

those people who are reasonable. I do not quarrel with any one for being insane. I think he is perfectly right to maintain that he is a poached egg; but I also think that it would be more generally convenient if he airs that belief in seclusion. He will probably disagree with me; and we shall then proceed to submit the issue to various methods of arbitration, ending with that of arms. But let there be no mistake about it, both sides are absolutely in the right. Even if I prove that the other man is dishonest in his belief in the righteousness of submarine warfare or whatever it may be, the situation is not changed at all. He has a perfect right to be dishonest if he wants to. I may dislike this quality in him so much that I am willing to kill him as the only cure; and he is equally right to kill me if he dislikes the color of my necktie. How many people were killed because they wanted to spell "Homooousios," "Homoioousios" with the iota? But one thing seems evident to me: that unless we get rid of our hypocritical Anglo-Saxon plague of Pharisaism, we shall never be fit to live with.

The other day I came into a fortune, and went to buy a necktie. The young man (or should I say gentleman) who accommodated me in this matter was English, and remembered me in those days of glory when I wandered in Bond street, and bought as many as three neckties on the same day. Having purchased my tie and wept together about Bond street, we began to talk about the war. I said to him: "If I had come into this shop (or should I say store) with the firm conviction that you were a dangerous maniac, thirsting for my blood, that you were insensible to every feeling of humanity, that the fiercest and most malignant wild beast had nothing on you (I believe that is the correct phrase) in the matter of atrocity, I do not think we should have settled this matter of the tie (or should I say neckwear) with the philosophic calm which has characterized our interview up to this point." I regret to say that this person was so lost to all sense of patriotism as to agree with me.

It is necessary in many circumstances to fight; and, in order to fight well, one needs certain quite definite qualities. In olden days I did a good deal of fencing, by which I do not mean receiving stolen goods. I mean the play of rapier and small-sword. I learned that I must be entirely concentrated on the business on hand, and that elaborate arguments purporting to prove that my opponent was a Chinaman or a heretic, were out of place. I learned also that my best chance of defeating him was to know what he was going to do before he did it; to read his mind in his eye and his wrist. I think it will be clear that in order to read the man's mind, you must put away from you anything like emotion. You are there to kill him efficiently, and you should practice the detachment of the surgeon, who does not wring his hands and wail when he sees the patient on the operating table.

Whether we want to fight Germany or to come to an amicable understanding with her does not matter. In either case, we are handicapping ourselves by hating her. We are failing to see her point of view. The Germans are under the monstrous delusion that God is with them; that they are fighting for their hearths and altars. It is none of our business to cure that delusion. We must accept it in estimating their minds. We can tell what they will do as soon as we can tell what they are thinking; if we make any mistake as to what they are thinking, we can no longer tell what they will do. Just so long as we hate them,

we blind our eyes and confuse our minds. Now, with regard to German atrocities, they may be perhaps a little more systematic than atrocities on the other side; but that is evidence of more system, not of more ferocity. I think, therefore, that we do wrong in blaming either side for any atrocity that they may have committed, whether it is the murder of an English nurse or a Javanese dancer.

And surely the rape and murder of a single Frenchwoman by one of the heroes who are saving France may outweigh a thousand such crimes committed by avowed enemies.

The mildest of animals, if it feels itself cornered, will resort to every means of defence. Queensberry rules were not invented for men who are scrapping in a life and death combat. How is it that the sentimental stay-at-home, domestic German becomes Gian-Blunderbore? It is not a miracle. It is not an outbreak of collective sadism. It is simply the feeling that he is cornered. All Germans feel this. It may be a delusion on their part; but they have it; and we have to act on the assumption that they have it. Now what is the proper way to deal with people in this situation? There is only one sensible thing to do. We must remove the cause of their belief. Until we do this they are assuredly right in continuing to believe it. We should, therefore, say, "My dear friends, you are quite wrong in supposing that you are cornered. We do not wish to hurt you. We wish to come to an agreement with you on the points in dispute." This may be a little difficult, as we have all forgotten what those points were; but at least we can try to come to some arrangement as to what is best to be done. In other words, let us quit fighting for a few weeks or months, and have a conference. If nothing happens, we can go on fighting again with renewed zest. Speaking as an Irishman, I might go further and suggest talking and fighting at the same time—an ideal state of affairs! Now one cannot help saying that the Germans have shown their good faith in this matter very clearly. They are always proposing "peace conferences," thereby indicating that we are not, as some of their publicists maintain, "a gang of enraged millionaires bent upon destroying German liberties as American liberties have already been destroyed," but a set of sensible people who want to settle down and live happily ever after. We reply, "Certainly not, you are monsters. On with the revel!" In such circumstances the German can hardly be blamed for thinking that we are set upon their utter destruction, and this thought is bound to destroy in them all considerations of mercy and kindness, or even ordinary reasonableness. They must argue that we who will not even discuss the question of peace can be none other than Huns. (Now I've said it!) I am told that the German offers are not sincere. Then call the bluff by agreeing to the principle of conference. We need not be afraid of an armistice: time is on our side, not theirs.

Where such ideas are pushed to the limit the results are utterly abominable. We need only refer to the destruction of one of the finest races of the world, the American Indian, which was due to nothing but the conviction that he was a remorseless and treacherous savage. The American Civil War would have resulted in the utter ruin of the whole country had it not been that Grant, in the moment of victory, forgot all about Simon Legree, dismissed the whole howling of the wolves of the press as nonsense, and observed succinctly: *Let us have peace.*