitudes was that in January 1927 the Socialist League was expelled from membership of the Labor Party.

Mr. Joseph Jones, one of the strikebreaking leaders of the 1926 General Strike, and now President of the Mineworkers' Federation, reputed to be the most militant body of workers, recently addressed the annual conference as follows: "In the times through which we are passing danger of a stoppage in the industry should be avoided at all costs and consequently it is better to raise no issues or adopt any program which may lead to such a result. Today the strike weapon is out of date. Direct action is a positive danger to the development of democratic and constitutional procedure." The statement was received without a murmur of dissent. The newspaper from which I take the account of the meeting, the *News Chronicle,* is regarded as an organ of "Left" English opinion. It comments on the statement with warm approval. It shows, the editorial comment states, "how far workers and employers have trav-

eled since the grim struggle of 1926 . . . it says much for the leadership of Mr. Joseph Jones and his colleagues that they have secured recognition of this truth. . . . It is strongly rumoured that before the end of the year Mr. Jones will be appointed to the reorganised Coal Commission which will control the mining industry." He has been appointed, and will, I should say, undoubtedly be knighted.

So wholehearted has been the support afforded by the British Labor party to the Fascist efforts of the National Government that the leaders of the workers of Great Britain have merited again and again the warm, if dishonoring, praise of *The Times,* and of Sir Samuel Hoare. "The wise attitude adopted by the Trades Union Congress over the Spanish crisis," said the latter worthy, "shows that in the ranks of Labor there is a solid force of patriotic responsibility," and he thanked the "responsible leaders of Labor" for giving the Fascist government "invaluable help."

It may not unnaturally be asked with some amazement how it is that such men, who have again and again cynically betrayed every interest of the workers, men who have openly shown themselves as the instruments of reaction, who have been convicted of bad faith, of mendacity, yet remain in their position of power as the representatives and executive "leaders" of the English working class. The answer is simple: they are duly elected to their position by majorities of the English working class. Mr. Jones's above-cited declarations were received by a full general conference of the reputedly most militant

British trade-union "without a ripple of dissent." Motions for the united action of all parties in conjunction with the Trades-Union against Fascism and war have recently been defeated in full meetings of English workers by a majority of 1,805,000 to 435,000 votes.

Speaking of the egregious "leaders" of the English working-class movement, Mr. Hutt asks: "Is it that the leaders of the movement are insincere men, dishonest men, men who deliberately ignore the lessons of experience? Nothing of the kind," he answers. "They are men whose point of view has been shaped by the circumstances of their personal and political lives. That point of view may be summed up by saying that they have a profound lack of faith in the working class and an equally profound, almost superstitious, awe of what they feel to be the almighty and unshakable power of the capitalist class." That is undoubtedly true, but it is not the whole truth. For that lack of faith and almost superstitious awe of the English Labor leaders are shared by the workers' majorities which elect them and support them. They are therefore not due to any peculiar circumstances of the political leaders' lives. They are due to circumstances which operate equally on them and on the workers, to circumstances which operate indeed equally upon every English mind conditioned by the sum total of influences which, in England, draw about the minds subjected to them an invisible but impassable charmed circle beyond which no outlook or sentiment can trespass. The same almost superstitious awe which inspires Labor politicians and

workers alike, and which led them, for example, to dissociate themselves from the Socialists as too advanced in their views, leads likewise those Socialists themselves to act in an even more singularly English manner. In the second week of March 1937, the Spanish workers sent a delegation to an international meeting held in London, naively thinking to enlist English Socialists in a movement of resistance to the infamous "nonintervention" plot of the National Government. Mr. Ernest Bevin, the *Daily Telegraph* reports with natural satisfaction, "said he was speaking in the name of the entire British Socialist movement when he frankly told the Spanish delegation that the movement refused to accede to its demands. The decision and policy of the British Socialist leaders, he said, must not be allowed to be influenced in any way by the war in Spain." M. Vandervelde, the veteran Belgian Socialist leader, by no manner of means a very revolutionary person, being in fact little more than a mild liberal, described the attitude of English Socialists, who stood out, and have continued to stand out against every other Socialist or Labor party in the world in their resolute opposition to any form of united action, as "inconceivably brutal."

It is not solely as an aspect of English politics that the character of the English working-class movement has here been briefly glanced at. It is in elucidation of one of the deepest and most general characters of the English mind, which is common to all. That mind, conditioned by the factors which constitute the sum of English tradition, may revolt against it;

may be acute in its criticism of it. But only up to a determined point. It cannot transcend the complacent myth of England's superior excellence. After reciting the ignominious tale of the incurable constitutional servility of the English Labor movement, Mr. Hutt is capable of setting down the breath-taking statement that, among the world's liberating social movements of thought and action is "the most important of all, that of Britain." The assertion is to be found, expressed or implied, in all English radical thought without exception, whatever the shade of its radicalism. Among English writers none, probably, has given to such thought more brilliant expression than Mr. John Strachey in his *The Coming Struggle for Power*. Yet he can conclude his book, a large part of which is devoted to the wholly unimportant, if ignominious, doings of MacDonald, Henderson, Thomas, and the like contemptible persons, with the amazing assertion that "the immediate future of all humanity rests to no small degree in the hands of the workers of Great Britain." The most extreme English criticism of, and opposition to, the long and unbroken leadership by England of all the forces of capitalist exploitation and reaction is merely replaced, in English radical thought, by the leadership by England of the forces of liberation. The leadership of England is assumed as complacently by the most daring English revolutionary as by the crustiest die-hard Tory.

It must appear evident that intellectual forces which are thus conditioned by patriotic loyalty are of negligible account in a social struggle such as the world is confronted with today.

Chapter Seven

ENGLAND AND EUROPE

ENGLAND'S early abstention from ambitions of Continental conquest, after the loss of her ancient French domains, has been consistently maintained since the Middle Ages until the present day. That abstention was not so much adhered to as a principle of policy as imposed by the force of circumstances. It was primarily due to the fundamental fact that England had no adequate standing army and was, from reasons of internal policy, reluctant to have one. At the outbreak of the contest against the French Revolution, the younger Pitt bitterly lamented that England had no army. So unused to Continental warfare were the English at the time that no officers were to be found capable of being entrusted with the task of forming an army. "We have no generals," Lord Grenville complained, "but only an old woman with a red ribbon."

English foreign policy thus presents from the outset a marked contrast with the political outlooks of Continental nations. The policies of the latter turned entirely on questions of respective frontiers, territorial expansion, dangers of attack and invasion. Those questions, which formed the theme of Continental politics did not directly interest England. She was not a Continental power. Her insularity was in

this respect a real factor in her foreign political outlook; but again it was indirectly rather than directly that the geographical factor exercised a differentiating influence. Japan's insularity does not prevent her from being a militarist country and her ambitions from being mainly continental. The peculiar relations between the aristocratic ruling class of England and the crown alone held England back from following a similar course. England's constant profession of being "disinterested" as regards Continental politics has, for all its hypocritical applications, a certain core of truth. England's interest in European politics and in the armed conflicts which are the continuation of those politics is, from the force of circumstances, different from that of Continental nations, with whom they are questions of life and death. The continent of Europe has been a perpetual cockpit. That is not to say that the natural disposition of Europeans is exceptionally quarrelsome or bellicose, but that the crowding of sovereign states enclosed by mostly artificial frontiers renders wars inevitable and that the state of things is irremediable so long as the cause subsists.

So absorbed were Continental nations in the immediate issues of their relations with their neighbors that they had little attention or energy to spare for events in distant lands. The uniform success of England in her contest with France for overseas dependencies, her dispossession of the French in India and Canada, were mainly owing to the indifference of the French Bourbon governments to those distant issues, and to the lack of support accorded to French

adventurers, traders, or commanders. It was only by degrees, and more particularly after the momentous conquest of India, that England herself began to appreciate the importance of extra-European adventures. And it was largely, though by no means exclusively, in relation to these that her intervention in European politics developed. But that intervention remained on the whole diplomatic rather than military, indirect rather than direct. In his history of the Great War, Buchan jocularly refers to the fact that England's first act of hostility in her vital conflict with the French Republic at the time of the revolution was to send a fleet to Demerara and seize the sugar islands. He regards the disposition often shown by England to combat Continental powers by expeditions to remote corners of the earth as arising from an amusing eccentricity of the English character. But England at the time could not do otherwise. She was not a military power in the Continental sense, and did not feel competent to cope with the professional armies of nations whose whole development had taken place amid such conflicts.

England's part, in the earlier stages at least of her determined effort to put down the French Revolution, was to shoulder the financial supply of all the forces of absolutism and reaction on the Continent. She fostered them, urged them on, and footed the bill, without herself taking a direct hand in the military contest. She fought the Revolution relentlessly by diplomatic action and intrigues, financial boycotts, swarms of plotters and provocative agents. In those means of action are manifested all the characteristic traits of

policy commonly charged to perfidious Albion. There is no occasion to put the appellation between inverted commas, for if the term has any meaning, perfidious English policy most eminently and superlatively is. In English home politics the same tactics are characterized by their English victims as "fiendish duplicity." The use of other powers, lavishly subsidized, as "catspaws," secret negotiations and intrigues, economic pressure, circuitous methods, indirectness, the obscuring of issues, the concealing of intentions—such have always been England's substitutes for the open use of force. But those methods are not the outcome of any racial traits of the English character; they derive, like all such supposed racial traits, from conditions imposed by circumstances during the historical development of the nation.

Even before the actual entrance of England in the field of European diplomacy coincidentally with the rise of her economic power, she found herself placed in a situation which served to rehearse and establish the tradition of her political methods, when, namely, she seceded from the Roman Church. The Protestant Reformation was not merely or mainly a theological dispute. It was a staggering blow struck at the power which had dominated the European world, economically and politically no less than spiritually and intellectually, and had indeed been the founder of that world. During a thousand years the wealth of Europe had flowed mainly into the coffers of the Roman Catholic Church. She possessed the best land in every country; she enjoyed priority and levied the lion's

share of revenues; her favor and support were purchased by rulers and private individuals with continual gifts and foundations. Officials of the Church were everywhere the advisers and ministers of kings and rulers. The European states were, in practice as well as in theory, the deputies and vassals of the Roman Church. The Reformation was a cataclysm which rent the whole edifice of that gigantic and age-long established power. England did not take an active part in the resulting conflicts and little in the controversy. The feudal Church of England which came into being in so undignified a fashion under Henry VIII was not inspired by fanatical religious zeal. Puritan fanaticism was as yet of little moment. But this did not alter the fact that a whole realm was lost to the dominating power of the Church. England came to be regarded by the Catholic powers as the Antichrist, the abomination of abominations. The papal court viewed England in Elizabethan days in much the same manner as it views Bolshevik Russia today. The Pope preached, as now, a holy crusade against the iniquitous state, whose mere existence threatened to subvert by the contamination of its doctrines all Christian order and civilization. France, too deeply engaged in putting down its own Bolsheviks, the Huguenots, was lukewarm in responding to the call to a Holy War. Spain was at the time the stronghold of the Church and her real temporal arm, embued with her fanaticism and possessing practically no other policy than to defend and extend the power of the Church. Spain had moreover other reasons to dislike England. To represent, as is usually

done in English histories, the relation between the two countries as one of rivalry, as a contest in which England broke the power of Spain, is plainly inaccurate. England's power was at the time far too disproportionately small to affect seriously the then dominant power of Spain. The depredations of English corsairs were a nuisance; the Armada expedition was one of the many blunders which Spain daily committed. But Catholic Spain regarded it as her religious duty to put down the scandal of heretic England.

The political contest was the first to illustrate the methods of English foreign political action, and Elizabeth was the first of England's foreign ministers. John Richard Green gives the following account of her political skill: "Of political wisdom in its larger and more generous sense," he says, "Elizabeth had little or none; but her political tact was unerring. She seldom saw her course at a glance, but she played with a hundred courses, fitfully and discursively. . . . Her nature was essentially practical and for the present. She distrusted a plan in fact just in proportion to its speculative range or its outlook into the future. Her notion of statesmanship lay in watching how things turned out around her, and in seizing the moment for making the best of them. . . . 'No war, my Lords,' the Queen used to cry imperiously at the council-board, 'No war!' But her hatred of war sprang less from her aversion to blood and expense, real as was her aversion to both, than from the fact that peace left the field open to the diplomatic maneuvers and intrigues in which she excelled. . . . She revelled in 'bye-

ways' and 'crooked ways.'. . . Nor was her trickery without political value. Ignoble, inexpressibly wearisome as the Queen's diplomacy seems to us now, it succeeded in its main end. It gained time. . . . Nothing is more revolting in the Queen, but nothing is more characteristic than her shameless mendacity. It was an age of political lying, but in the profusion and recklessness of her lies Elizabeth stood without a peer in Christendom. . . . As we track Elizabeth through her tortuous mazes of lying and intrigue, the sense of her greatness is almost lost in a sense of contempt. But wrapped as they were in a cloud of mystery, the aims of her policy were throughout temperate and simple, and they were pursued with a singular tenacity. . . . The diplomatists who censured at one moment her irresolution, her delay, her changes of front, censure at the next her obstinacy, her iron will."

The characterization might, it will be seen, apply to English diplomacy at the present hour. Green explains it, in accordance with mythological conceptions of heredity which are still all but universal, as the result upon the temperament of Elizabeth of the mingling of Tudor blood with that of Anne Boleyn. But the unvarying character of English policy appears to be rather the outcome of historical circumstances.

That policy did not again come into play on an important world scale until the time of the elder Pitt, the Earl of Chatham, when the conquest of India, the important colonial possessions in America, and the beginnings of industrial capitalism in England were

laying the foundations of the position she was to occupy in the nineteenth century. Pitt himself belonged to a family of Anglo-Indian "nabobs"—his grandfather had been governor of Madras, and had brought to Europe the famous diamond which he sold to the French Regent. He was therefore in a position to appreciate the possibilities which those great advantages held out, though he could not have foreseen the extent of the power which they were to bestow upon England. The one obstacle to the exploitation of those advantages was the power of France, which occupied during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a position equivalent to that which England was to occupy in the nineteenth. Although Bourbon France did not attach great importance to overseas domains and maritime enterprise, yet her preponderance had, independently of the intentions of her rulers, led to the acquisition of considerable foreign possessions. She was England's competitor in India, and the American colonies were surrounded on the side of Canada and in the Ohio and Mississippi valleys by French dependencies. The attempt to dispossess France might have aroused her rulers from their indifference. Pitt therefore devised means of attacking France at home. But since England possessed no military force equal to such an enterprise, he had recourse to the plan of getting some other power to keep France busy in Europe while her colonial possessions were being attacked.

The opportunity to carry out that plan was offered by the ambitions of the new little German kingdom of Prussia, which had been created by the Elector of

Brandenburg, Frederick William, who, in return for permission to assume the title of King, had sold his support to the Catholic Emperor against his fellow Protestant German states. Smitten with militarist frenzy, he had put the peaceful northern German peasants into swaggering uniforms and taught them the goose step. Pitt undertook to provide with the sinews of war the Elector's son, Frederick, who was itching to test his father's parade army by running amok among his neighbors, but being as poor as Job's turkey, had not hitherto been able to indulge his dreams of brigandage. Supplies of cash were poured from the English exchequer into his empty coffers, and the Hanoverian troops of the German King of England were placed at his disposal. England thus laid the foundations of that German Empire against which, in 1914, she had to fight for her life, and has ever since nursed the new European power with the same tenderness as she was to show later when assisting the Nazi chief, Hitler, to power and fostering his exploits.

England's Germanophile predilections have been set down to natural affinities with Teutons. But England herself did not appear to become aware of those subtle racial affinities until long after her unremitting assistance and support had helped to build up German military power, and her own hegemony had become firmly established and consolidated. The discovery by England of the charming traits of the German soul and of her natural kinship with its delectable aspirations dates from the relatively recent times of Coleridge, Carlyle, Freeman, Green, and other

Germanophiles who made themselves the interpreters of those German virtues which are themselves as much the products of history as are English characteristics. Racial interpretations are purely fanciful, and sentiment has nothing to do with political promotion of material interests. England has during a century and a half fostered the growth of German power because her interests required her to raise a Continental opponent to France.

England's need to destroy French power did not arise from the fact that she was her nearest neighbor, or from any ancient grudge dating from medieval conflicts, or from racial antagonism towards a "Latin" people. In her cultural development England has been beyond all comparison more influenced by France, which has been the chief carrier of European culture, than by Germany. Pitt, to use his own words, "conquered Canada in Germany"—and he might have added, India—because France was at the time the only world power of importance and the only rival in the way of England's overseas expansion.

The policy thus established by the elder Pitt has been described as the maintenance of the balance of power. The expression borrowed from the diplomatic language of the Popes, who safeguarded their temporal dominion by fostering dissensions and quarrels among the petty states of fragmented Italy, is merely one of those euphemistic camouflages—like "nonintervention" or "saving peace"—which serve to impart a dignified title to more pedestrian policies. Although England eschewed Continental adventures, her economic and imperialist interests were inevitably

involved in Continental politics. To promote those interests without becoming a Continental power could only be accomplished by so using economic power and diplomatic pressure as to assure the military protection of those interests by the vicarious military action of other countries. English foreign policy has been governed by her concrete interests alone.

So, of course, is the foreign policy of every state. But those interests are commonly conceived as being combined and commingled with ideological notions and sentiments, notions of prestige, of honor and glory, passions and abstract principles, and even on occasions, rare though they may be, impulses verging on generous sentiments. Spanish policy, during the heyday of Spanish power, was shaped exclusively by fanatical religious motives to the gross neglect of vital national interests. Revolutionary France was genuinely interested in the spread of liberal ideas and the liberation of oppressed small nations. After 1871, Frenchmen were obsessed in their foreign policies by the lost provinces of Alsace-Lorraine—which were of little concrete value. Russians were interested in southern Slavs, in their monks' access to the Holy Sepulchre. French interests in Egypt were stupidly sacrificed to sentimental horror at the bombardment of Alexandria. The United States refused to accept Chinese compensation for the Boxer Rebellion, and has constantly muddled its foreign policy from naïve and irrelevant considerations such as a reverential subservience to England ("the old country," "blood is thicker than water," and so forth) with no profit whatsoever in view. The pursuit of English interests

is never diluted with such silly nonsense. It has never been deflected by any vapid and sentimental generous impulse. It has never been obscured by abstract moral principles. English foreign policy is soberly and calmly unprincipled. It is practical. Its sole principle is clearly defined and inculcated into the mind of every properly public-school-educated Englishman: "England, right or wrong," which, being interpreted, means the promotion of the concrete interests of the property of the English ruling classes, by fair means or foul.

