

esteem in which hereditary rank is held by the public, an esteem that can have no other support than its roots deep down in that national history which should be one of our most cherished inheritances." He envies the French because they have "an aristocracy informal but yet impressive, and with the advantage that its ranks are closed, so that it cannot be submerged in an artificial flood of new men; thus it can retain the flavor of the national history and the interest even to foreigners which thence arises."

In Canada, too, the rage for titles is on, or at least it was until a sharp debate in Parliament upon a motion to abolish all titles was defeated by a handful of votes. Sir Wilfrid Laurier helped the cause of democracy by offering to throw his own title on the bonfire, but Sir Robert Borden fought successfully to kill the resolution, substituting one that no honors be awarded save with the consent of the Dominion Cabinet. A couple of hundred titles are said to have been "won" in Canada since the war began, and the dissatisfaction therewith has been marked. Canadians have felt a certain incongruity in the knighting of butcher and baker in a war to make the world safe from autocracy and aristocracy. We Americans are in no such dilemma. Not that we are without many who would gladly have us imitate some of our allies in this respect. We have been extraordinarily imitative ever since we got into the war, even to the extent of adopting all the lingo of the other fellow—"slackers," "over the top," "blighty," "cootie," etc. We have not only subordinated and coördinated our military forces with the veterans of France and England; we have likewise, in the common endeavor for the common purpose, subordinated mental originality.

This question of foreign distinctions comes home to us now because we read of Allied generals pinning military medals on American soldiers, and then, *horribile dictu*, kissing the men on both cheeks—a formality which we are sure General Pershing will not imitate; of King George offering our generals membership in orders, the mere suggestion of which a few years ago would have fired those anti-British newspapers which for years insisted that the editor of the *Nation* took Cobden Club gold because he believed in free trade and in fair play to England. We have read, we confess with regret, a denial that two of our admirals had decided to return their foreign decorations. To some this refusal would appear ungracious, but a good many Americans have declined decorations and titles in the past, and the precedent is a good one to follow. Nevertheless, one of our military journals asserts that it is not only desirable that our officers hold to these rewards, but that it is our duty to devise at once some similar decorations, in order that this republic may reciprocate by "conferring" suitable medals "upon members of the Allied military and naval forces who render conspicuous services."

We feel compelled to believe that Americans can adequately reward their own heroes while still profiting by a few of the teachings of our forefathers. One recalls George Washington, to say nothing of plain Benjamin Franklin, one Thomas Jefferson, and a certain Alexander Hamilton. We cannot think that a dozen decorations would have added to their worth or dignity or their claim to immortality. Congress has made it legal to accept foreign decorations. We wish that in safeguarding the world for democracy our superb soldiery might decline to make use of the privilege extended, except the medals for bravery in battle, and thus win additional honors for themselves and their country.

## The Unconquerable Human

WHAT could "prop in these sad days our mind" were it not for continual reminders of the great victorious stretch of humanity that so abundantly overlives the chicanery of statesmanship, the misfeasances of diplomacy, the horrors of war, and all that bulks largest in the public eye? The few European observers who really look beneath the surface of things agree that the most encouraging and hope-inspiring reality they encounter is the invincible persistence of the individual, his unconquerable tendency to go on in fixed ways. In the battle of Jutland a British destroyer, disabled, red-hot, was on the point of blowing up when the commander ordered all hands on deck to leave ship. The last two came up from the furnace-room, conversing on the way; and as they stepped out of the hatch, stripped, sweating, filthy, one was heard to say, "And the next time I caught 'im sober, I says to 'im, 'Ain't you ashamed of yerself, a fine upstandin' churchgoin' man like you, a-marryin' of a thing like 'er?'"

Here is the large utterance of the early gods, the sublime consciousness that, as Whitman says, the whole theory of the universe is directed to one single individual—namely, to You. How glorious a testimony that the human spirit, made in the image of the Archindividualist, may not be finally dominated by the external and incidental, may not finally admit that anything in the world is greater than itself! Placid, intent, triumphant, it goes on amid whatever circumstances, cleaving to the end to its self-appointed way. "You may destroy the shell of Anaxarchus, but himself you cannot reach." *Punch* draws a memorable picture of a torpedoed steamship plunging down by the bows, and in the foreground, amidst swelling waves, two sailors clinging to opposite sides of a bit of wreckage, submerged to their shoulders, one saying to the other, "And as I was a-sayin', Bill, when we was interrupted, it's allers been my belief as 'ow the submarine blokes ain't in 'arf the danger as the chaps wot run the blinkin' 'planes." This is not the light humor of extravagance; it is the portrayal of stark essential humanity; and those who can discern and exhibit this are the true artists whom the unchanging human spirit will appreciate as its best benefactors and will not willingly let die.

Thus it is that posterity, taking a more objective view of current happenings than is possible for us, will catch up and cherish a Bairnsfather while contentedly letting the dust deepen on a hundred Raemaekerses. So, too, a book like Edward E. Hunt's slender little "Tales from a Famished Land" has an actuarial expectation far beyond the prodigious ruck of "human interest" narrative in which there is nothing essentially human. So, also, with all those records of simple personal experience, whether of war or of daily common life, which exhibit normal men and women in their ordinary round. There is little, very little, in the public activities of mankind at present that has not the mark of Dagon upon it; little, therefore, can the mark of the children of light be reflected in current art and literature. Yet in a perverse social order, humanity manages somehow to get on with its normal kindness and goodness; and this is enough to avert despair and sustain a sometimes faltering hope of the race, for it is an unmistakable earnest of "the ideal life which is nothing but man's normal life as we shall some day come to know it."

