

try of America was the turning point of the war, he told more truth, perhaps, than he knew. The entry of America decided the character and purpose of the war, made it a war of mankind; made it, indeed, a war no longer in the old sense of the word, but rather an exercise of the world's will. Up to that moment, through all the long history of mankind, the world has been merely a geographical expression; now it has become a fact, and Germany is not a nation at war, but a traitor to the world.

But have we the wit and the imagination to grasp what this change means? Can we think in terms of it quickly enough to make all that ought to be made of it? We have, naturally enough, seen the war as above all a struggle between England and Germany; and the Germans are always telling themselves and us that it is that, and nothing more. France and Russia are our misguided vassals, just as Austria and Turkey and Bulgaria are the vassals of Germany. That is false, of course; but do we see how entirely false it is? Can we rise to the fact that this is not a war at all, and that we must not wish to make peace as if it had been a war or the result of a quarrel, between the Germans and ourselves? That is the question upon which the real issue of the war depends. For the moment the world has become a fact, and ceased to be a geographical expression. Can we all aim at a peace in which it will remain a fact, in which it will become one even for Germany? Not if we make a peace against Germany, if we think of her and treat her merely as a defeated nation. Not if we go to the Peace Conference as nations, each seeking its own advantage, if we see this alliance of ours as an alliance for purposes of war, and to be prolonged in peace merely to keep Germany in subjection. We have enjoyed a brotherhood in arms with our allies; we have suddenly been aware of their virtues, and said eloquent things about them; but let us remember that a short time ago we were very much aware of their vices. Is posterity to smile at all our praises of France as mere partisanship, like the praises which hack writers give to politicians of their own party? Posterity will certainly smile so, in spite of all our present sincerity, if France and England re-

main precariously allied for purposes of war, if they are merely members of a party against the party of Central Europe. For such an alliance is bound to be precarious, and some day to come to an end.

This is the moment at which we need to be aware that when we declared war against Germany we were not entering into an alliance merely for purposes of war, we were not fighting merely for ourselves or for Belgium, or for France, but for a different order of things. We were the great neutral of Europe, as America a few weeks ago was the great neutral of the world. Her action has at last ratified and consummated our own; it has made us, or should make us, fully aware of the nature of that action, and resolved to maintain it in peace as well as in war. But this we can do only if we are ready to make sacrifices equal to our opportunity. We have our own private quarrel with Germany as one nation with another, as she with us. Her aim is to make the world believe that the war is a personal quarrel between herself and us, and that she would end it now if we would let her; it is the ambition and the enmity of England that prolong the war. That is her cry, and we must prove by our freedom from ambition and enmity that it is false. We must go to the Peace Conference with no claims against her merely as of one nation against another. We must make her understand by our actions that we come not as a nation at all, but as a member of a new society, and that she, too, may become a member of it if she will. She has a blood feud with us now, and we cannot end it by killing her; but we may convince her that she lives in a world in which blood feuds will no longer be endured. For this talk of blood feuds is all metaphor. The quarrel between us and Germany is not one between two men who hate each other and have done each other wrongs. It is between two multitudes, no one member of which has a personal quarrel with any other. It is the error of the Germans that they see a nation as a person, a romantic, sentimental error; in which they forget to see themselves or any other man as persons in which they cease to act as men or to treat men as men, or women as women, or children as children. We cannot cure them of it

by falling into it ourselves, by talking or thinking of Germany as a person and a personal devil. Rather we shall cure them by knowing ourselves that this is a world of men, not of nations, and that when nations fight it is men who die, and women who are widowed, and children who are left fatherless.

For that is the fact behind all the solemn talk of theorists. Germans are more real than Germany, Englishmen than England, and men than either. And now the league of the nations has become a league of men to maintain that fact, a league a thousand times more real than any alliance of the past. But it can keep its reality only if it remains a league of men and does not slip back into a league of nations maintained for a particular purpose and against one particular nation. We need to see the Germans, and to convince them that we see them, not as a nation at all, but as a multitude of men possessed by a collective madness, a multitude calling themselves Germany, which is to them another name for God. But if they will throw off the madness we will see them, and treat them again, as men; we will forgive the wrongs which they did when they thought themselves God; we will not exult insolently over that country of theirs which has exulted over all the world. We will remember that they, too, have their dead and their widows and their fatherless, a grief which they share with us in our common humanity.

It is strange that the statement of these simple facts should be called sentimentality by some Englishmen, as by most Germans. Sentimentality is the statement, and the enjoyment, of unrealities; it is the enjoyment of a moral sense based on unrealities, the most dangerous pleasure that men can give themselves. So the Germans have been enjoying the belief that they were fighting, and making necessary sacrifices, for the triumph of that abstraction which they called Germany. This fight for an unreality they called **real politik**; and under the spell of it they sacrificed all realities to it, and will continue to sacrifice them until their life becomes unendurable. We can see the truth in their case; but we need to see it in our own and all others. We need to see that the idea of nationalism be-