And yet—such are the paradoxes presented by every national policy—in apparent, but only apparent, contradiction with the "practical" character of English foreign policy, its repudiation of general principles is overridden, and frequently vitiated to its own detriment, by a general principle.

England's circuitous efforts to undermine and weaken the power of Bourbon France were a contributing factor in bringing about what she regarded as a far more serious danger. The French Revolution appeared at the time as the major social cataclysm of history. The French bourgeoisie, who during the very period of England's overseas expansion at their expense had conceived an enthusiastic admiration for the political institutions which had developed in England, were moved to adopt them as the pattern of their political ideals. The declared aim of the French revolutionists, as of most of their successors in nineteenth-century liberal revolutionary movements, and more recently Spain, was to establish a monarchical constitution "after the English model." Such a pur-

pose filled the English ruling classes with a horror and panic fear which their French admirers found it difficult to understand. England is usually not understood by foreigners. The simple French liberals did not apprehend the fact that the development of English institutions was the practical result of conflicts of interests in specific circumstances, and had nothing to do with theoretical principles or abstract ideals. They could not conceive that England's representative government was not in the least representative; that England was governed by a ruling class more tenaciously jealous of its powers and privileges than any Bourbon. All that they could perceive, viewing things as was their habit from a theoretical point of view, was that in England alone of all countries, the power of the king was limited by restrictions imposed mainly through parliamentary assemblies. When, with the help of England, the Bourbon King, the Austrian Queen, and the aristocracy strove to resist by force and foreign invasion the establishment of an English constitution in France, the revolutionists were compelled, thanks to England, to give up the idea and to turn their thoughts instead to republican conceptions.

What the French liberals, and what modern Americans who marvel at the English horror of republics, fail to understand is that English liberties are "practical," and not theoretical. The vague and elastic term "practical" is one of those euphemisms of which the English language is largely made up. In English politics the term "practical" has reference to due consideration for the concrete and immediate pecuniary

interests of the ruling classes. The converse notion is expressed in English by the term "ideas." Protection against "ideas" is obtained in the scheme of English culture by the achievement of a detached, impartial, judicial attitude, free from bias, and the balanced judgment which is commonly associated with mental vacuity. That impressive intellectual attitude robs "ideas," which are *ex hypothesi* of little "practical" importance, of their dangerous character. Their high reputation for judicial balance and disinterested impartiality leads English governments to be ever ready to proffer their advice and services to arbitrate in disputes between foreign nations, devising "practical" solutions to their difficulties, that is, solutions wholly in accordance with English interests.

To bear those fundamental conceptions in mind is necessary in order to understand the frenzied horror and panic which seized the English ruling classes on the outbreak of the French liberal proposal to establish an English constitution. It was even greater, for it was the first major shock which the English mind sustained from "ideas," than the horrified feelings aroused in our own time by the Russian Revolution. The Jacobins, like the Bolsheviks, menaced the English, whose intellectual and social purity had been so judiciously preserved, with wholesale infection from a pestilent flood of the most virulent "ideas." Not only had the foreigners totally misconceived the nature of the English constitution, but "French ideas," as they were called, threatened to convert the perfectly safe and practical compromises of English "liberties" into theoretical principles—specific "lib-

erties" being in danger of becoming transformed into an ideal of "liberty." With a sure instinct, the rulers of England perceived then as now that there is no telling to what depths the mind can sink once it has been started on the slippery path of "ideas." "What are called liberal ideas," it was pointed out in the House of Commons, "paves the way to Jacobinism and Anarchy." If commoners revolt against the authority of a divine throne and a privileged ruling class, what is to prevent the servile masses from applying the same subversive ideas to the privileges of the propertied commoners? Once introduce logical ideas into politics and the whole fabric of the social order, civilization itself, may sink into the mire, to be "trampled under the hoof of the swinish multitude."

We now know that the panic of the English ruling classes grossly exaggerated the danger. It always does. The English rulers' fear of seeing the guillotine set up in Westminster was somewhat hysterical and naïve. Their fear of the logic of ideas was nevertheless broadly justified. The French Revolution was an important factor in giving rise to the English revolution which compelled the aristocratic ruling classes to share political power with the commoners. And although "practical" England succeeded in bringing back a Bourbon king to Paris, she did not, and could not, perform the impossible task of arresting the logic of "ideas." Revolution broke out again and again ever after. England, which rose to unmatched power on the crest of the liberal revolutionary wage against which she struggled, was fated to live throughout her brilliant career under the perpetual menace of the

dangerous ebullition of ideas, until today, at the close of her career, she finds herself still engaged in fighting social revolution grown to far more dangerous strength and maturity.

The simple, direct, "practical" aims of English foreign policy—the promotion of the interests of English property—thus became complicated by another purpose, directly connected, it is true, with the primary purposes of all national policy, but generalized and theoretical in its scope instead of being particular and concrete. By a poetic paradox English policy, characterized by its "practical" outlook and its intuitive horror of theoretical generalizations, became itself fundamentally influenced by a generalized theoretical principle. Not only had the English people to be protected against ideas which might hold dangers subversive of the established order, but that danger was to be combated in whatever quarter of the world it might arise. England became not merely the model of liberal institutions, but also the consistent supporter and promoter of all reactionary tendencies and forces wherever a disposition to establish such liberal institutions might appear.

After organizing and financing every force of absolutism and reaction against the French Revolution, after her long struggle against the military dictatorship which began as an armed diffusion of "French ideas," and, despite its later transformation, was instrumental in that diffusion and in shaking, as never before, every throne and established power in Europe, England, as the influential inspirer of the Congress of Vienna and the Holy Alliance, helped to put down

liberalism in every quarter. The heroic Nelson had crushed the liberals in Naples by a reign of terror, massacred the intellectual leaders, hanged his old friend and companion in arms, Admiral Caracciolo, to the mainyard of his flagship, while the English national hero rowed round the picturesque gulf in the company of Lady Hamilton, to the sound of mandolins and amid the floating corpses of his victims. England afforded the French and Spanish Bourbons every assistance while they smothered in like manner liberalism in France and in Spain. When the turn came for Greece to cast off the Turkish yoke and establish a constitutional government, a romantic enthusiasm was inspired in England by classical school memories, and Byron enrolled volunteers to help Greece fight for freedom. But the liberal government of Canning adopted a policy of rigorous "nonintervention," which obstinately defied public sentiment and was characterized by Lord Erskine as "lowering to the country, a disgrace to Christianity, and a discredit to mankind." The English government argued that the integrity of Turkey must be maintained as a safeguard against Russia, and, offering to arbitrate between the contending parties, secured the suzerainty of Turkey over Greece. England organized an international naval control to maintain "nonintervention," and it was only through an accident, and in disregard of the orders of the dismayed British government, that the battle of Navarino took place and the Turkish fleet was sunk. The British government apologized to Turkey for the "untoward event," and the British naval contingent was ordered to with-

draw. After Greece had obstinately fought for two years for her independence, despite England's efforts to stop her, the "noninterventionist" British government intervened in the final settlement to deprive Greece of the fruits of her victory by securing the richest province, Thessaly, for Turkey.

Obvious "practical" considerations determined a more liberal attitude towards Belgium's struggle for independence and secured Belgian "neutrality" under English guarantees. But while the liberal Palmerston had a great deal to say about the support of liberalism and the defense of small nations when English practical interests at Antwerp and on the Belgian coast were at stake, he severely abided by the policy of "nonintervention" when Italy, under the leadership of Mazzini and Garibaldi, struggled against foreign rule, and when reaction gained the upper hand and the Italian fight for freedom was slowly crushed, the British government remained a "passive spectator." Lord Derby arranged to sell Italy to Austria and to put down the liberals. He strove to break up the alliance of France with Savoy, and to prevent the expulsion of the Austrians and the unification of Italy. It was only alarm at Louis Napoleon's schemes of French influence in Italy which led, in the final stages of the struggle, to a relaxation of England's support of the oppressors. The expression of popular Platonic sympathy with Italian liberation was permitted, and Garibaldi was feted in London. But when the Italian popular hero clumsily declared at a public banquet that he was "the friend of the

working classes in every nation," he was immediately and mysteriously whisked out of the country.

The first, and only, occasion when truly cordial relations of sympathy became established between England and France was when the adventurer, Louis Napoleon, provided with English money, overthrew the republic by a particularly bloody and treacherous *Putsch,* and established by terrorism a regime of repression which would today be termed Fascist. England's hearty friendship for the precursor and prototype of Fascist dictators, who was hailed as the "savior of society," only cooled off towards the end of his spell of power when growing forces of opposition and indignation induced him to seek safety in the semblance of liberal reforms. England's lively sympathy towards the French Fascist adventure did not prevent her from assisting the development of Prussian "blood and iron" power, which she had consolidated at the Congress of Vienna by forcing upon Saxony *Anschluss* with Prussia. She supported German aggression against Austria and Schleswig-Holstein, and Queen Victoria declared that "any encouragement to Denmark would be fatal." Immediately after Sedan there was a considerable movement among English liberals to afford active assistance for the defense of the French republic, and it was pointed out that the hegemony of unscrupulous German militarism might become a danger to England. The plan was more seriously contemplated by Gladstone, then Prime Minister, than is revealed in recorded history. Had that intention been followed up, the war of 1914-1918 would, in all probability, not have taken

place. But the Tories resolutely opposed such contemplated action, and Queen Victoria said that, were any step taken in the direction of assisting the French republic against Germany she would abdicate.

England's policy outside Europe when, as most frequently happened, she was not herself the aggressor, has likewise been automatically on the side of abuse and reaction. Thus, in the American Civil War, English intervention immediately rushed to the assistance of the slaveholders and the reactionary South, which could not have sustained the bloody struggle against progressive forces, and would probably have hesitated to undertake it, without the active economic and material support of England, who to this day glories in her sympathy with feudalism, slaveowning, and obscurantism.

The record of English foreign policy may be searched in vain for a single instance in which it has been influenced, let alone determined, by a motive of a generous character, such as the support of the weak against aggression, of liberty against oppression, or of mere justice and respect for international law. On the rare occasions when, as in the World War, England has happened to be on the side of relative right, her participation in its defense has been determined by her interests and not by moral considerations. When those interests have not been directly involved, England's recognition of the justice of a given cause has never gone beyond Platonic expressions of sympathy. But whenever practical interests have not happened to coincide with equity, England has been consistently and invariably the defender of vested in-

terests and established power, however flagrantly oppressive, aggressive, and unjust. England can always be trusted, if in nothing else, to be the determined supporter of reaction.

It is usual to refer to that fundamental character of English policy by the term "conservatism." But the euphemism is incorrect. England is not interested in maintaining the *status quo* as such. No more profound subversion of the *status quo* and of the whole tradition which has ostensibly presided over the development of modern Europe could be imagined than Fascism. Yet England is the supporter and admirer of Fascism. Respect for international law is an essential part of the maintenance of the *status quo*. Yet England has been foremost in condoning the flouting of international law in China, in Abyssinia, in Spain, Austria, Czechoslovakia, and in setting it aside. Her interest has not been in the maintenance of the *status quo;* it has not been "conservative." It has been throughout her political international career reactionary in the fullest connotation of the term. She first came upon the scene of European politics as the champion of absolutism and feudalism. She has consistently supported monarchy as such. She refused to recognize Peter of Serbia, not on the ground of the bloody palace revolution which brought him to the throne, but on the avowed principle that monarchy is sacred. When the last Czar of Russia was deposed in a revolution which as yet appeared to have but a constitutional monarchy as its goal, and before Bolshevism had appeared on the scene, England, alone of all "democratic" countries, received the news with frigid

displeasure, and Mr. Bonar Law moved in the House of Commons a vote of condolence with the deposed Czar. A letter recently appeared in an English paper in which the writer objected to Franco being designated as a "rebel." He argued that the Spanish republicans were the rebels because they had brought about the abdication of Alfonso Bourbon-Hapsburg. On the other hand, Louis Napoleon was hailed as a "savior of society" because he had destroyed the French Republic.

English foreign policy enjoys the advantage of a unique continuity of aims and methods. The modifications of direction attendant on changes of ministry or of party in power are relatively insignificant. A Tory government's policy may be vigorously denounced by His Majesty's Liberal or Labor opposition. But no sooner is that opposition at the helm than the head winds of denunciatory eloquence drop out of its sails, and the ship of state proceeds undeflected upon its traditional course. Gladstone, shortly before taking office in 1880, had indulged in an eloquent moral denunciation of the infamous Hapsburg empire, challenging anyone to point to any good it had ever done in the world. By the time the Austrian ambassador had received his instructions and called to protest in the name of his offended government, the orator was established in Downing Street. He smilingly pointed out to the protesting Austrian that at the time the diatribe had been launched, he (Gladstone) "had been in a position of greater freedom and less responsibility." The phrase has become a classical formula of English political verbiage in similar situations.

Whether a Gladstone or a Disraeli, a Palmerston or a Derby be in power does not materially affect the course of English foreign policy. Gladstone in power carried on rather more recklessly and aggressively the imperialist policy of Disraeli. The Tory minister had secured the Suez Canal shares; the Liberal leader secured Egypt herself for the empire, by means the crookedness and brutality of which excited universal indignation. He initiated the attack on the Boer republics, curtly declaring that England's authority over them would never be relinquished. The first act of the first English Labor government was to defend vigorously abroad the interests of the City.

The present particularly infamous reactionary policy of England is commonly set down to the Tory government in power. But that policy was initiated under a Labor government. It was Ramsay MacDonald who put forward in 1924 the plan of a western four-power pact which was carried out the following year by Austen Chamberlain, and is today the declared aim of Neville Chamberlain. The long series of active condonations of Fascist aggression and of systematic breaches of the League of Nations Covenant was initiated, not by a Tory, but by a Liberal, the Congregationalist lawyer, Sir John Simon, who stifled all action against Japanese aggression in Manchuria and China.

The "responsibility" which every English government, whatever may be its shade, assumes on taking office is to the pecuniary interests which are above and behind any party. The principle, more clearly understood in England than in any other country, is

expressed by the formulas "Country above party," "England first," and "England right or wrong." "England" in those declarations of principles held to be so sacred that no government, however pink, could conceive of the depravity of ignoring them, is understood to mean the financial interests of the City of London. In the indirect phraseology which is the great literary achievement of English politics, that power behind the throne is referred and deferred to as "public opinion." And the public opinion evidenced by any part of the population of England with whom anyone dressing at a good tailor's is likely to come in contact is the exact reflection of the reactionary politics of *Punch* and of the *Daily Mail*.

There undeniably exists in England another sort of public opinion. But that is not the "public opinion" referred to in political formulas, for every government, be it Tory or Labor, knows that it can with absolute security contemptuously defy it. In other democratic countries, such as France or the United States, the defense of the interests of bourgeois capitalism can only be maintained by measures of repression similar in character to those employed in Fascist states. The danger of resistance, whether active or passive, on the part of social opposition is never entirely absent. Not so in England. Truly disloyal public opinion holds out no danger there. In so far as it exists at all, the whole development and tradition of such public opinion directs its activities into the innocuous channels of eloquence and the beatific contemplation of perfectly harmless constitutional and parliamentary action. England is the only country in

which the establishment of Fascism is highly improbable, for it is quite superfluous. The English mind has been "fixed" and neutralized by the entire course of English mental and political development.

Opposition to feudal reaction has developed in England in indissoluble conjunction with religious Nonconformity. It has assumed the form of Liberalism, which is a variety of the Christian religion. All mental social revolt in England has a moral and elevated character. His Majesty's opposition to feudal reaction has consisted in the delivery of moral eloquence in Biblical language. The seditious meetings of Welsh miners are opened with the singing of Psalms. Mr. George Lansbury pays a visit to Signor Benito Mussolini and speaks to him—about God. Social opposition is Christian, turns the other cheek and resists not evil. It is safe! The sole thing required of the rulers of England to adapt their policies to the Nonconformist conscience is to word them in the language of lofty moral sentiments.

English foreign policy is "the great task committed to us by Providence"; it is the duty imposed upon our imperial race to police the world and accord the benefits of the "sympathy, tolerance, prudence, and benevolence of our rule; it is the disinterested and impartial discharge of a heavy responsibility which has been laid upon us by God, and for which we are answerable to Him." The elevated moral language in which the "practical" aims of English policy have been couched since the passing of the Reform Bill was primarily intended to conciliate the Nonconformist conscience and His Majesty's opposition. It has

answered that purpose satisfactorily. Like all people unaccustomed to the cerebral irritation of "ideas," the great English public is deeply affected by noble sentiments. Any indignation which the purposes and results of English foreign policy may arouse among the English themselves obtains all the assuagement it requires so long as it is permitted to find vent in the expression of noble sentiments. Such assuagement is termed liberty of thought. It is entirely devoid of the dangers with which "ideas" are fraught. Being moreover exceptionally immune from the more concrete effects of English foreign policy, such as the massacres of women and children in Spain, the English public is better prepared than Continental populations to react to elevated sentiments.

But the insistent moral elevation of English political purposes, while originally intended for home consumption, and despite the additional fulsomeness which it may be thought by some to impart to a rascality which is not peculiar to it, has been found to serve its purpose abroad more effectively than the hollow French phraseologies of traditional diplomacy or the gross and cynical insolence of German *Realpolitik*.

English diplomacy has acquired a reputation for cleverness. Whether that reputation is merited will be presently considered. The first result achieved by England's subtle so-called "balance of power" policy, that is, the continuous support of militarist Germany's exclusive faith in barbaric violence, was the World War.

Chapter Eight

IN A CHANGED WORLD

On emerging from her life-and-death struggle with the opponent she herself had raised to power, England stood in a changed world. Not only had she lost the economic monopolies which had constituted the concrete foundations of her power, but she was called upon to adapt herself, if possible, to the conditions of an entirely new environment. Like many individual survivors of the war, England had to begin her career anew.

So profound was the change that to the surviving generation, old and young, history appears to be sharply divided into two distinct periods: the postwar world and the already old-fashioned and seemingly remote prewar ages. The distinction between the two is so all-pervading and manifold that it appears elusive and hard to pin down. To many English survivors of the older generations the world appeared to have grown un-English, or, in other words, to have degenerated. But the causes of such transformations of the times, more often felt than distinctly apprehended, which were wont to be vaguely set down to some mystical *Zeitgeist,* are to be sought in definite political and social changes.