# What American Labor Does Not See

By ALBERT JAY NOCK

FROM the point of view of the state, on the broadest interpretation of Machiavelli's maxim that it is the first duty of the state to keep itself rich and its people poor, modern war is coming increasingly to appear an extremely hazardous enterprise. Short wars, at not too long intervals, are the only ones that may be depended on nowadays to strengthen the state. They make trade brisk and create new centres of industry, and at the same time do not make disabling demands on the labor supply or alter too unfavorably the terms upon which labor may be had. The Spanish War is an excellent illustration of a profitable war; and England's recent series of small foreign wars, ending with the Boer War, was immensely profitable. But to lay out specifications for such a war now, with any kind of assurance that they can be followed, is very difficult and hereafter doubtless will be quite impossible. The Boer War itself showed how easily an enterprise which at the outset looked fairly safe might turn out disastrously. It improved trade and opened some new markets, but on the other hand it put the finishing touches on the education of British labor and made immense inroads upon the stability of the landholding classes. Even Lord Milner would probably now admit that the Boer War, all things considered, cost more than it came to. The earth's surface is so well plotted, spheres of influence are so close together, and international jealousy and watchfulness are so keen, that there is simply no telling when a war begun in good faith as a profitable short-time enterprise may suddenly go wrong and pass the point of diminishing returns.

The trouble is that as soon as war becomes of any magnitude its effect is to strengthen the position and enlarge the advantages of the very classes which normally it weakens and subdues. No clearer intimation of this fact could be found than the one given by President Wilson to his party organization in New Jersey. Modern war needs so much material and so many men, not only as fighters but as labor-motors, that when practiced on even a moderate scale the demand presses heavily on the supply, and labor approximates something like the terms of a monopoly. This is extremely bad for the state. As an organization of what some Continental economists call the "political means" of satisfying human desires—namely, the appropriation of the fruit of others' labor without compensation—obviously the state cannot suffer such an encroachment of the "economic means" without great and permanent detriment. Hence, when the state undertakes war on a large scale, it must employ its best energies in masterly accommodations for the sake of salvaging as much as possible of its power and prestige. Conscription of labor was possible a very long time ago, but now, unfortunately for itself, no state, not even Germany, may seriously attempt it. The state, accordingly, must keep continuously to the minimum of concession and compromise, meanwhile using every force of sentiment and persuasion to secure from labor a maximum voluntary surrender of its advantages; and the final position of the state depends chiefly on the skill which it has shown in carrying on this difficult process.

The Wilson Administration has from the beginning taken wise and able measures with labor. In comparison, for

example, with British labor, labor in the United States has had a very imperfectly developed philosophy. A long course of protectionist arguments has trained it to know nothing, officially at least, of the difference between real and apparent wages, the foundation of monopoly and its relation to wages and prices, and the general *raison d'être* of the phenomenon of a propertyless dependent class existing in such numbers as are found in a country like the United States. It does its thinking in trade-unionist terms—terms of wages, hours, conditions of labor, and "the higgling of the market." Here, then, the state has a great advantage. It can make most effective and satisfying concessions without seriously impairing its own position; and the Wilson Administration has done magnificently with the advantage presented, from the "Great Surrender" at the time of the threatened railway strike in 1916 down to the last act of the Walsh-Taft Board. It has made superb concessions in the matter of hours; its stand on the eight-hour day is almost spectacular. It has in principle overridden the Supreme Court in deference to the unionist objection to child labor. As for "the higgling of the market," it has granted workers in strongholds of non-unionism like Bethlehem and the packing industry the right to organize and to do collective bargaining. In the case of Bethlehem, it has ordered the revision or the complete elimination of the company's bonus system, readjustment of the piece rates, a minimum wage, the eight-hour day, overtime, and equal pay for equal work as between men and women.

Nothing could be better. The Government has given trade unionism precisely what trade unionism has all these years been asking for, and given it with no mean or reluctant hand. It has solidified trade unionist principles and policies and carried them further in eighteen months than the unions themselves could have carried them in eighteen years; and by so doing, without forfeiture of a single essential prerogative of its own, it has earned the gratitude and allegiance of organized labor in perpetuity. In short, it has done with trade unionists what Germany did with the old-time Marxians in the early days of the Confederation, and with the result, here as there, that the power and prestige of the state will be immeasurably enhanced. The Wilson Administration deserves credit for this admirably wise and forethoughtful performance as probably its greatest achievement. Yet in the mean time prices have been running a little high. Consumers and employers, salaried persons, and in general those who are out of Mr. Gompers's purview, have seen that, in relation to prices, the competitive increase in wages with the concomitant huge labor turnover has become a game of outrunning the constable. The Government, accordingly, seeks sanction from the placated trade unions for a further step in state Socialism, namely, the mobilization and direction of all the low-grade labor available, amounting to more than four-fifths of all the labor in the country, and for a comprehensive plan of wage-fixing.

This will undoubtedly be acceptable. As far as low-grade labor is concerned, trade unionism is not greatly impressed with responsibility as its brother's keeper. Since the War Labor Policies Board has given assurance that the