Stripped of camouflage, deliberate reticences and obscurities, the course of political history in postwar Europe is fairly simple and logical.

The war was brought to an abrupt conclusion by the German revolution. The Allies, whose normal military course after so gigantic a struggle would have been to mark their victory unequivocally by driving on into Germany and dictating peace in Berlin, accepted instead the German request for an armistice and abstained from any military demonstration of their victory beyond a symbolic occupation of the Rhineland. Speaking a few months ago, Marshal Pétain said that most present political troubles derived from the mistake that was committed at the time of the Armistice in setting aside all usages of war; negotiating while the enemy was still in occupation of Allied territory, and not even disarming his troops. By the manner in which the Armistice was concluded, all the objects of the war, undertaken to lay once and for all the recurrent menace of German militarism, were, in fact, in a large measure abandoned.

But had the normal military course been followed and had the Allies invaded Germany the probability would have been that a Soviet government would have become established there. Berlin was at the time in the power of the Spartacist Communists under Liebknecht. A new desperate resistance would in all likelihood have been set up by popular armies in conjunction with those of Soviet Russia, and possibly of Austria and Hungary. The revolutionary movement would have been strengthened and extended by the need of united resistance to foreign invasion. To crush that resistance would have amounted to beginning a new war, the issue of which

could not have been confidently foreseen. Even the danger of fraternization on the part of the French troops could not be excluded.

The Allies were thus compelled by circumstances to rest content with an incomplete victory which left the enemy with the sentiment that they remained unbeaten in the field, and turned to futile waste the enormous sacrifices of lives and money. The first act of the Allies was, moreover, to render the enemy immediate assistance in crushing the Communist revolution and recapturing Berlin. Armaments surrendered under the terms of the Armistice were restored to Germany for the purpose. The Allied Commander in Chief, Marshal Foch, who had been the most truculent of Hun-haters and the most intransigent advocate of an unequivocal victory, earnestly proposed an immediate alliance with the late enemy for the purpose of carrying out a joint attack on Soviet Russia. Hindenburg and Ludendorff entirely concurred with the proposal. Clemenceau and Lloyd George were regretfully compelled to dismiss it as inexpedient at the moment. Neither the resources of the Allies nor the temper of their war-worn armies were at the time favorable to undertaking a new war on a formidable scale and attended with incalculable dangers and social complications. What was even more decisive, America flatly refused her co-operation. President Wilson laughed in Marshal Foch's face. Colonel House declared that "the United States is not at war with Russia. There is no ground for supposing that it will ever take part in any action directed against that nation."

There was nothing for it but to put off the plan until a more favorable opportunity, when the war-exhausted armies and peoples should have recovered. But despite the discouraging attitude of the American government, the plan was not altogether abandoned. A compromise was made. Although the immediate attempt to destroy Soviet Russia by a large-scale concerted operation had to be set aside for the moment, every effort was concentrated on carrying out the attack on a more limited scale which would, it could not be doubted, be after all more than sufficient to achieve the purpose in view and to eliminate the tottering revolutionary government. The White Russian armies were organized, armed, equipped, and financed. So were Poland, the newly founded Baltic states, and the Czechoslovakian legion. The Germans were supported in the occupation of the Ukraine and the Baltic states. Allied forces, including Japanese and a United States contingent, were landed in Siberia to occupy the Maritime Provinces and support Admiral Kolchak, who was recognized as the representative of the old Czarist government. British expeditionary forces were sent to Transcaucasia and northern Russia, and French forces to Odessa. Naval and air support was given to the White armies. A rigorous naval blockade was established for the purpose of starving out Soviet Russia.

The elaborate combined attack from all sides ended in a spectacular defeat, all the invaders being literally driven into the sea.

It would be fantastic to suppose that the Allies, having to a large extent sacrificed their hard-won

victory for the sake of putting down the social revolution and having bent all their energies and directed all their plans in the postwar settlement towards that end, could accept their defeat as final. They had expressly declared the object of their efforts to be the paramount factor in the world situation and to outweigh all others. M. Pichon, the French Foreign Minister, stated that "the sole object which occupies the Allies is to extirpate Bolshevism from Russia." In a White Paper, the British Foreign Office endorsed the terms of the report of the Dutch ambassador: "If an end is not put to Bolshevism in Russia the civilization of the whole world will be threatened. . . . The immediate suppression of Bolshevism is the greatest issue now before the world. . . . The only manner in which this danger could be averted would be collective action on the part of all the Powers." Even though the Socialist State should abstain, as it in fact did, from any aggressive action, its mere existence constituted an ever-present menace to capitalist society.

The signal defeat of their first attack on the Socialist State was never, in fact, accepted, and the object which had been foremost in the minds of all the leaders of both the Allied governments and their late opponents was never abandoned. The "plan" set forth by the Allied Commander in Chief immediately on the conclusion of the Armistice, and which had been mooted some time before, of a united crusade for the destruction of the Socialist State has been ever since in one form or another the ultimate goal and implication of all policy. The relations be-

tween states, whether on the Allied or the vanquished side, the combinations of alliances or the conclusion of pacts, have taken place with that eventual end constantly in view. The efforts towards unity and accommodation of differences, have been directed towards that co-operation in the destruction of the common menace postulated in the "plan." The preservation of peace, of security, the averting of dangers of war have not been pursued under the inspiration of an ideal pacifism or humanitarianism, but have been understood as being subordinate to the requirements of common action. Peace and security have been defined by the qualification "in the West," and as implying "a free hand in the East." The Locarno Pact, the Four Power Pact which is again put forth today as the avowed objective of Allied policy, are but reissues of the original Foch-Ludendorff "plan," the plan of General Hoffmann, of Brest-Litovsk fame, the Nazi Rosenberg plan of a united crusade for the destruction of the Socialist State. Briand's idealistic project for a European federation, a "United States of Europe," which assumed the high appeal of a Utopic dream of "the Parliament of Man, the Federation of the World," was nothing else than a version of the Rosenberg plan. Asked whether the Socialist State of Russia should be included in the "United States of Europe," Briand turned purple and threw a fit which rendered him speechless with rage. He regarded the "United States of Europe" and the "Parliament of Man" merely as a means of conducting a united holy war of "civilization" against the Socialist State.

No act of external policy, and it may be added of internal policy also, has been undertaken or contemplated by any European capitalist state in the course of the last twenty years that has not had in view, directly or indirectly, the destruction of the Socialist State. The *Daily Mail* accurately described the guiding principle of all English policy by stating that it should be determined "by noting what the Soviet would have this country do and taking the opposite course." That haunting preoccupation and supreme principle of policy to which all others are subordinate is, in England, the dream of the financial magnates and of all the ruling classes. But it is not peculiar to them. It is shared and backed by the leaders of Labor. At a meeting of the General Council of Trades Unions in 1925, Mr. F. Bramley, criticizing the attitude of the meeting, remarked: "It appears to me you can discuss any other subject under the sun without getting into that panicky state of trembling fear and excitement and almost savage ferocity you get into when you are discussing Russian affairs. . . . You can discuss calmly and without excitement the operations of the Fascists in Italy; you can discuss with great calm the suppression of trade-union organisations in other countries; you can discuss the activities of capitalist Governments and their destruction of the trade-union movement in one country after another without this unnecessary epidemic of excitement. But when you begin to discuss Russia, you begin to suffer from some malignant disease."

After the complete collapse of the aggression

against the Socialist State, the goal of policy was no longer openly proclaimed by the "democratic" governments. A studied pretence was made of forgetting it. It was vaguely suggested in official quarters that, after all, there was no reason why the Socialist State might not be permitted to carry out its "experiment"; that in any case there were ample signs of its imminent and inevitable failure; and it was periodically pointed out that the Socialist State was finding it necessary to return to the methods of capitalism. The allegation that the high purposes of policy could be seriously affected by any anxiety arising from the Socialist State would be treated by English officials with that contempt of frigid silence in which they are more adept than in directness of statement. Other aims, such as "saving peace," or the promotion of neighborly relations are substituted for the real goal of any given policy. While an unceasing fury of abuse, slander, and fantastic misinformation is daily poured forth in the press concerning terrorism in Russia, the cooking and eating of infants, the dictatorship of Stalin, the jealous tyrant, the breakdown of Socialist economy, the rusting of tanks at Vladivostok, the unfair trials of Nazi and English agents, or the deplorable disorganization of the Red armies, the misery and discontent of the people, the mention of the Socialist State is generally avoided, like the use of unparliamentary and indelicate words in political discussion. A tone of studied indifference, scornful condescension, dignified contempt, or light jocularity is adopted, when such mention is incidentally made. To take an in-

stance at random, a recent official report, supplied from Whitehall to the American press expounding the "Four Power Pact," the term used for the Nazi plan of an alliance of capitalist states in view of an anti-Soviet crusade, stated that "The Soviet is excluded on the ground that it does not work well in harness, with the proviso that some day Russia, if she behaves, may be admitted to membership."

The policy so discreetly covered up in "democratic" countries is shouted from loud-speakers in Fascist and Nazi countries, which thus serve as convenient amplifiers for the confidential whispers of Downing Street and the Quai d'Orsay. But that tactless blatancy, while it serves the useful purpose of enlisting sympathetic support for the policies more delicately and subtly formulated by gentlemen, is represented by the latter in such a manner as not to clash too stridently with the substituted formulas which they are in the habit of employing. It is pointed out that the Holy Alliance of all capitalist nations for concerted aggression against the Socialist State serves the Fascist states as a convenient pretext for their legitimate desires for aggrandizement, and that the intemperate language used by Nazi Germany in reference to the Socialist State merely arises from a desire to obtain from the Ukraine the means of substituting wheatflour for bran in German bread.

But whatever obvious truth may impart plausibility to those representations, it is at least equally true that but for their proclaimed purpose of anti-Bolshevist crusading the Fascist states would neither have come into existence, nor be in power today, nor have

received the support which has enabled them to carry out the extension of their influence, and that the capitalist "democracies" which have afforded them that support have not been influenced in doing so by concern for the composition of German bread or Italian macaroni. They have been and are influenced by concern for the success of anti-Bolshevist enterprises and for the chances of carrying them to their logical issue with more success than attended their earlier combined efforts. And the same ultimate object and constant consideration has governed every one of their political acts or endeavors since that time.

It is that universal preoccupation which marks the distinction between prewar politics and those of the postwar period. Prewar politics were concerned with purely political issues. The motives which directed them rested upon national rivalries for power, economic competition, territorial disputes, military menaces from various quarters. They had reference to questions between states regarded purely as political units and powers. In the postwar world those truly political questions are overshadowed by social issues which are unvarying in character, override the purely political issues of the prewar world, and by no means run parallel to them. The aims or claims of the German, French, or Turkish government, which formerly held the attention of political observers, had nothing to do with the views which might be entertained by those governments on social questions. In postwar Europe purely national aims, or threats to peace are, on the contrary, subordinate to the bearing they may have on social issues. There is no question, as in the

days of Palmerston or Disraeli, of the threat of the "Russian bear" to Constantinople or India. But the whole map of eastern Europe was remodeled at Versailles with a view to guarding against the infection of Central Europe by the social views of the Russian government, and the threat to India does not arise from Russian armaments, but from the propagation of Russian social ideas. The issues of international politics have ceased to be purely political; they have become social issues.

At the time when England made her first appearance on the European diplomatic stage, political issues were also, as today, combined with social issues. Her representatives took their places at the Congress of Vienna, as they did a century later at the Congress of Versailles, on the morrow of a long war and of a momentous social revolution. On the earlier, as on the later occasion, England was the fosterer and organizer of the forces of reaction against revolution. She sought to restore Czarism in the twentieth century as she had for a time restored Bourbonism and divine right in the nineteenth. But the social revolutions she combated differed profoundly in the two instances. The French liberal revolution against feudalism and absolutism was, by a strange irony, to bring about that very power of the capitalist bourgeoisie upon which England's own world domination was to be founded. Could a supposition so extravagant be conceived as that England should have been endowed with true political insight, her interests would have been served at the time by encouraging what she fiercely opposed. Had she done so, and supported the

mild liberal aims of the French constitutionalists to establish a limited monarchy on the English pattern, their revolution would probably not have undergone a further development into Jacobinism, and the result which, despite the tooth-and-nail struggle of Tory reaction against it, was eventually attained, would have been brought about without a fraction of the political and military convulsions which opposition to it wantonly produced.

That result, the establishment in the nineteenth century of capitalist bourgeois rule, misleadingly termed "democracy," did not, in fact, alter the purely political character of European international issues. European national governments continued to be instruments for the promotion and defense, by diplomatic, economic, and military action and pressure, of the interests of the capitalist bourgeois class, as they had been the instruments for the exercise of national power by the same means under feudalism and absolutism. International relations remained political and were concerned with the same kind of issues. The rivalries, subjects of dispute and contention between national groups became, in truth, considerably intensified by the economic competition which was of the essence of bourgeois interests. Bourgeois Europe became to a far greater extent a cockpit of war while engaged in the "peaceful" pursuits of industry than it had been under landowning nobilities and divine monarchies. But political issues underwent little change in character.

It is quite otherwise after the Russian revolution. This was not, like the liberal revolution, a struggle

for control of the machinery of the state between two ruling classes already possessing economic power, but a revolt of the servile class against both those power-holding classes, and against the detention of economic means for private profit. The issue thus brought to a head was a challenge to the very structure of civilization, namely, its dependence upon servile labor and the limitation of its benefits to a relatively small ruling class. By transferring servile labor from the fields and villages to crowded factories and cities, the Industrial Revolution had transformed the mental condition of the servile classes from animal abjection to the possibilities of information, reading, discussion, and intelligence. The servile multitudes became capable of knowing and understanding. They no longer necessarily accepted the servitude imposed upon them by the private ownership of raw materials and instruments of production and by the slave system of minimum wages paid out of maximum private profits. That system of slavery which is, according to Aristotle, indispensable to the maintenance of civilization, is now in jeopardy. The bourgeoisie's own experience tends to show them that the ultimate outcome of social revolt, even if held down for centuries, is its triumph. The abolition of slavery is inevitable. The existence of a vast Socialist State where that abolition has already taken place is a perpetual reminder to bourgeois capitalist states of the ultimate inevitability of that consummation. As the British Foreign Office fully recognized in its White Paper on Russia, unless the Socialist State is destroyed, that emancipation of the servile classes from

wage-slavery "is bound to spread in one form or another over Europe and the whole world."

The social issue of the twentieth century cannot be met, like the social issue of the nineteenth, by concessions, compromises, Reform Bills. Those "democratic" concessions merely compelled the aristocratic ruling classes to share their privileges and power with the capitalist bourgeoisie. It extended the political power of the ruling classes in accordance with their economic power, and did not even impair the economic condition of the feudal aristocracy. No such concessions or adjustments are possible as regards the servile multitudes. For to abolish wage slavery means, not to reduce, but to abolish ruling class privilege and control. Wages cannot be increased or turned into profit sharing without reducing profits below the scale which makes private enterprise attractive, more especially when the expansion of such enterprise on any considerable scale is no longer possible, but constant shrinking is instead inevitable. By no economic or social "plan," by no adjustment or concession of capitalist ownership can the irreducible incompatibility between wage slavery and the private detention of the means of life be remedied. Coercion is the only alternative. While there were alternatives to the repression of liberal revolution in the nineteenth century, there are none in the social issues of the twentieth.

The ruthless repression which had, with the assistance of the Allied democracies, been applied to revolutionary outbreaks in Germany, Bavaria, Austria, Hungary, as well as in Switzerland and Spain, came

to be organized as a permanent means of control under demagogic terrorist dictators in chronically penurious, albeit victorious, Italy and vanquished Germany. Ample financial assistance was forthcoming from England and the United States, as well as from Milan and Essen industrialists to "save civilization." Appropriate gestures were at first called forth in democratic countries by the jettison of all the principles which had constituted the glorious political achievements of nineteenth-century "democracy." But it was clear to anyone, except the general public, that the principles of democracy, while they had proved useful in securing bourgeois liberty to control the State, were entirely inapplicable to keeping down and controlling the servile multitudes when inspired by a desire to liberate themselves from their condition of slavery. Coercion, unhampered by the pretense of democratic principles, was, in fact, the sole logical available means of meeting the situation. Mr. Winston Churchill was the first to set aside publicly the formal pretense of horror at the repudiation of "English" liberties, by paying a friendly visit to Signor Mussolini and declaring that, were he an Italian, he would be a Fascist. Once the ice was broken all nonsensical pudicity was set aside by blushing democrats who hastened to take Italian Fascism to their bosoms in four-power pacts, Locarno spirit, and gentlemen's agreements with bandits.

Democratic support was even more prompt and assiduous as regards Adolf Hitler's Nazi Germany. His accession to power was at once hailed with enthusiasm by *The Times* and English opinion. The

Italian Fascist chief, though a declared apostle of anti-Communism, was mainly concerned with purely national, though loudly aggressive aims. The Austrian fanatic was the first to shout and proclaim in the unequivocal language he uses so often that far-off divine event to which all postwar European politics move: the destruction of the Socialist State. That object being the goal of the whole capitalist world, there could be no question of placing any obstacle in the way of the German dictator's pursuit of it, or of checking any augmentation of power which might forward his preparation for so desirable a purpose. Well knowing this, and consequently assured of unlimited impunity, the Nazi chief proceeded to tear up the Versailles treaty as well as every other treaty into small scraps, to set aside all international law and civilized usage, thus blotting out any gain which the slaughter of ten million men might be supposed to have brought to humanity, and to build up a more barbaric German menace than prewar history had known since the days of Barbarossa.

The situation which has thus arisen has no parallel in recorded history. The so-called democracies developed a sudden and unprecedented enthusiasm for the ideals of unconditional pacifism, and adopted in fact as their guiding principle of policy the Sermon on the Mount, strictly refraining from resisting evil and being ever mindful to turn the other cheek. Not only did they afford the Teutonic chief every facility and assistance in restoring the blood-and-iron of German mail-fisted *Kultur* which "our glorious dead" had a few years before so inconsiderately given their

lives to check, but they waived what had formerly been regarded as their vital national interests, the sole legitimate aims of policy, and abandoned what had previously been accounted inviolable notions of civilized international law and national honor. Nothing like it had ever before been known. The revolution in all international relations which the situation has brought about, a revolution in political and diplomatic aims and methods, is more completely subversive than any conceivable revolution in the old social order. The strength, resources, reserves of power of the democratic countries are beyond question greater than any at the disposal of the terrorist lawless states, which notwithstanding their aggressive display of super-armaments and the truculence of their bellicism, are economically bankrupt and in every respect precarious in their whole existence. At any moment during their career, each act of lawlessness on their part, each menace to the vital interests of surviving civilized countries, could unquestionably have been checked by a mere display of resolution and authority on their part with no risk of an armed conflict. Any semblance of such an attitude has been studiously avoided, and the opposite attitude of eager demonstrations of amity and co-operation consistently adopted. Neither the most direct menaces to their interests and their very security, nor repeated assaults upon or slaying of their subjects and officials, nor the bombing, torpedoing, and sinking of both their merchant and war ships, nor even territorial attacks over their frontiers can divert the

democratic governments from their assiduity for the welfare and success of the lawless governments.

The ostensible explanation of that inversion of all hitherto known principles of international relations is an equally unparalleled pacifism. The policy of democratic government is to them an object of self-laudation, as preserving the world from the horrors of war. That official interpretation is a lie. At no time while lawless violence has been arming would a firm declaration that it would not be tolerated have necessitated recourse to force; the opposite course has had the opposite result; to assure the impunity of violence is not to prevent it; to charter military aggression is not to preserve peace. The balance of military and economic power is still, even after the results of that chartering of lawless bellicism, so great in favor of the democratic states that the risk of war is still fraught with more gravity for the aggressor states than for the democracies. They know it. The Italian military masquerade is of little account. The Italian people are valiant as assassins from the comparative safety of bombing-planes, but the heroes of Caporetto, Guadalajara, and the Ebro are too sensuously attached to life to be formidable in open combat. Nazi barbarism knows too well its own insecurity to court lightly the risk of again measuring its incompletely renovated strength against the resources of capitalist democracies. More than the risks of war, it dreads the risk of revolution.

So do the plutodemocracies. Their ostensible and abnormal pacifism, which takes the form of giving free course to mass massacre in every quarter of the

globe, is but a pretext serving them to confuse issues, to keep silent over their true motives, to conceal and disavow them. Not only have they encouraged and assisted the rise to power of lawless violence because that violence was directed against the menace of revolution and the Socialist State, but they have likewise abstained from any act, word, or gesture which might inflict damage on the fragile fabric of demagogy upon which the existence of the lawless states is precariously dependent. It is part of that flimsy fabric to impress their dupes with the semblances of independent power by hurling defiance and abuse on the democratic supporters without whose aid that factitious power could not stand for a day. These understand the nature and purpose of those bombastic displays of valiant fury as clearly as the lawless leaders understand that they may indulge in them as long as their pretended victims permit them to do so. They also understand that the capitalist democracies' toleration is unlimited, for, more than any humiliation and dishonor, more than mass massacres, more than damage to their own concrete interests, more than universal war, the capitalist democracies dread that the lawless rule of coercive terrorism should give place, as it needs must when it totters to the dust, to the establishment of Socialist societies.

The pretense that such toleration arises from infirmity of purpose, vacillation, or weakness, that it constitutes submission, abdication, surrender, is as fraudulent as the fiction that it is the outcome of pacific sentiments. It is true that the policy involves complete abandonment of the old aims of external

policy which defended national interests. But that abandonment is the result of deliberate choice. Faced with the alternatives of sacrificing their political interests and even their security or of incurring an even remote risk of the spread of social revolution, the capitalist governments do not hesitate. Their policy towards the lawless crusaders of anti-Communism is not one of passive acquiescence or weakness. It is one of resolute support, encouragement, assistance, and co-operation.

That co-operation presents, however, the gravest difficulties. The ideal ultimate aim of European policy embodied in the Nazi plan and the English "Four-Power Pact" to afford the anti-Communist crusaders facility of action "in the East," appeared till lately to be no nearer of attainment than it was twenty years ago, when its realization had to be deferred after the glaring failure of the first attempt to apply it. From a military point of view the destruction of the Socialist State, or the infliction of any considerable defeat upon it, even by the united forces of the capitalist states is, to say the least, exceedingly unlikely. The Socialist State disposes of a recognized superiority of armaments and effectives, of organized resources which render it entirely self-sustaining in war time, and it enjoys a notoriously advantageous geographical position. Moreover, the morale of combatants counts, as has been demonstrated in the Fascist attack upon Spain, for at least as much as a superiority in armaments. But further, such a concerted attack on the Socialist State would be the signal for the bursting into flame of all revolutionary forces in the

rear of the aggressors. Even supposing that the armed effectives of Germany, brutalized and stupefied by years of terrorism and propaganda, could be depended upon, the first major reverse in such a conflict—and no military authority can suppose that it would be a mere military promenade—would endanger the whole precarious edifice of repressive terrorism. If it did not bring about its immediate collapse or overthrow, it would suscitate incalculable forces allied to the Socialist State. China, incidentally, the scheme of Japanese co-operation which had been so largely counted upon having already proved more than questionable, would provide an inexhaustible source of effectives. The success of the Nazi-English plan of aggression against the Socialist State presupposes, in fact, an immediate, rapid, and continuous success. No competent German military authority would subscribe to such a forecast.

Attempts to bring about the destruction of the Socialist State by the promotion of internal agitation, conspiracy, and revolt, by the same methods as have been used in Austria, Czechoslovakia, Spain, France, and which were based on an entire incapacity to judge of the mental condition of Socialist populations, have likewise completely failed.

The task of capitalist policy has been still further complicated by the attitude and policy adopted by the Socialist State. Had it been truculently aggressive, the task of the European powers would have been greatly simplified. But the Russian Soviets employed the exactly opposite policy. The Socialist State revealed itself as the most genuinely pacifist state in

the world. It rigorously abstained from any form of provocation or threat of aggression, and in doing so carried conciliation and forbearance in the face of every possible provocation, insult, menace, and hostile act, to a degree which would have been accounted humiliating in any previously known state, but which eventually produced, by its consistency and calm perseverance, the opposite effect of imparting enhanced dignity to its power. The external relations of the Socialist State have been uniformly conciliating, without ceasing to be firm and without any compromise of principle. Soviet Russia lost no opportunity of co-operating with any other power, however hostile, in actions calculated to preserve peace, and had as a matter of ordinary decency as well as of policy, to be admitted to the League of Nations. It scrupulously honored undertaken obligations, so that its signature can be counted upon as no other diplomatic signature can. It abstained from active participation, open or secret, in any social unrest or uprising in other countries. No other European state has made less use than Soviet Russia of underground political methods, secret plots, and machinations. Its foreign political action remained open and aboveboard, and, unprecedented circumstance in the history of diplomacy, it found no occasion to employ lies, deceptions, indirect speech or action, or misrepresentations. Despite persistent accusations to the contrary, the Socialist State abstained from organized propaganda, revolutionary or other, except such as naturally and inevitably developed, irrespectively of any political action, by the normal diffusion of ideas and

literature and from sympathetic organizations independently arising in other countries, whether or not they allied themselves to the Communist International.

On the other hand, the co-operation of the democratic states with the lawless Fascist states, or indeed of the latter with one another, is rendered difficult by the fact that, repudiating as they do the minimum of international obligations, they are totally dishonorable. Their signatures, words, or promises are wholly worthless, and they cannot be accounted bound by any pact of agreement. Notwithstanding their initial dependence upon the support of the democratic states, such is their confident and well-founded knowledge that nothing can change the social passion of class interest upon which that support rests, or deprive them of the carte blanche with which it provides the anti-Communist crusaders, that these are in a position to deal with the democratic capitalist governments on a basis of threats and blackmail, and would not scruple, should the occasion present itself, to attack their patrons and destroy them.

England is thus confronted with a situation totally new in international politics. She can in that transformed situation place no absolute reliance on the methods that have served her in quite other circumstances. England has "muddled through" her long contest against the social change which was initiated by the French Revolution because that change, though she failed to perceive it, was in reality to her advantage. Her failure to achieve her purpose of putting down bourgeois liberal so-called democracy was,

despite her lack of insight into ultimate issues, to her own interest. Capitalist England successfully "muddled through," despite gross political misapprehension, in a world of prosperous and developing capitalism, which was therefore wholly favorable to her growth, whatever blunders she might commit. But that is no guarantee that she can "muddle through" in a world where capitalism is no longer developing and prospering, and which is in fact no longer purely capitalist. Because a shark can dominate in the ocean is not a reason for supposing that it can dominate when transported out of its element into a jungle. The success commonly set down to an ability to "muddle through" was to a large extent dependent upon England's possession of the economic means of doing so. Her ability to "muddle through" when no longer enjoying the supreme economic advantage of which she formerly disposed has yet to be tested.

Chapter Nine

THE LAST LEADER

DESPITE reduced resources that bear no comparison with those of which she at one time disposed, England is today playing in world affairs more prominent a part than she ever did at the height of her domination. Never has her political intrusion been more constant and general. England's postwar policy stands in sharp contrast in this respect with the "splendid isolation" which was her boast at the zenith of her power.

The abandonment of her traditional attitude is imposed upon England by necessity. Her prospects of security are no longer independent of other nations. They require her to seek every alliance she is able to form. Her command of the sea can no longer dispense with the assistance of other naval powers. England no longer enjoys her prewar insular security. Her feverish activity and interference in foreign diplomacy, the cultivation of her prestige and influence to the utmost limit of her ability to impose them, are not a measure of her power, but of the extent to which she realizes her weakness and her danger.

Her chosen weapons in the struggle she is waging are naturally those tortuous schemes, intrigues, negotiations, those byways and crooked ways of diplomatic manoeuvring in which she has always excelled

and has placed more reliance than in the exercise of force. War is indeed the prospect which she most dreads, and her anxiety to avoid it is not hypocritical. Yet England is driven to arm with an intensity she did not display on the eve of the most critical conflicts she has waged. For the first time in her history she is openly fitting herself out as a militarist state on a Continental scale and is facing the adoption of conscription. England is preparing for the final emergency, lest all the efforts of her diplomacy should fail to disengage her from the situation in which she finds herself placed.

Her acts prove that she is not unconscious of the gravity of that situation. It does not arise, as before the World War, from the concrete menace of one particular opponent or rival, but from a complex of conditions. England is fighting and preparing to fight to the last ditch, not, as previously, a specific antagonist, a rival power, France or Germany, but a world situation made up of a multitude of entangled and contradictory factors, a situation which leaves her as yet uncertain as to the particular antagonist she may have to confront. The situation presents the reverse of those conditions which made, a century ago, her rise to power possible, and secured for her that hegemony which she exercised during the nineteenth century. She is preparing to fight, not for her power against the power of other nations, but for a world order with which her mere existence is bound up.

In her far-flung diplomatic intervention and in the employment of the imponderable psychological assets of her prestige, which survives the more solid foun-

dations upon which it formerly rested, England enjoys considerable advantages. Her influence on the course of international relations is, in some respects, more real than it was when she was better able to dispense with it.

However it may suit the policies of prestige of the lawless powers to antagonize and defy England, stage violent campaigns of abuse against her, and challenge her to the verge—but only to the verge—of open hostilities, they know that their mere existence is dependent upon her support. The German Nazis have sedulously cultivated England's friendship during the period of their rise to power, and their first care is still to assure themselves of her acquiescence and co-operation. The Italian Fascists, though they have gone farther in defying and challenging England—Mussolini personally detests the English—are equally aware of the importance of that support. The only surviving "democratic" power of any moment on the Continent, France, has now become completely reduced to subservience to English policy, and regards itself as entirely dependent upon England for its security. The Quai d'Orsay is now scarcely more than a Continental annex of Whitehall. Small nations, such as Austria and Czechoslovakia, in their hour of desperate distress, telephone to England, as a burglared householder calls for the police. (Schuschnigg rang up London on the fateful night when the German Nazis crossed the border, but the line was reported to be "engaged.") Like the other lawless powers, Japan recognizes that the injuries it openly inflicts on English interests can be indulged in only

so long as it can count on England's secret sympathy with its aims. The United States of America has no other conception of external policy than to follow the leadership of England, to conform to her wishes, and to act, if at all, in conjunction with her, although it is hard to see what advantage it can hope to derive from such a policy.

There are good reasons why the support of England, despite her greatly reduced strength and power, is sought and her guidance valued. Apart from the still considerable residue of her accumulated reserves of power and credit, which like those of the medieval Catholic Church remain a momentous factor, even though they are but a shadow of what they formerly were, England is the natural leader of a cause which is common to all capitalist states. Between the sovereign states which occupy the cockpit of Europe, there are sharp conflicts of interests, as there have always been and will inevitably be so long as there are independent sovereign nations. But those conflicts and clashing interests are overshadowed by a vital interest which is common to all: the protection of capitalist society against the dangers of social change. In the defense of that cause England is the natural and trustiest leader. No other European nation's existence is so deeply bound up with the fabric of bourgeois capitalist society as the nation where that society had its origin, and whose whole power and influence have, from the beginning, rested exclusively upon it. Throughout her career England has shown herself the most determined, tenacious, and resourceful opponent of social change. Her record is that of

the champion of reaction against change in every form. Unlike other countries England's steadfast fidelity to the cause of reaction can be counted upon not to be modified or deflected by internal factors or dissensions. England is in this respect far more reliable than even Nazi Germany. No one can doubt that, should the regime of Nazi terrorism collapse, there would be a strong probability of its place being taken by a Socialist or Soviet regime. No such possibility exists in England. The unvarying pursuit of a resolute reactionary policy against social change is, in England, independent of the constitution of the government of the day, and is safe from any danger of effective opposition or of any manifestation of seditious intelligence on the part of the servile classes or conditioned intelligentsia. England is, properly speaking, the most steadfastly and immutably reactionary country in the world, the natural bulwark and defender of the vested interests of established power. She can always be trusted, if in nothing else, to be the most determined promoter of any reactionary policy or cause. England is therefore, in the present situation of the capitalist world, the natural and obvious leader.

But her leadership and the unprecedented activity of her widespread diplomatic intervention are, nevertheless, largely of her own seeking. No opportunity has been neglected by England since the war to improve her means of exercising her influence.

When, at Versailles, a President of the United States took for the first time—as had England a century earlier—his seat at a European conference, Eu-

ropean politicians were placed in the embarrassing situation of having to take serious account of naïve transatlantic political notions. The United States had saved England. The dreams of the American professor of history, innocent of the slightest comprehension of European history, could not be summarily waived aside with a smile. They were political notions from Cloud-Cuckoo-Land. A League of Nations! A Holy Covenant after a Biblical pattern! England proved equal to the embarrassing situation. She perceived the use which might be made of the new international talking-shop; the opportune field it offered for the new war of schemes and plots in which she was now called upon to engage. The League of Nations from Cloud-Cuckoo-Land, absurd for the visionary purpose for which it was ostensibly intended, was established as an instrument of bland and suave British control over other nations.

Her first task—somewhat reminiscent of old prewar nationalistic policies, and insufficiently appreciative of the new conditions—was to check France, who, for a brief moment, found herself, to her own surprise and excitement, apparently cock of the walk on the Continent, in a stage setting, flimsy enough in reality, suggestive of Napoleonic glory. France had, cunningly, as she conceived, devoted herself at Versailles to establishing what she termed a *cordon sanitaire* of petty states round Bolshevik Russia to preserve Germany and the rest of Europe from infection. Pilsudski's Poland and the Little Entente states served also the double purpose of drawing a ring round Germany, which, France imagined, might

be regarded as her eastern outposts, now that a Russian ally against the ever-present German menace was no longer possible. Before the ink was dry on the peace treaties, England, falling back on her old policy of so-called balance of power, turned pro-Hun. She shed tears over underfed German children while she starved Russian children as callously as she is helping to massacre Spanish ones. After acting as Germany's protector against France's mean and vindictive desire to reduce Germany to harmlessness and protect herself against the quite visionary apprehension of German rearmament and a recrudescence of the Hun menace, England secured the admission of the late enemy to the League. Chamberlain II, wearing Chamberlain I's monocle and speaking diplomatic French, engineered Locarno and the Four Power Pact. The scheme, to be later revived as the aim of policy by Chamberlain III, had been shaping and maturing for some years. It had itself revived an old ideal of Chamberlain I, who had repeatedly sought to align England with German militarism in the days before the outbreak of the World War. The ground had been thoroughly prepared for it by the British ambassador in Berlin, Lord D'Abernon, a gentleman with a long financial record in the East, not uninterested in oil, as well as art and horseracing. Ramsay MacDonald, during his short first Premiership, had formulated it, after contacts with Dr. Cuno of Berlin. Sir Henri Deterding, of Royal Dutch and White Russian leagues, was also deeply interested in it, and had had occasion to talk it over with Dr. Rosenberg and a Dr. George Bell, friends and emis-

saries of a certain as yet little known Adolf Hitler. The Chamberlain dynasty's Four-Power Pact, presented to the world as a great achievement of "pacification," was in fact the title of the English edition of what was known in Germany as the Rosenberg Plan, and had been mooted in some form or other ever since the Armistice by almost everyone. While hailed as a triumph of pacifism, it was at the same time recognized even by the English Conservative Press as also serving to "forge a ring round Russia." The Four-Power Pact provides for "security in the West," resting on the questionable foundation of the word of honor of German and Italian "gentlemen," while discreetly abstaining from any reference to "the East," a term used in diplomatic language to refer to the Socialist State. It is, in fact, the necessary preliminary step towards launching the anti-Soviet crusade by the united capitalist powers—the ultimate goal of all postwar international diplomacy.

The Locarno Pact and the solicitous admission of Germany to the League served also England's object of bringing down the French Chantecleer from his provisional position on the top of the European dunghill. France was asked to disarm, as a friendly gesture to Brother Hun, who, long before the Nazi seizure of power, was encouraged and assisted to rearm intensely, such rearming being consistently denied by English "observers." The further steps by which, in a surprisingly short time, France was taken down from her momentary position of visionary Continental hegemony and reduced to her present position of vassal and tributary to England—the breaking up of

her Eastern and Balkan alliances with small states which, with the rise of Nazi Germany, automatically passed over to the stronger side, the financial pressure exercised from London over French currency and credits, and finally the encirclement of France by the Fascist occupation of Spain—need not be recapitulated here. But it should be noted that the downfall, unparalleled in its completeness and rapidity, though deliberately and consistently brought about by her English "ally," is not exclusively due to England's action. At each step in the process, France could have resisted such action and was in a position to do so safely and effectively. Her failure to do so, her passive acquiescence in the engineering of her own ruin, have been due to the very same causes which are determining England herself to act in a similar manner. France's submission to English policy has been and is inspired by the same considerations which determine that policy itself; in each case the major interest of the social issue overrules the most vital national interests. Like England and any other "democratic" state, France is ruled, whatever the color of the government in office, by an oligarchy of dominating financial interests. No labor government or popular front can affect that "democratic" constitution of an industrially developed country. The only difference between present-day France and England in this respect is that the popular opposition, which is negligible in England, is much more considerable, more organized, and more clear-sighted in France. But that difference has no appreciable effect on foreign policy. Present French gov-

ernments are the elected mandatories of an overwhelming popular-front electoral majority, heavily Communist and with a large Communist representation in the Chamber. But nevertheless government policy, administration, the judiciary and the police, the diplomatic representation, the army command are not essentially different from what they would be or have been when acting as the organs of the most reactionary electoral majority. Such is the inevitable character of a capitalist "democracy." As in England, every manifestation of "public opinion" which comes under the *prima facie* notice of a casual observer, the views and conversations of people, literature, stage, cinema, the press are to all intents and purposes Fascist. In reality, the Communist organ, *L'Humanité,* has one of the largest circulations of any paper throughout France. But its circulation is almost exclusively among the workers, and it is subject to constant police prosecutions and condemnations. That "public opinion" is submerged, invisible, and has no concrete effect upon the broad lines of policy, more particularly foreign policy. This is governed by the dominant financial and industrial interests, the "two hundred families," the *Comité des Forges.* And the "public opinion" which is of account and is manifest is that which openly declares that it would prefer seeing Hitler's troops in Paris and Mussolini's in Morocco than to see a "popular front" in actual power.

The present well-nigh desperate situation of France, the normal and obvious outcome of which would seem to be the eventual wiping off of the

country from the map, is worth noting here, for it is the logical result of the same situation which, in a lesser degree, England occupies, and of the selfsame policies which England is sedulously pursuing. England has consistently and deliberately helped to bring about that French situation which reduces that country to absolute dependence upon her, but that process has been greatly facilitated by the motives of the governing powers of France herself, which are identical in their aims and character with those of England. England is the accepted leader, and that leadership is accepted in "democratic" countries because its goals and principles are one with their own, and England's resources, experience, and ability in carrying them out are superior to those of other democracies. When in discussions of the present European situation the "democracies" are opposed to the Fascist dictatorships, the former term means England and France, and since the policy of the latter is entirely subject to the direction of Whitehall, the expression denotes in reality England.

The use made by England of the League of Nations to exercise her diplomatic guidance and persuasion on other nations collectively brought her face to face with those irreducible contradictions which, in the postwar situation, sickly over the native hue of resolution, not in national policies alone, but in all capitalist policy. The primary ostensible purpose of the League was to check armed conflicts by the application of diplomatic and economic pressure upon any wanton aggressor. Although the notion that a vital general conflict between major powers could

be averted, that war could be put an end to by a league of armed, intriguing, sovereign states, appertains clearly to the politics of Cloud-Cuckoo-Land, yet there was nothing wildly extravagant and impractical in the hope of checking local outbreaks of lawless aggression by those means. In point of fact this could have been done with comparative ease in every one of the instances which have occurred since the foundation of the League of Nations. The first instance to present itself was the lawless seizure in October, 1920, of Vilna by a Polish force under General Zeligovski two days after Poland had signed a declaration in the presence of a League of Nations commission officially recognizing Vilna as Lithuanian territory. Nothing would have been easier than to enforce the observance of treaties by simple diplomatic and economic pressure. This was not attempted. The answer of the League of Nations to the problem posed was equivalent to that of a British Foreign Minister when an inconvenient question is put in the House of Commons: silence. Why? Because to humiliate Poland, which was regarded as a more important outpost of the line of defense or attack against the Socialist State than it is now, would have weakened her utility as such.

The case was a very minor one; its importance small. But in every subsequent instance the Geneva talking-shop has functioned in exactly the same manner when the issues have been major, and their importance vital. Those "failures," so-called, have not been due to any intrinsic inability to cope with the situations through lack of means to enforce a firm

and determined decision; they have not been due to any difficulty in the way of arriving at such decisions. They have been, in each instance, due to a deliberate determination not to enforce; in each case, that determination has arisen from the same motive and, in each case, the determination not to act has been imposed upon the assembly by the initiative and influence of England.

The first case of importance which established the precedent followed in every other was the Japanese aggression on China which led to the annexation of Manchuria in the form of a puppet state. In that instance the flagrant breach of obligations under the League Covenant, the Kellogg Pact, and the Washington Naval Treaty, was at once recognized and Japan was declared an aggressor within every meaning of the Constitution of the League. Further, the clear operation of the League was strengthened and supported by the intervention of the State Department of the United States with a strong proposal for co-operation. At England's suggestion the League followed up its findings with characteristic dilatoriness by sending a commission on a cruise to the Far East to "report" on the situation. After a delightful visit to their Japanese friends, who dined and wined them with grinning hospitality and conducted them on a tour through now-annexed Manchuria transformed into a puppet state, the Lytton Commission composed a long and verbose report which informed the world that the Japanese had in fact attacked and annexed Manchuria and set up a puppet state there. Smiling Sir John Simon, whose enthusiastic pro-Japanese sen-

timents were notorious, recognized that the events reported some four months before in the world press were indeed as stated, that Japan had violated three treaties and formed an "independent" state in Manchuria. He concluded amid much verbiage that it would be "unwise" to do anything about it, and that Manchuria should become, as it had become some months previously, an "independent" state under the aggressors' protection.

The *Saturday Review* commented, "Sir John Simon is to be warmly congratulated upon his refusal to associate this country with the American note to Japan. His attitude throughout the whole Manchurian crisis has been marked by a common sense and a regard for the true interests of Great Britain that have not been displayed by any of his predecessors." Quincy Howe comments, "At every turn, Sir John has taken care not to antagonize the Japanese, in the hope that they might attack Britain's supreme rival in Asia—the Soviet Union."

The next major outbreak of militarist lawlessness placed England before a new dilemma, and subjected her policy to an acid test. In Northern China she had no important concrete interests that could qualify her satisfaction at seeing Japan take up her position in Manchuria for the important eastern flank co-operation in the Rosenberg anti-Soviet crusade. The Fascist Abyssinian adventure was another matter; it was a direct challenge and menace to the Sudan, which would be at the mercy of the occupants of the Lake Tana region, the sources of the Blue Nile; it was a menace to the even more vital life line to India. There

could, in fact, scarcely be conceived a more direct single move threatening the Empire. The new Fascist adventure was a reckless, almost desperate one. Mussolini's position was at the moment one of the most serious he had had to face. Italy was bankrupt and full of growing rumbles of dissatisfaction. Something had to be done, which in terms of Fascism meant some theatrical adventure to stifle hunger and discontent under the hurrahs of inflated prestige. Negotiations had long been on foot with the Fascist Spain of Primo de Rivera for some combined action and deal which would give Mussolini a base in the Balearic Islands in exchange for assistance in supporting the tottering Spanish regime. Affable Sir Austen Chamberlain had made important advances in connection with the plan. After hearty interviews with the anxious Italian chieftain at Leghorn, he had cruised over to Spain to proffer the encouragement of cheering words to the Spanish tyrants. But the whole scheme was held up by the obstinate nationalist pride of the Spaniards, who, greatly as they admired the Italian bandit, could not be brought to give him definite assurances as to cessions of Spanish territory. An interview with Hitler, newly installed in the saddle in Germany, was even more disappointing. The shabby pupil of Mussolini proved intractable as to affording him an opportunity for the necessary triumph. Yet something had to be done, and Abyssinia seemed the only available field of glory at the moment. The hearty sympathy shown by Austen Chamberlain afforded hopes that the English obstacle could, somehow or other, be surmounted. The

decisive encouragement was given by M. Pierre Laval, the most rascally politician that France has produced for a long time. He came over to be feted in Rome, held very secret transactions with Mussolini, the upshot of which were that he sold the skin of the Lion of Judah and his good offices with England and the League in exchange for assurances of abstention from menaces to France, and returned to Paris to be acclaimed as the "savior of peace." Laval then went to London, and the notorious plan was concocted with the English Hoare. The plot, however, nearly broke down owing to the unexpected indignation aroused by the breath-taking baseness of its cynical infamy, which necessitated the gesture of rusticating for the moment the ignoble Hoare. There was nothing for England to do in the circumstances but to observe her obligations under international law, to permit the application of economic sanctions, and to make a cautious gesture of naval firmness against the Fascist aggressor.

The latter's situation was now utterly desperate. There was only a two-months' supply of petrol with which to carry on. The slightest move on the part of the English fleet, which Mussolini had spoken of as "so much scrap iron," would have burst the whole bubble of bluff of Italian Fascism. Mussolini had to beg for mercy. The King of the Belgians went to London "to consult a dentist." It is said that he was the bearer of a message from the King of Italy, imploring that Mussolini should be spared, for if he were brought down, a Socialist regime would certainly be established and he, the contemptible little King

who had sold his country, would lose his dishonorable crown. This was also in accord with the information of the Foreign Office, and Sir Austen Chamberlain, from his retirement, declared that "the fall of Mussolini would involve Italy in a fresh bout of anarchy and internal disturbances which would form a pretext for further unrest in Europe." The British Fleet was withdrawn from the western Mediterranean, and the application of "sanctions" became no more than nominal.

England's Abyssinian surrender established the pattern of all subsequent policy, which thenceforth proceeded on its course with a crescendo of overt and cynical support of the cause of Fascism. It was far more definite as regards the German *Führer* who had been helped to power with subsidies of English money, than as regards the first Italian adventure, and there no longer was any mention of sanctions. As Lloyd George stated in the House of Commons, "If the powers succeed in overthrowing Naziism in Germany, what will follow? Not a Conservative, Socialist, or Liberal regime, but extreme Communism." Everything would be sacrificed, even the empire, even security, rather than contemplate such a possibility. The Versailles treaty could be torn up, the menace of armed and truculent Germany, to avert which five million "glorious dead" had given their lives, could be restored more gruesome than ever before, the Rhineland could be occupied and fortified, Austria, Czechoslovakia could be handed over to the Hun, and there would be only friendly conversations to ascertain the Hun's further wishes.

There is, in the whole mounting series of "capitulations," no question of "weakness" or "unpreparedness" on the part of England. At the time of the occupation of the Rhineland, all the German General Staff urged their opposition to what they regarded as a foolhardy venture. Hitler had good grounds for assurance. The Nazi *Führer* must be given credit for being a far cleverer strategist than the blustering Mussolini. His *Blitzstossen* are even more spectacular and appear bolder and more reckless. But in reality he is more prudent. Not a step has he taken without first making perfectly sure of the ground, that is, of England's attitude. Not a soldier has been moved to the Rhine or across the Austrian border without having obtained full assurance of her passive complicity.

English policy, as it presented itself to the outer world, having progressed from a momentary show of resistance to Fascist aggression in the defense of her national interests to acquiescence, from acquiescence to passive complicity, passed from complicity to active and overt support, with the Four-Power Pact, alias the Rosenberg plan, as declared objective.

The Fascist attack on Spain, first conceived by Hitler and Mussolini as a *Blitzstoss* on the Hitlerian model, failed in that respect, and turned out, owing to profound miscalculations, a general rehearsal of the conflict towards which all postwar policy has been moving. The matter was far too serious and delicate to be entrusted to the procedure of the League of Nations, whence, moreover, the Fascist powers had withdrawn. England, as regards the Spanish re-

hearsal, withdrew likewise. She established an ostensible international talking-shop of her own, safe under her thumb in London, bearing the sardonic name of "Nonintervention Committee."

England has justified the trust placed upon her as a leader in postwar politics, and has played her historical part as the promoter of reaction. But, while the policy she has consistently pursued in that respect has been in perfect accordance with her invariable political tradition, it presents a remarkable new feature which arises not out of any departure from that tradition, but out of the conditions of the changed world in which it operates. English foreign policy and the first duty of those to whom the duty of carrying it out is intrusted has been defined over and over with a clearness not equaled in any other country as the defence of English interests and specifically of English possessions and of the Empire. We are witnessing for the first time in history the systematic sacrifice of those national interests to the promotion and support of the general cause of reaction against the menace of social change. The latter ideological motive is held, in the view of the leaders of English policy, to have precedence in every instance over the concrete national interests which have hitherto been the first and absolute aims of all political action. England has not hesitated to jeopardize hopelessly what she had formerly regarded as the life line of the Empire, the road to India through the Mediterranean. England, whose foreign policy hinged for generations on her interest in maintaining control over the Straits of the Dardanelles, has now

silently accepted the loss of her control over the Straits of Gibraltar, and has, without raising a finger or uttering a word, submitted to the systematic siege of the Rock by German guns. She has jeopardized almost to the same extent her command of the Suez Canal; she is cheerfully negotiating the virtual surrender of her command of the whole Mediterranean. Positions for which she was once prepared to face a general European war on the slightest challenge to her supremacy have now been surrendered without so much as a protest. In 1896 England was prepared to go to war with France because a handful of men had hoisted the French flag on the White Nile, and she declared that "France must decide whether she cares to fight the matter out in the Channel." In 1936 she acquiesced almost without a protest in the complete control by Italy of the sources of the Blue Nile. In 1900 England sent a military expedition to China when her missionaries and officials were menaced by the Chinese; today she stands by while her officials are shot and the whole of her Chinese interests are threatened by the Japanese. In 1850 England did not hesitate to contemplate a general war in the Near East because a Portuguese naturalized British subject had been maltreated in a street riot; today her ambassadors and consuls are shot at and killed by Japanese or Italians without England taking any steps concerning those incidents. In 1904 the accidental hitting of an English trawler in a fog by a gun fired from the Russian Baltic fleet brought on a crisis; the *Daily Mail* wrote: "As to the action which should be taken by this country, there can be

little doubt. If the Baltic fleet fired by accident, such a fleet is not to be trusted on the high seas, where its presence will endanger every vessel under our flag. If it did not fire by accident, the incident is an act of war and a weak and wanton act which will be condemned by the common judgment of humanity as a crime unparalleled in modern history." Today British ships, both merchant and of the Royal Navy, are bombed and sunk, British seamen and bluejackets killed, and not only does England take no step, but her ministers refuse to answer questions on the subject in the House of Commons, and passionately support the aggressors. England's security at home, her very existence, are directly menaced as they have never been before, but England steadfastly remains notwithstanding the mainstay and support of the aggressors from whom those vital menaces come.

Were England's submissiveness to the interests of the lawless powers due, as she has suggested, to "unpreparedness," to relative weakness and impotence, it would argue a more advanced decay of her late imperial power than any critic would venture to predicate. It would be proof of the complete ruin of that power, and would indicate that England has fallen to the rank of a second- or third-rate nation. To that conclusion no English opinion could, of course, bring itself to subscribe. And the plea is in fact demonstrably but a prevaricating subterfuge of the same kind as most other grounds adduced by her ministers to excuse their policies. The policy consistently followed by postwar English governments has not been dictated by relative weakness or by timidity, but has

been imposed by England's desire to put down every condition which holds, even remotely, a menace of social revolution, and to foster by every means, at every cost and sacrifice, the powers whose declared object and whose methods of coercion, terrorism, and aggression are directed to that end.

England's unconditional subordination of every aim, including her own vital interests, to the cause of reaction against social change fully justifies her leadership of the capitalist world at the present day. In the accomplishment of her mission she brings to bear in a high degree all the astuteness and perfected arts of devious intrigue for which she is justly reputed. The imponderable prestige which England is still able to command consists largely, or mainly, in the confidence felt in that ability. A belief similar to that held by the English themselves in England's proverbial capacity to "muddle through," and in some manner or other to "come out top" inspires general political opinion, which is not, as a rule, remarkably profound in its impressions.

Is that confidence justified? That is the question which presents itself to all who still believe, whether in hope or fear, in the traditional astuteness of English policy. Neville Chamberlain himself pointed out that the character of that policy has never varied. In his already cited characterization of Queen Elizabeth's policy, Green remarks that "of political wisdom, in its larger and more generous sense, Elizabeth had little or none." Nothing in the policy of her successors indicates that the deficiency has been amended. They have invariably shown a singular in-

capacity for taking the long view. From the time of her first rise to power until the present day the general aims pursued by England's foreign policy have again and again resulted in disaster to herself, and if the effects of those disasters have been more or less neutralized, if she has "muddled through," that has not been thanks to her having learned any lesson from them, but to the enormous reserves of power of which she disposed and which have enabled her to avoid the worst consequences of her blindness.

England completely failed to appreciate the boundless possibilities of the empire of which she had laid the foundations in America. She lost it through sheer stupidity and the obstinate perversity of her prejudices. By doing so, she handicapped the development of her whole subsequent imperial expansion. She was compelled to disinterest herself from that development, to loosen the bonds between the interests of her overseas dominions and her own, and only when it was too late, and the time for considered organization was long past, has she bethought herself of attempting to weld her empire into effective unity. By her entire lack of foresight, and the shortsighted selfishness of her policy, she has prepared the premature and complete dissolution of that empire.

English leadership of reaction in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was directed against those powers of bourgeois capitalism and industrialism upon which her own outstanding advantage was to be founded. Her blind panic at the eighteenth-century liberal revolution helped to raise the very dangers which she most dreaded. In short, it has been

England's whole policy throughout the century of her power to nurse to vigorous maturity those forces of social change against which she is now arrayed in a life-and-death struggle.

Every power which the policy of England has sedulously built up has turned into an opponent menacing her existence. She brought into being German militarism when she set up the power of Prussia in order to "conquer Canada in Germany." Through over a century and a half she has unremittingly fostered the monstrous growth of that aggressive barbarism which has been the constant menace to European peace. The Germans have been charged with incapacity to understand the psychology of their opponents. But the same charge could with at least equal justice be levied against the English. They have persistently thought of the Germans as a people chiefly interested in music and metaphysics. In a social and rational society based upon those principles which one of their Jewish exiles and outcasts has been foremost in elucidating, the German people would, there can be no doubt, prove eminently peaceful, industrious, and intelligent. Had England and her allies favored, in 1918-19, instead of opposing by every means in their power such development, the German people might already have proved their true qualities. But as a military and militarist nation the Germans, who destroyed ancient civilization, are ever mindful of that achievement as of their proudest title to glory. In their internecine strifes, which destroyed half the population of central Europe, they missed the Renaissance upon which the cultural de-

velopment of modern civilization, such as it is, has been founded, and remain the barbarians of Europe. Swollen with the monstrous and bitter vanity and arrogance which invariably accompanies a rankling sense of inferiority, they exult in the defiance of every cultural value and in holding only to the barbaric faith in brute force. Whether under a Brandenburg princeling, a Bismarck, a Hohenzollern all-highest, or a Nazi *Führer,* that military Germany fostered from first to last by England has been the main and constant menace to the peace of Europe and of the world.

Through the express good offices of England, brutal Prussianism was encouraged to swell itself out by englobing Silesia, Poland, Saxony, Schleswig-Holstein, as it has, through the same good offices, englobed Austria. Grown to full stature by England's support, further support and co-operation were persistently offered to her by the first Chamberlain up to almost the eve of the conflict which sealed the decay of England's domination. No sooner was that conflict brought to a bungled conclusion than Bourbonlike England took up once more the task of raising up again the Frankenstein spectre by which her existence is again and more imminently threatened.

England created in like manner the barbaric power of Japan. She built, equipped, trained the Japanese navy, bore Japan to power, financed it, with the eventual result that her own vast interests in the Far East are now swept aside and her Indian empire threatened by the opponent she has so sedulously

created for herself, and who now proclaims his contempt for her decayed power.

Almost every one of England's major armed conflicts—the Crimean War, the Afghan War, the Boer War—has been a blunder which has brought her more material and moral loss than advantage, and she managed to turn the most strenuous conflict of all into the ruin of the victors and the triumph of the vanquished. She has, with almost uncanny consistence, backed the wrong horse. England strained every resource of her trickery and financial support to secure the success of the secessionist slave-owning states of America, in the same manner as she is now aiding and applauding rebellion in Spain, with the same gross miscalculation, the same misunderstanding of the issues and of her interests. England finds herself forced by the accumulated blunders of her stupidity to cling to her traditional opponent, France, as the sole ally left to her on the Continent, after she has, by her ceaseless efforts, so weakened and imperiled that ally as almost to deprive the support of any practical value.

It would be difficult to point in the history of any other nation, except that of Catholic Spain, to a more unbroken record of blundering, blind political incapacity, and total lack of intelligent prevision. England has nevertheless managed hitherto to exercise and extend her power despite that record, and it is that luck with which she appears to have been favored when her acts and policies seemed calculated to bring about the opposite result which has given rise, both in her own belief and in the minds of outside

observers, to a superstitious confidence in her capacity to "muddle through," to extricate herself from the results of her blunders, and to turn disaster into eventual triumph. But that supposed capacity has not been the effect of fortuitous luck any more than it has been the result of any peculiar ability. England's supposed capacity for successful tenacity and recovery has been the very natural outcome of an economic power which was practically unlimited and of the accumulated reserve of resources that resulted from it. There is nothing very marvelous in her having more than survived the loss of her overseas dominions and the series of defeats which she sustained at the beginning of her career in the eighteenth century, when she was gorged with the wealth of India and her industrial hegemony was developing; or in her having finally managed to redeem her humiliation and defeat and save her face in South Africa by using the entire military resources of her empire to gain mastery of a couple of little settlements of farmers; or her having come out of the desperate position in which she was brought to in the German war by using her credit with America—and dishonoring her obligation.

Her resources have been supplemented by an undoubted ability of astute dealing with particular situations and of persistently pursuing the objects she has had in view. England has been, and is, clever, ingenious, cunning—but she is not intelligent. To be intelligent is to understand—*intelligere*. The thought which understands as clearly the premises and assumptions upon which it proceeds to build, as the

practical superstructure which it erects upon them, may be termed intelligent. English politicians have seldom understood either the premises or the ultimate consequences of the schemes and intrigues which their cunning has carried to a successful, but limited, issue. They have excelled in craft, but not in statecraft.

Those politicians are today applying, to cope with a situation more desperate than any with which England has been confronted, the traditional methods of English policy and using the hollow prestige of England's former influence, but without the resources by which these were formerly backed. England identifies herself today in her policy with the lawless barbarism of Germany and of Japan which she has fostered, and with that of Italian gangsterdom, because she sees in their uncontrolled and unscrupulous violence a weapon against the menace of social change and, above all, against the Socialist State which permanently represents that dreaded menace. She is doing so with ever-increasing ardor and recklessness even though she knows that she is jeopardizing her vital interests and once more raising up for herself an opponent which has already brought her to the verge of destruction, and that another such encounter is likely to bring about her final annihilation. But such is the fierceness of her reactionary passion and her dread of fundamental issues that she subordinates all other interests to that passion, and, confronted with the choice, does not hesitate to sacrifice all else to her haunting obsession. Such a policy is not pru-

dence or foresighted astuteness; it is a desperate gambler's recklessness.

The path upon which English foreign policy is engaged is the logical continuation of her past tradition, and it is wholly inconceivable that she should abandon it, whatever party be at the helm. But at the same time, operating as it does in circumstances which have no precedent in her history, it has brought about a reversal in some of the main characteristics of her traditional policy. That policy has always prided itself in being "practical," in placing England's concrete interests first. Today those concrete interests are ruthlessly subordinated to a general and abstract end. From being "practical," English policy has become "ideological." With the progressive intensification of that change it has even become in part conscious and deliberate. A new language has had to be adopted. One of the most pronounced characteristics of English political language, its moralistic hypocrisy, shows signs of breaking down. The objects of English policy have of late come to be pleaded in terms, not of moral idealism, but of what used to be called in the days of Bismarck *"Realpolitik,"* or is now denoted by the impudic blatancy of Fascist defiance as "realism." Chamberlain III and his confederates, adopting the language of berserker Japanese militarists, of a Mussolini and a Hitler, claim to be "realists."

"Realism" does not, in that political vocabulary, mean a bold endeavor to face facts, to be intellectually, if not politically honest. It denotes no profound grasp or understanding of realities. It does not pos-

tulate farsighted prevision and wisdom. Nothing could be more remote from Fascist "realism" than those connotations. The Fascist "realism" of raging Japanese militarists, of bellowing Fascist bankrupt demagogues, of Chamberlains, is even shallower in its apprehension of realities than any other type of policy. What is denoted by the term, as thus employed, is the casting aside of moralistic and idealistic camouflages formerly employed to cloak indecent rascalities. The synonyms for such "realism" are not intellectual honesty, understanding, wisdom, but effrontery, and defiant insolence. Fascist "realism" is elegantly paraphrased by its Italian practitioners with the delicate phrase chosen as their motto *Me ne frego!* (The phrase is not translatable into polite English—as yet.)

The policy followed by the British government in the latter postwar period, its invariable support and protection of lawless, unscrupulous, and brutal Fascism, the sabotage of the League of Nations, the surrender of Abyssinia to conquest by poison gas, the abandonment of China to Japanese savagery, of Austria to Nazi sadism, the unspeakable outrage of its co-operation in the assassination of democratic Spain, is the basest, most contemptible, and most criminal recorded in history. But it is not even intelligent from the point of view of the objects and interests which it is intended to defend.

What are, "realistically" speaking, the aims towards which that growing accumulation of infamies is ultimately directed? In their passionate anxiety to promote by every means all forces calculated to beat

down the menace of social revolution, the English government and the English ruling classes have fostered the growth of lawless powers which are now a direct menace to the security and existence of England herself. The endeavor of English policy is to divert that menace without, at the same time, endangering or impairing the strength of the powers of reactionary repression. Its present endeavor is to bring about the closest possible friendly *rapprochement* with those powers, to co-operate with them and to gratify, as far as humanly possible, their desires, as by the gift of colonies, financial assistance, etc., and to renew, in fact, a Four-Power Pact, securing—as far as their words or signatures can count as security of any sort—nonaggression "in the West" and a "free hand in the East." It is, however, by no means certain that the essentially cautious Nazi *Führer* will account it expedient to observe the geographical conditions of the pact. None realizes more clearly than he does the formidable character of the task "in the East." The secure strength of the Socialist State has been such as to cause prolonged hesitation in the carrying out of the Rosenberg plan. It has even arrested the even more impetuous desire of berserker Japanese militarism to attack it. It has caused the Nazi *Führer* himself to delay until too late his first plan for a lightning annihilation of Czechoslovakia. Moreover the Spanish assassination, originally planned to be at most a three-months' job, has demonstrated that such an assassination of a people, even practically unarmed, defending its existence against the horror of the Fascist scourge, is not, with all the assistance of

the zealous and active "nonintervention" of England herself and her French lackeys, the simple matter it was conceived to be. That assassination has not yet, at the time of this writing, succeeded; and even should it "succeed" it is not at all clear that the trouble, which has bled Nazi and Italian Fascism of a large measure of their "preparations," would be any nearer a satisfactory end. The Nipponese experience in China so strongly confirms the Spanish experience that it is more than doubtful that the Japanese co-operation in the Rosenberg plan on the eastern flank of the Socialist State can any longer be reckoned as being a factor of much account.

Further, Nazi experience has meanwhile also shown that the unconditional devotion of England, and consequently of Fascist-capitalist ruled France, to the protection of Nazi prestige is such that almost any object needed to maintain that prestige can be obtained without military risks, and with assured confidence in their co-operation. The early dependence of Nazidom upon that favor and co-operation has, in fact, turned, thanks to the unexpected and unlimited measure in which it has proved justified, into contempt. That co-operation has placed the fortified and intensively growing power of Nazi Germany in a position to dispense with it, if need be. The mere maintenance of Nazi and Italian Fascist prestige demands ceaseless triumphs—in the same manner as did the Fascist empire of Napoleon III. The fanaticized Nazi youth have been taught to sing: "The Germans possess Germany today; tomorrow they shall possess the world!" Should the difficult

adventure against the Socialist State have to be indefinitely postponed, it matters little that the conquest of the world should begin in the West.

To deal the deathblow to an already crippled England would be a pretty manner of beginning the conquest of the world. It would be what mathematicians call an "elegant solution." Bold and ambitious as may seem the plan of a frontal attack on the quondam mistress of the world, it might prove less formidable an enterprise than the crusade on the Socialist State. A full supply of submarine and aerial torpedoes would embarrass the ruler of the waves' invincible navy; the howitzers standing ready in their concrete gunpits round Gibraltar would go off; England's macaroni friend would rush his troops from Libya over the Egyptian frontier and would block the Suez Canal. France, hanging on like grim death to her precious English alliance, would think twice before fulfilling her obligations under it; the Dominions have already given notice that they must not be expected to rush a second time to the defense of the empire with the enthusiasm of 1914; the U.S.A. would meditate over nonintervention and in any case find it difficult to do anything about it; the U.S.S.R., not committed to defending England, would stand by and grin to see the capitalist world going up in smoke.

England is not unaware of those dangers. She is intensively arming, though not by a long way as intensively as Nazi Germany. Against whom are England's new armaments intended? The British government would probably be for once speaking the truth

if it replied that it did not know. England is arming as she has never done before except in actual wartime because her position is one of unprecedented danger, a danger which does not so much arise from threat against her security which comes from one particular antagonist, but from a situation which places her in mortal danger whatever course she takes, on whatever side of the contending forces she takes her place in the inevitable conflict. England could have abolished the mortal menace of Germany and her Fascist allies any time in the last five years without war or with such a minimum use of armed force that it would have been negligible by comparison with the threatened strife. The ardently pro-Fascist policy which she has followed demonstrates that she will stop at nothing to continue that policy. If an attack is directed against England by the Fascist powers, she will have favored and encouraged that attack on her security and existence up to the last minute.

England's whole policy is directed towards warding off by plots and parleys the contingency of war "in the West" and consequently turning the Fascist attack towards the East. The goal of her policy is a formal alliance of the "democracies" with the Fascist states, and the exclusion of the Socialist State from all transactions of Western diplomacy, that is, the Rosenberg plan. The immediate aim of her armaments is to impose, if possible, that solution on the Fascist powers.

But does that constitute a solution to the danger against England's security? Success of the Nazi-Eng-

lish plan, and a Nazified Europe where terrorist coercion would be so effective as to hold down all revolt, which is, to say the least, an unlikely eventuality, would make the very danger to her security more inevitable and imminent than ever. The victory of the Socialist State would be, on the other hand, the consummation which all English policy is directed to averting. Either event would mean the end of England as a capitalist power.

There is a third logical possibility which is, I believe, the one which English political rulers have in mind, namely, the exhaustion of both sides in such a struggle. But that somewhat naïve view leaves out of account a number of factors, and is founded on complete failure to apprehend the elements of the situation. The view rests, for one thing, upon a misjudgment similar to that which vitiated England's estimate of the military conditions when she entered the World War. It assimilates the impending conflict to previous ones without taking account of changed conditions of armament. Unlike the first stages of the World War, unlike the conflicts in Spain and in China, the armaments of both sides would be fairly equally matched in a Nazi-Soviet conflict. The rapid moving forward of artillery, which was the deciding factor in the German advance of 1914, would not be in the same manner possible. The immobilization of the front in the World War and the Spanish war were both due to the one side's marked inferiority in the armaments employed by the other. A German-Soviet war would be from the first, to a far larger extent than those precedents, a war of movement,

with aviation playing a prominent part. Exhaustion is not a factor of such importance in a war of movement as it is in an immobilized war of attrition. How far exhaustion enters as a factor in a war fought for a real, and not a fictitious political cause, has been amply illustrated by the morale of the blockaded and ill-armed Spanish people in the face of overwhelming odds. To count upon the exhaustion of the Soviet State, or on exhaustion of Germany without its leading to revolt, is a form of military prognostication akin to imbecility.

The choices with which England stands faced are between equally desperate evils. In a situation dominated by lawless militarist powers which cannot permit it to remain static, there is no discoverable issue which can save England from defending in a death struggle that security, that very existence which, blinded by unalterable reactionary passions, she has systematically sacrificed.

Chapter Ten

DECAYED GENTLEMEN

In proportion as her power decays, England assumes more and more the right to thrust her uninvited finger in every political pie of a chaotic world. She has become the great interventionist nation. Proffering her "disinterested" offices to mediate, investigate, debate, negotiate, arbitrate, she takes it upon herself to dictate how every other country shall conduct its affairs, what ships the United States shall build, what alliances France shall contract or repudiate, whether the Spanish government shall be permitted to govern Spain, or the Czechoslovakian Czechoslovakia, what satisfaction shall be offered to robber chiefs demanding other nations' purses and lives, who shall rule in Mexico or Manchuria, in Paraguay or Timbuktu.

The chief means upon which England relies to exercise that universal intervention is to impose upon the world as to the value of her hand. She professes to assume that the position her wealth, credit, industrial and commercial supremacy, her unchallenged command of the sea, and the resources of her Empire bestowed upon her fifty years ago is unchanged. That assumption the rulers of England know to be false. Not only has England overtly assimilated herself, in the aims of her policy, to the lawless powers

that have fastened their rule, under the guise of recognized governments, upon portions of the human race, but her co-operation with them partakes of the same methods of bluff, as hollow as it is brazen, which constitute the perilous basis of their precarious power.

England has, during the years 1935-36, attempted to stage a "return to prosperity." She had quite overcome the depression consequent upon the transient aftereffects of the war. Her restoration to the throne of her former glory was advertised to the world by the resumption of gray toppers at Ascot and "the most brilliant season ever." Anglolatrous visitors to London reported with enthusiasm that "there is no depression in England." Those musical-comedy methods of impressing simple-minded Anglolaters, somewhat of an anticlimax to England's tradition of reserve and dignity, were to have culminated in the grand transformation scene of the royal coronation. The stage management of that scene went, however, so completely amiss that the show had the exactly opposite effect from what had been intended. It was spoiled because King Edward VIII, a simple youth whose English education had unfortunately been far from undefiled by considerable residence abroad during the war, was sincerely shocked at the unspeakable misery attending England's "return to prosperity."

The late pretended revival of English prosperity was effected by certain bookkeeping manipulations together with the Nazi method of manufacturing cannon to offset an insufficiency of Danish butter. Trade,

which remained, and remains, in the neighborhood of thirty per cent below its 1929 level, was strenuously directed into imperial channels, thus accentuating the permanent loss of foreign markets. But, as Sir Robert Kindersley has shown (*Economic Journal*, December, 1937), the notable feature of that manipulation was that the imports indispensable to Britain's subsistence were paid for, not by exports, but by withdrawing capital investments from the Dominions and colonies. England has thus, since her abandonment of the gold standard and during her staging of a "return to prosperity," been in effect living upon capital. The intensified manufacture of unproductive instruments of destruction has, on the other hand, not been attended with the results that the admired example of Nazi Germany had led the British government to expect. It is true that inland-revenue returns show that there were in 1936 forty-nine more millionaires than in the previous year, thus adding to the brilliancy of the London season. But subsequent revelations have thrown an unpleasant light upon the personal prosperity of those gentlemen. It appears that the cannon and bombing planes at the disposal of English prosperity do not represent anything like the money paid for their production, and Lord Swinton (formerly Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister), an enthusiastic Hitlerian and crony of Lord Halifax, had to resign from the Air Ministry. Other gentlemen's financial operations, including the falsification of accounts, landed them in jail.

Despite those accessions of personal wealth from obscure sources, the inland-revenue figures likewise

show some of the less glamorous aspects of revived prosperity so indiscreetly noted by King Edward VIII. Only seventy-five per cent of taxable Englishmen dispose, it appears, of property amounting to the meager sum of a hundred pounds. The ladies and gentlemen whose parade of (depreciated) Rolls-Royce limousines and (depreciated) diamonds during the musical comedy of the London season so impressed the simple Anglolaters from overseas constitute rather less than one per cent of the population of Britain. The more financially anxious middle classes, the "backbone of the nation," form only fifteen per cent of that nation. Of the remainder, about eighty per cent of the English, half the number lack the wherewithal to buy food. Half the population of Great Britain is suffering from the effects of malnutrition, and a committee of the British Medical Association reported that about ten million are subsisting on a diet which is below the standard of the worst convict prisons.

The directors of the Bank of England warned the government that the musical comedy of "revived prosperity," though it might prove a box-office success, was not to their taste, and that unless the tide of "prosperity" were stemmed it might spell the direst disaster. Little is now heard about that prosperity. England's adverse balance of trade was last year (1937) worse by £27 million than it ever was at the most acute period of the economic depression, and has worsened this year (1938) by £12 million; all the indices of production and financial activity show a marked and rapidly increasing fall; the posi-

tion of transport activity, both as regards the merchant marine and the railways, is such that they cannot carry on without extensive government aid (revenue decrease on the S.R. in the last six months: £574,000; on the L.N.E.R.: £1,780,000). The motor industry is reported by City editors to be "on the verge of Queer Street." The figures of unemployment are mounting in nearly every trade; so is the cost of living; so is the floating debt.

The national credit was jacked up in staging the so-called revival, by balancing the budget—without, of course, taking account of the American debt. But England is, in the current year (1938-1939), spending £260 million more than in 1935-1936. There is every probability that, even apart from an outbreak of war, expenditure will go on increasing. It will certainly not decrease. One fifth of the money comes at present out of taxes on private property and borrowing from the same source. But the population of England is decreasing, and there is not the faintest likelihood that its productivity *per capita* will increase. Future balancing feats are, it will be seen, not unattended with the prospect of considerable peril, and it is currently stated in London political circles that Mr. Neville Chamberlain is not averse to promoting his own downfall on some side issue rather than face the acrobatic perils arising from England's late "recovery." The depreciated pound sterling is in reality still twenty-five per cent above its real value.

The myth that England's former power did not rest upon her budget, but upon her virtues and the

superiority of the English race, is, of course, a form of the racial theories so refulgently upheld in countries suffering under Fascist rule. But the present condition of the English "race" is not calculated to enhance the comfort to be derived from those theories. During the period of England's rapid rise to power through industrialization, her population had doubled in a few years and soon increased threefold and fourfold, notwithstanding an enormous death rate among the wretched servile classes. The opposite phenomenon is now being witnessed. The birth rate is rapidly declining, and in the present year (1938) a decrease of 175,000 births below the corresponding period of last year has been recorded. The pronounced contrast between the servile and the ruling classes, which has of late been investigated independently by several scientific authorities, has long been visible to the casual observer. But English complacency ignored it, and it was declared that the British workingman bore, no less than the roast-beef-and-suet-pudding-consuming members of the imperial race, the marks of its superiority. The British servile classes are, in fact, five inches shorter, on an average, than the one per cent population of ruling beefeaters. Their lamentable physical condition is probably inferior to that of any other working class in Europe. It used to be quite usual, as a part of the hallucinations of their religion of complacency, for Englishmen to point, as clear evidence of racial superiority, to the small and selected British regular army, and to contrast its well-tailored appearance with Continental conscript armies. The naïve delusion was

rudely dispelled by the War, and difficulty is now experienced in finding recruits that can satisfy greatly reduced standards.

But the significance of those pronounced evidences of physical deterioration in the population of England need not be exaggerated. Such physical decay is an effect, and not, as mythical racial theories would have it, a cause of decadence in national aggregates.

Decadence is a phenomenon common to all imperial powers and civilizations that have hitherto existed, for none has ever constituted a truly social, and therefore stable, structure. The interests on whose behalf the power of any political state has been wielded have, on the contrary, been those of numerically small governing classes, to which the bulk of the population has been subordinate, either leading a parasitic existence or constituting a servile instrument for the production of wealth and the exercise of military force. Such a structure is by its nature unstable. Not only is the loyalty of the servile classes an insecure factor, but in order to maintain it the ruling class is compelled to have recourse to coercive and oppressive measures which are liable to increase the danger of disloyalty, or to resort to deception and fictitious creeds imposed by propaganda, and intended to cultivate loyalty by forms of fraud which, when detected, are prone to produce the opposite effect. That state of things not only holds the danger of failing of its intended effect, but brings about an inevitable deterioration in the mental capacity of the ruling class itself, which be-

comes more pronounced in proportion as the insecurity of the whole structure becomes greater.

It is that deterioration which imparts to decaying power the appearance of senescence. The causes of decadence do not lie in adventitious conditions superadded to the defective social structure, but in the conditions which originally gave rise to it and resulted in its success and prosperity. If the "greatness and empire of England" were, as Disraeli claimed, "due to the ancient institutions of the land," the decadence and eventual downfall of that empire will likewise be due to the same "ancient institutions of the land." Or if the more realistic view be taken that the "greatness and empire of England" were due to an economic position brought about by a number of fortuitous causes, to the character of that same economic position is also to be attributed the transiency of that greatness and empire.

The manifestations of that decadence are likewise to a large extent but accentuations of the characteristics which were at one time the attributes of dominating power. Those characteristics are broadly reflected in the age of English supremacy, the nineteenth century. It were idle to dispute that it was one of the most notable epochs in the general evolution of humanity. Its material progress, so loudly celebrated at the time as "progress" in general, and quite unjustly detracted by superficial minds as having brought about the enslavement of mankind to machines, furnished an accession of control over the material conditions of life such as no previous age had contributed. The antagonists of the machine

merely confound the social conditions and purposes which attended the use of machinery with the functions of the machines themselves. The nineteenth century was also the age which, owing to the urbanization of the bulk of the population and the unprecedented diffusion of literature, brought about a general spread of capacity for intelligent thought which had in previous ages been the privilege of the few.

But in respect of those imponderables of which so much of an epoch's or a nation's influence is made up, the nineteenth century was, and was felt to be, a singularly unwholesome, fatuous, and mediocre epoch. Much of the intelligent activity which undeniably illustrated it was inspired by revulsion against the atmosphere of falsity, mental dishonesty, and smug mediocrity that filled it. It was the English age, the age which was largely the outcome of that influence and prestige which England, its economic creator and ruler, exercised over it. Yet the nineteenth century represented in many respects a degeneration, a decadence, from the eighteenth century. The latter was inspired, both in England and in France, by a will to intellectual honesty, to clarity and realism. The nineteenth century was inspired, more particularly in England, by a will to pretense, to fictitious conventions of thought, sentiment, emotions, honored not on account of their genuine values, but because they chimed with the interests and outlooks of a ruling class.

The sudden change which took place at the beginning of the nineteenth century in English literature

has already been noted. It reflected, as literature does, the change which came upon the English mind in the period of its greatest influence. It was a change from which English intelligence at the present day feels impelled to turn away in spontaneous disgust, from which it seeks to dissociate itself by dubbing it "Victorian" and pretending to regard it as the passing mood of an epoch. But it is an invariable cultural law that a nation which has at one time wielded great influence remains permanently limed in the tradition of that period of its supremacy. What renders the mental atmosphere of fallen and decayed France more tolerable, for all its inefficiencies and limitations, than that of England, is that France still belongs essentially to the eighteenth century, and that the eighteenth century was a healthier and more living epoch than the Victorian age. To the latter age England belongs, and will continue to belong while she remains England.

The real manifestations of England's, as of every nation's, decay do not lie so much in changes in the national character as in the fact that, in a changing world, that character remains unchanged. The English have always been funny. But the smiles called forth by their illimitable complacency, the impermeability of their cultivated insularity, their moral didacticism and Goddery, and their improbable hypocrisy were wont to be tempered by awe at the success attending so much fatuity. It is otherwise when that success becomes more doubtful. When at Geneva the ineffable Sir Samuel Hoare, setting forth in unctuous phrases his infamous plan for the parti-

tion of Abyssinia, enlarged with Victorian serenity on the wholly disinterested character of England's aims and foreign policy, an irrepressible titter ran through the diplomatic audience. Sir Samuel paused and looked about in uncomprehending astonishment, wondering what the joke was. He was under the impression, as is all England, that the present times are still part of the nineteenth century.

The phenomena of national decadence are largely the outcome of such errors in reading the calendar. They consist essentially in incapacity of adaptation to changed conditions. Such adaptation would call for the repudiation and the reversal of the traditional outlooks, values, habits which have been associated with power and success. Thus to recognize that those estimates have become inapplicable and demoded and repudiate what it formerly regarded with complacency is what no national culture can bring itself to do.

Despite the delusion of the contemporary English intellect that it has outlived the limitations of Victorianism, there is no indication that this is the case. If the Victorians were essentially mediocre and shackled by prejudices, their postwar successors are even more so. The authority and influence of English thought and literature in the world have certainly not increased since the last century. The revulsion of the best English intellect against the manifest falsities and insincerities of Victorianism has led it only to arid cynicism and negation or sterile levity. It cannot bring itself to face squarely the vital issues of the new age and to dissociate them from parochial Eng-

lish interests. It seeks, on the contrary, to evade them, either by distorting them in the sense of those interests, or by taking refuge in a detached irrelevance which has no point of contact with life or actuality.

A conspicuous instance of that sterility is afforded by the theater of the land of Shakespeare and Shaw —the latter having unfortunately survived himself by about twenty years. There are at the moment in which I am writing exactly three plays running in London which are susceptible of holding the attention of any but morons—a revival such as has not been known in London theaters for many years. Those three plays are by American authors. Mr. Desmond MacCarthy comments as follows on the circumstance: "The greater veracity, energy, and variety of the American stage is incontestable. Mr. Benn Levy, in the *Observer,* looking about for some explanation of the contrast, pitched on our Censorship as the depressing influence; so tactfully exercised, but discouraging all the same, enterprise and daring. I am inclined to agree with him. The Censorship inevitably encourages a trivial, noncontroversial drama—puts a premium on it. . . . It is not merely a question of license in sex directions, but of outspokenness generally. 'Safety First' is the guiding principle of all Censorships. Our plays are carefully searched for political and social criticism and allusions, and criticism is only tolerated if well muffled."

With the comment, as far as it goes, one is bound to agree. But it does not cover the whole explanation. The general sense of Mr. Desmond MacCarthy's re-

marks applies equally to literature on which there is, supposedly, no official censorship. That this professed absence of press censorship is a characteristic instance of paltering English dishonesty is notorious. Such are the legal dangers attending literary publication in England, on the score of the operation of so-called "obscenity" and "libel" laws of incredibly elastic application, that no English publisher ventures to issue a book before its having been previously submitted to minute legal scrutiny. That precautionary censorship, inspired by nervous dread and operating by a far wider application of the "Safety First" principle, is naturally far more ruthless than any which an individual official would venture to impose. While the undefined dangers indicated under the heads of "obscenity" and "libel"—the latter extending to the mention of places by their names—receive the widest interpretation, occasion is at the same time taken to doctor the text generally in view of traditional English prejudices. The effect is that, apart from financial reasons, many English writers have come to regard the American publication of their works as the only authentic one, the garbled and mutilated English publications being of as little account as the judgments passed upon them by English critics.

But external censorship, whether direct or disguised, admitted or repudiated in complacent declarations about the freedom of the press, does not cover the whole explanation of a manifestation which has become evident to all. There is another sort of cen-

sorship which Freudians used to term "endopsychic censorship." Nowhere is its operation so magnified as in the English mind. For are not all values laid down therein overshadowed by what things are of good repute, what things are "done" and what things, thoughts, or tastes are incompatible with that English gentleman's self-respect, which the most undisciplined hesitate, while they use the English language, to forfeit? Not external official or unofficial censorship, but a far more efficient and deeper limitation of the range of thought or values controls theater, literature, every form of creative art. And from that endopsychic censorship there is no possibility of evasion or deviation.

That the blight is not wholly peculiar to contemporary English literature must be granted. Dread of facing realities is common to all mental activities in an age when those realities are in a state of violent transition. But in both France and America, the only two capitalist countries which can still be, culturally, taken into account, vital and vitalizing exceptions to the general paralysis of thought, and therefore of creative power, abound. In England there are, properly speaking, none. Talent, which is far from lacking, is uniformly stultified. The dead hand of the fictitious values of English good repute and complacencies weighs more or less heavily over all and debars English thought from coming to grips with life and reality. To cite names is pointless where the conditions are general, but it may not be invidious to mention those which most readily occur to all as illustrating contemporary English literature. Both

Mr. H. G. Wells and Mr. Aldous Huxley would be delightful writers in the particular satirical or cynical veins of their respective talents, had they not become persuaded, or been persuaded by injudicious friends, that they are thinkers. Mr. Wells insisted upon publishing broadcast his interview with Stalin, a document that any adequate sense of self-respect should have induced him to suppress, but on which he, on the contrary, distinctly prided himself, totally unaware of the ridiculous light he thus cast upon himself. Mr. Huxley, abandoning his clever cynical satire of a society in dissolution, is impelled to offer his constructive instead of destructive ideas, and achieves the feat of contradicting himself three times on the same page in struggling with his muddled conceptions of his *Brave New World,* and still further surpasses himself, turning definitely fulsome, in his *Eyeless in Gaza*—or is it *Mindless in Bloomsbury?*

Even in the full tide of Victorianism, English thought was at least lucid. In one aspect, that of science, it was, as late as the eighties and nineties, a progressive, liberating, and inspiring force in the world. A change so sudden has come over English science since Thomas Huxley defined it as organized common sense that the change amounts to a collapse. Physical and astronomical sciences have become a branch of theosophy, and Sir James Jeans popularizes them by the profound Platonic argument that if this "mysterious universe" be analyzed geometrically it will be found to be geometrically constructed. In biology the stark inconsistency of the theories of preformation which Darwin strenuously combated

forms the basis of conceptions which lead the most distinguished exponents of the science to discover the "all-embracing personality" of which the organism is the reflection. Sir Ambrose Fleming, F.R.S., renews the parsonic attacks of the seventies in defense of the first chapter of Genesis, and English scientific controversy drops to the level of Tennessee. Sir Arthur Keith, the most eminent of English physical anthropologists, is particularly interested in giving voice to Fascistic views in his defense of "prejudice." Cultural anthropology, a science that owes the greater part of its development to English thought, has become an utterly contemptible defense of bourgeois social doctrines and a truck of charlatans.

Apart from the Goddery and Bibliolatry of which the domains of English science are now regarded as the natural habitat, superstition, in its crudest forms, thrives in England to a degree unknown in other civilized countries, and the national disposition to superstitious beliefs has undergone a notable development in the postwar years. Belief in ghosts among the presumably cultured classes is almost peculiar to England. Conversing the other day with a world-known English novelist, whose books are sprinkled with ghost stories which I assumed to be licit, if somewhat old-fashioned, vagaries of fancy, I discovered to my surprise that the distinguished authoress did actually believe in ghosts—quite orthodox white-clad, chain-rattling, midnight ghosts, and was peculiarly interested in the subject. It is quite usual to be told in some of the stately homes of England that the place is haunted, and for one's opinions on

the subject to be gravely probed, with a challenge to prove the negative. The polite retort that there exists no evidence that the moon is not made of green cheese is regarded as an admission of presumptive evidence as to the caseous nature of the satellite. The exuberant efflorescence of primitive irrationalism, fortunetelling, talismans and amulets, "psychical research," horoscopes and astrology, are the constant accompaniment of the dissolution of artificial foundations of thought, which served their purpose in days of stable security, but afford no foothold when confidence becomes shaken. The process is similar to that which Gilbert Murray, speaking of the breakdown of Greek rationalism, felicitously termed "failure of nerve."

The monstrous hypertrophy of English complacency, which accounted "God's Englishmen" a semi-superhuman race and regarded Africa as beginning at Calais, doubtless functioned as an asset while it was associated with dominating power. But when unchallenged dominance gives place to struggle for existence, delusion becomes detrimental. England has many legitimate grounds for pride. National complacency becomes ridiculous and misleading when it extends indiscriminately to all things, even when they are the reverse of appropriate matters for self-congratulation. The ancient institutions of England are regarded as objects of admiration, not because they are excellent, but because they are English. I used, for example, to receive letters on coroneted paper from unknown noble correspondents exhorting me to assist in preserving "our splendid system of hos-

pitals entirely supported by voluntary contributions," and to help avert the disaster of public medical institutions becoming efficiently state-organized institutions. Even more glorious than those ancient institutions, which are among the most backward and inefficient in the world, is the vaunted administration of English law. It is no less ancient. English law retains all the antique flavor of the not very ancient times when it was a byword to the rest of the world for its ferocity, when London was known as the City of Gibbets, when, little more than a hundred years ago, women were burnt alive at Smithfield. England is the only country in professedly civilized Europe (Nazi Germany not being included in the term) where corporal punishment survives. While civil actions are characterized by the usual dilatoriness, the expeditiousness with which criminal charges are disposed of by pronouncing capital sentences on circumstantial evidence is unequaled elsewhere. A considerable number of instances could be cited in which, during recent years, that evidence has been so flimsy as to be wholly unconvincing, but the hangman's task has been carried out with indecent haste before the wave of protest had died down or the condemned person's innocence had been, as has sometimes occurred, established. Despite that haste, English judges take it upon themselves to enliven the procedure of criminal trials by displays of humor in the worst taste, which the press reports as causing "much laughter." Quite recently the records of English justice have been discussed by a barrister who shows that its dispensations by pompous, though not always

dignified, judges who are invested with excessive arbitrary powers is entirely in favor of the propertied classes, the impecunious accused having little chance of effectual defense.

Fair play and sportsmanship are the virtues upon which English complacency is most wont to dwell. The recent records of English sport are not calculated to sustain the claim. At Wimbledon both the umpiring and the spectators' behavior, when foreign champions are playing, are a source of disgust to visitors. The same is true of international football matches, prize fights, and yachting contests. The bland English claim to a moral monopoly of fair play in sport is sustained by charges of foul play against every successful opponent. So consistently do the English prove themselves bad losers, so invariable are their whining and their accusations when they are beaten that they have now established a world-wide reputation for being bad sportsmen. When the Derby was won this year by a French colt, the whole English press hawked the suggestion that the age of the colt had been misrepresented, and the charge, which should obviously have been brought before instead of after the race, continued to be repeated or sneeringly insinuated in "reputable" papers after it had been conclusively disproved. Whether the wholly unsportsmanlike character of the English is a recent symptom of "loss of nerve," or whether it has always been so, and English claims to fair play in sport are as fictitious a piece of bluff as their claim to fair play in political action, I do not feel competent to judge. But I find that exactly

the same complaints against English sportsmen as are general today were voiced as far back as 1860.

The more general manifestations of the sporting spirit of English gentlemen were somewhat obscenely displayed to the whole world in the crisis of King Edward VIII's enforced abdication. It has not been quite clearly explained, by the way, why Señor Alfonso Bourbon-Habsburg who, in slightly different circumstances, was also compelled to abdicate, is invariably referred to in the English press as His Majesty King Alfonso XIII, or as the King of Spain, as the late Senhor Manuel de Braganza was described as His Majesty the King of Portugal, while King Edward VIII, in an exactly similar situation, is invested with a new title quite gratuitously invented for the occasion. The anomalous procedure is, however, in harmony with the whole exhibition of gentlemanly tact characterizing the unedifying incident, which probably reached its climax in the ill-timed scurrility of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Primate of England.

The gentlemanly English mind wears at all times the vesture of an almost inhuman impartiality, distinguished by its objective and judicial attitude and immunity from bias. A noble orator, recently addressing an audience of university students, held up to them with some emotion the paradigm presented by the well-known impartiality of the English press, which never permits, he said, any form of prejudice to color its selection and presentation of the news.

Such extravagant flights of complacency may afford occasion for amused titters. They may also give

rise to other sentiments. "I am not in the least provoked," wrote Swift, "at the sight of a Lawyer, a Pickpocket, a Colonel, a Fool, a Lord, a Gamester, a Politician, a Whoremunger, an Evidence, a Suborner, an Attorney, a Traitor, or the like. This is all according to the due course of things. But when I behold a lump of deformity and diseases, both of mind and body, smitten with *Pride,* it immediately breaks all the measures of my patience; neither shall I be ever able to comprehend how such an animal and such a vice could tally together." The classes of malefactors enumerated by Swift were not, however, yet to any great extent infected, in England, in his time, with Virtue, Moral Rectitude, Integrity, Righteousness, Justice.

The particularly nauseating combination resulting from the self-attribution of those characters with the manifestation of their opposites constitutes the unique fulsomeness of English complacency. National egotism is a characteristic of all nations. But English self-approval is distinct in kind from all others. The vanity of the Frenchman or Spaniard chiefly rests upon exaggerated estimates of the value of national achievements. The frenzied effrontery of German bragging is manifestly the outcome of a gnawing sense of barbaric inferiority. English complacency is convinced and sincere, and thus amounts to a form of amentia. When Iago protests his honesty, he is a fiend. But when an English Prime Minister or Foreign Secretary does, he presents the rare combination of a fiend and a cretin. The complacency bred in the English by the possession of superior sup-

plies of money has led them to contemplate their superiority with most satisfaction in the supply of those qualities in which they are most lacking and to glory in the perfection of their national institutions which are most backward and most scandalous. They serenely hold up to universal admiration a judicial system which is among the most incoherent, abusive, and barbaric in the world; a press which is the most generally biased and subservient; medical institutions which are the most uncivilized and backward; a sportsmanship which is a byword of unsportsmanlike pettiness; an integrity, rectitude, disinterestedness, humanity, which the whole of their historical record and daily action honor in the breach much rather than in the observance. For a fraction of those delusions and hallucinations individuals are kept under lock and key in asylums.

But nations, like individuals, are largely accepted at their own estimations. The chimeras of English national self-approval serve at least with no inconsiderable success the purposes of that bluff which lawless bandit powers find remunerative. In somewhat the same manner as the neurosis of patriotism is a surrogate expansion of personal egotism, so Anglomania is bourgeois society's vicarious admiration for itself. Even when England is not the venerated object of such adulation as abject for example as that of M. André Maurois, there is a general notion that criticism of England is only permissible with gloves on. While English opinion and the English press have never shown the slightest scruple or moderation in the violence and scurrility of their in-

sults, invectives, and defamations directed against every other nation, whether brother Hun, American cousin, French, Spanish, unspeakable Turk, or, of course, Socialist Russia, the same freedom in judging England is accounted as partaking of the nature of a lapse of esthetic and moral sense.

There exists no sort of ground to justify such a privileged indulgence. England, if not a Fascist country, is a Fascist power. The present writer, who makes no claim to the simulation of impartiality which is a fetish of English complacency, addresses himself to an imaginary reader who is as biased as himself against crime, and detests it. To such a prejudiced reader the infamy of Fascism is abhorrent. Nothing in mankind's record in any age or on any continent, under Assyrian, Hun, or African slave-raiding potentate, has presented a spectacle of infamy and barbarism such as Europe is witnessing today. To discuss that cataclysm involving the collapse of all human values as though it were a human phenomenon, or maniacal criminals as though they were civilized beings, is inane. A plague, a scourge of vermin, are not fit objects of moral and rational considerations. They are not discussed; they are stamped out.

He who hates the scourge of Fascist infamy must logically regard England with hundredfold horror. But for England there would be no Fascism. But for England bestial barbarism would have been crushed in the spawn. But for England not one of the criminal assaults perpetrated by lawless powers on humanity could have taken place. The rape of Manchuria and

China by Japan has been effected under the shield of English protection and encouragement. The rapes of Abyssinia, of Austria, have been concerted in London. England it is whose hands are dripping with the blood of the women and children of heroic Spain.

The "Spanish business," as it is referred to with airy levity by "disinterested" English gentlemen and English "Socialists" who blandly proclaim that it does not concern them, may yet prove the crucial factor that shall determine England's and Europe's fate. It is not long since England declared, in her bombastic moral jargon, that martyred Belgium would seal the fate of German lawlessness. The blood of assassinated Spain may even more truly be the means of calling down final retribution on England's consistent policy of crime. The deathless heroism of an awakened people will not be stamped out. Though, by England's tireless effort, Franco's Moors, phalangists, *guardia civil,* and Mussolini's Black Shirts should flaunt their barbarism in Madrid, Valencia, and Barcelona, the "Spanish business" would be far from concluded. More certain is it that in the historical memory of humanity shall be graven the words REMEMBER SPAIN, and that men, women, and children, when they hear the name of England, shall be reminded of the basest and bloodiest infamy that has disgraced the name of a nation. Let there be little pity when her hour shall toll.

Hun barbarism, Italian banditry, Japanese savagery, fostered by England's treachery and will to evil, are at least undisguised. The fulsomer vileness of

their English confederate is cloaked in a complacency and hypocrisy that have no name.

Sir George Macaulay Trevelyan concludes his garbled history with the words: "In spite of all our country's errors and misfortunes, the world's best hopes still rest on her." And Mr. B. S. B. Stevens gravely declared the other day that "there is not one country today on the face of the earth, even if its politics for the time-being are hostile, that does not thank God for Great Britain." No Fascist delirium has so blandly insulted human reason.

And let it not be imagined, as is too generally done, that England's criminal record is the deed of individuals, of a government, of a party. Too much reliance is placed, in England and outside, on that plea. Chamberlain lately boasted that English policy had never varied during two hundred years. The boast was for once well founded. Ever since she has had power or influence to do so England has been the promoter and bulwark of the forces of evil. To conceive that her immemorial policy can be reversed is chimerical. The present English government is the executive of the will of England's economic rulers. No other English government can act otherwise than as the same rulers' servant. Long and ample experience, extending from Gladstone to MacDonald, has shown what is to be expected from English Liberal, Labor, or other opposition when transferred to office. The present leader of the parliamentary opposition, Major Attlee, is doubtless inspired by every good will; but, as he has repeatedly declared, he is scrupulously faithful to the aims and principles of the

English Constitution, and those aims for which, throughout its development, it has been expressly designed are the interests of English property and the carrying out of the will of its owners. No constitutional change of government can alter that purpose or materially affect the attitude of England, as a nation, in the modern world. Enraged by the infamous, insolent, and ferocious Fascism of the elderly gentleman in Downing Street, a bemused English crowd manifested its wrath by calling: "Give us Eden!" Such is the simplicity of English political thought that it can turn its hopes of peace without honor to the poor weakling who negotiated the betrayal of Abyssinia, while babbling of the mythical sanctity of a British Foreign Secretary's signature, and that Mr. Compton Mackenzie discerns in Mr. Anthony Eden the leaven of Communism!

In no instance is political guilt chargeable, as it is with England, to a whole nation. For in no instance is a whole nation so effectually and uniformly conditioned in subservience to ruling interests as is the mind of England—Right or Left. That a day will come when the English people, schooled by humiliation and just retribution, shall labor with the rest of the human race for its universal good in an equitable world, I devoutly trust and believe. But before that desirable consummation shall have come to pass, England, as the insolent promoter of the opposite aims, as the archetype of crooked and callous duplicity, nameless self-sufficiency, and fulsome hypocrisy, will have ceased to exist. Admired though her

base and shortsighted cunning may be by many, it is effectually contributing to that consummation.

But it is not yet; and the world is not yet rational. If it were so—admittedly a fanciful hypothesis—England would be prevented from working more evil by a universal boycott imposed upon her by every nation. Such a boycott would effect more good than any sanction against even the overt protagonists of lawlessness. These would of themselves collapse from the failure of the main source of their precarious power to work evil. But that is but idle fancy. The consummation will be brought about by means unfortunately less simple and less peaceful.

POSTFACE

THIS book was in the press when the crowning chapter in England's centennial record was written by Mr. Neville Chamberlain. He has been more explicit than I could have ventured to be. Many who might have demurred at my judgments will doubtless be more indulgently disposed since I have enjoyed the benefit of the Right Dishonorable gentleman's unconscious collaboration. That, at least, is the view of one friendly critic who informed me that he totally retracted the strictures he had planned on first reading my manuscript, and which arose from the widespread notion that England is too sacred a theme to be treated with anything but reverence. I am lamentably slow in forming conclusions. It has taken me over half a century to discover the character of the English myth. But I hold that the caution which should attend the forming of judgments is false pretense in expressing them.

The spectacular confirmation of the views expressed in these pages, which the events of the last few weeks have afforded, have added nothing new to them. I have, therefore, not thought it needful to impart a spurious timeliness to what I wrote by changing future tenses into past.

There would be little purpose in recapitulating here what is still fresh in everyone's mind. Of far

more moment is it to recall the antecedents which, throughout England's career as a world power, have logically culminated in those events. One or two aspects of these, not usually referred to in current accounts and comments, may, however, be usefully indicated.

The war danger which, during ten days, drove the world crazy with panic never existed. The two protagonists of the tragical comedy, Adolf Hitler and Neville Chamberlain, knew that there would be no war. Hitler's strength and success have lain throughout in his unshakable faith that Naziphile England would in no conceivable circumstance fight Nazi Germany by the side of Soviet Russia. In that conviction Hitler has proved himself more intelligent and realistic than nine hundred and ninety-nine per thousand of the vaporous commentators who persisted in taking seriously the supposed opposition between the alleged "democracies" of Europe and Fascism. The paradoxical conflict which their fancy imagined could never have been for one moment contemplated by Chamberlain and his confederates. It was a mere fiction serving to veil and ignore the real opposition which Hitler had clearly in view—that between democratic Fascism and Socialism.

As Mr. Roosevelt has justly remarked, war can always be averted. To do so requires no diplomatic tact or skill. All that is required is to present the aggressor with everything he wants, or a little more, without fighting. Mr. Chamberlain and his French lackeys had considerable experience in that diplomacy. It is, of course, particularly effective when ex-

ercised at the eleventh hour. Informed English political circles, with whom I happen to have had some contact, now know positively that Chamberlain's theatrical flight to Berchtesgaden, far from being a last-minute inspiration, was the outcome of long planning and preparation. Weeks before, at Balmoral, Chamberlain had suggested that the King should himself open personal relations with Hitler. Chamberlain was restrained by timorous confederates from insisting on the plan, but they could not restrain his personal action. For several weeks a selected airplane was kept in readiness to wing the fanatic old gentleman to his spiritual home.

Public panic was astutely cultivated by a ridiculous display of air-raid precautions. Gas masks were distributed, trenches were dug in the parks, and wealthy old ladies attended lectures. In Paris every householder was provided with a few spadefuls of sand—for what useful purpose none could clearly discover. Any expert knows that the aerial bombing on any considerable scale of a city provided with adequate aerial defenses and pursuit planes is practically impossible. In the World War, when aerial defence was primitive compared to what it is now, not a single German squadron out of many ever succeeded in reaching Paris. Out of forty bombing planes—the largest squadron sent out by the Germans—two only managed to fly over the city for a moment. In most cases one only reached its objective. Whenever Madrid and Barcelona were able to dispose of even a few inadequate pursuit planes for their defense, the Italian bombing squadrons

were at once driven away. The air-raid scare was not used to intimidate the general public by Hitler, but by Chamberlain and Daladier.

When, immediately after the Nazi seizure of Austria and England's flagrant dishonoring of her signature, Czechoslovakia was menaced with a like fate, the British government issued a cynical declaration stating that it was not interested in Central Europe. To French enquiries it replied that any action France might take in fulfillment of her treaty obligations would receive no English support and that France would in such an event be regarded as an aggressor.

The attitude of the British government became suddenly reversed. Instead of being, as she had professed, "disinterested," England became intensely interested from the moment when the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics announced its intention of departing from current practice and honoring its pledge and signature. The chains binding France to Downing Street were immediately tightened and riveted. The King was sent over to Paris to be acclaimed by a stage crowd of plain-clothes men. The Anglo-French alliance was proclaimed anew. The price asked was the repudiation by France of the Franco-Soviet pact. Since this involved the abandonment of the sole remaining defense of French security by substituting for the guarantee of the treaty-observing Soviet Union that of treaty-breaking England, the price could not be paid openly by the shyster French politicians. To do so would, moreover, have been futile while a like pact guaranteed Soviet help to Czechoslovakia.

The opportunity offered by the instant menace of general war, which appeared inevitable to a bemused public and to professional commentators steeped in the fraudulent myth that so-called democratic governments and Fascist dictatorships represented conflicting aims and were natural opponents, was skillfully utilized to the utmost to bring about an alliance between the supposed opponents. The triumph was complete. Not only did the Fascist and "democratic" confederates save a peace that had never been in serious danger, but—what was more important—they saved themselves. They did so at a moment when the fortunes of all Fascists and fascisizing plotters stood at the lowest ebb of direst jeopardy. Instead of collapsing, as they were about to do, the Fascist ruling gangs were raised at one stroke to the complete hegemony of Europe. Mr. Chamberlain, instead of being hanged, as there was some talk of doing, became canonized as the savior of society. The decent, but inconvenient, fiction of antagonism between pretended "democracies" and Fascist barbarism was once and for all cast aside. The whole fictitious and fraudulent alignment of forces in superarmed Europe was instantaneously transformed. The Socialist State was completely isolated and surrounded. The Japanese, who were about to contemplate committing harakiri, took on a new lease of life and ferocity. All Fascists throughout the "democracies," who had been slinking round with long faces, came out of hiding with whoops of triumph. The distant and seemingly difficult goal of all postwar policy, the Rosenberg plan or Four-Power Pact, that is, the

coalition of international Fascism and Fascistic "democracies" was attained. There now remains only to mop up the last surviving traces of what used to be called democracy in martyred Spain and tricked France, and to await a suitable opportunity to move the general Holy War of a united Fascist world, led by England, against the Socialist State.

The Right Dishonorable Neville Chamberlain, from being an object of universal indignation and execration, shared by the very Tories who retained vague memories of professions of honor associated with old school ties, ascended amid the hysterical acclamations of a sobbing British public to a seat on the right hand of God, to whom Mr. Chamberlain was currently assimilated.

To ascribe, as is too prevalently done, the divine attributes which have brought about the fascisization of Europe to Mr. Chamberlain individually is, however, a theological error. It is true that the Right Dishonorable illustrates in an extreme degree the passions which have always been the guiding principles of English policy. Chamberlain is a fanatic of a maniacal type and closely resembles in this respect his friend, the Nazi Führer. His first public act, some twelve years ago, when he was merely Minister of Public Health, was to endeavor by every possible means to prevent local boards from affording assistance to the starving families of striking miners. The brutality, which prefigured the gentleman's eagerness to help in the assassination of Spanish women and children, was almost devoid of political purpose. It was merely an act of sadism arising from his frenzied hatred of the working classes.

But, as Chamberlain himself has justly declared, his policy has been no other than that invariably pursued by England during two hundred years, and the inspiring passion of his fanaticism, the fierce defense of the power of English Money, has been the acknowledged guiding principle governing that policy. It would be wholly mistaken and superficial to direct what disgust and indignation the latest villainies of England's policy may arouse against the person of Neville Chamberlain. He has the whole of England at his back, including His Majesty's loyal Opposition. What isolated protests have come from some liberals or old school ties have had reference to the brazen excess of baseness in the manner in which the traditional policies of England have in this instance been carried out, and not against those policies themselves. That is why these pages, written before the culmination of recent events, are not untimely.

We have lived to see all records of four thousand years of unclean history broken. A new standard of political baseness has been set up. Its finished perfection is rounded by the circumstance that it is exclusively compacted of lies. England's actions have been presented as saving a peace which had never been in serious danger. It has been presented as assuring its permanence whereas another load has been added to Europe's charge of dynamite. It has been represented as checking the lawless aggression of gangster dictators, whereas it has saved them and was intended to do so. It has been represented as arising from the alleged "unpreparedness" of England whereas everyone knows that the

Fascist plague would not have survived a month of deliberate armed opposition, if indeed it could have weathered a genuine threat of it. It has been presented—by critics—as a surrender, whereas it was an eager and determined co-operation and the culmination of all the "democratic" governments' previous aims and actions. "No one is likely to doubt England's word," the Right Dishonorable said, while the pact of Munich was, before the ink was dry, broken by all its signatories. Overcome during his House of Commons speech with emotion at his own moral virtue, the Right Dishonorable buried his face in his hands dripping with the blood of Spanish women and children and further soiled by contact with those of his assassin friends.

There has been throughout human annals no page as infamous as that which England has written since the foregoing pages were sent to press. But that page is not the end. A formidable bill of costs has been mounted up against Merrie England. Sooner or later, and soon rather than late, the reckoning will be presented. Thousands of eyes that were closed but a few weeks since are now opened. Unalterable historical laws provide a scientific equivalent to what went at one time by the name of Divine Justice.

America has cause to congratulate herself on her relative isolation and isolationism. Isolationism can never be an unconditional policy any more than isolation is a fact. But America will at least think twice before identifying her inevitable intervention in world affairs with a blind rush to the side and to the assistance of England.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

ROBERT BRIFFAULT *has ranged the earth and followed many callings. Born in London of British parents, he received his education privately and abroad. In 1894, at the age of eighteen, he moved to New Zealand where he practised surgery until the World War, when he served in Gallipoli, France, and Flanders, twice receiving decorations which he returned to the King on October* 1, 1938.

In 1919 *Mr. Briffault retired from medicine and devoted himself to writing chiefly on anthropological subjects.* The Mothers *is his most comprehensive work, but he is also known as the author of* Rational Evolution, Breakdown, *and, more recently,* Europa, *his first book of fiction which at once became a best-seller. During the* 1920's, *Mr. Briffault spent much time in the United States; he has now taken up residence in France but returns to the United States for occasional visits.*