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Garnett Engels Schiller Byron Maupassant Schiller  
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Baum Henry Nietzsche Dumas Flaubert Turgenev Balzac Crane  
Leslie Stockton Vatsyayana Verne  
Burroughs Curtis Tocqueville Gogol Busch  
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Potter Zola Lawrence Dickens Harte  
Kant Freud Jowett Stevenson Andersen Burton Hesse  
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**Essays in War-Time Further  
Studies in the Task of Social  
Hygiene**

Havelock Ellis

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# I

## INTRODUCTION

From the point of view of literature, the Great War of to-day has brought us into a new and closer sympathy with the England of the past. Dr. Woods and Mr. Baltzly in their recent careful study of European Warfare, *Is War Diminishing?* come to the conclusion that England during the period of her great activity in the world has been "fighting about half the time." We had begun to look on war as belonging to the past and insensibly fallen into the view of Buckle that in England "a love of war is, as a national taste, utterly extinct." Now we have awakened to realise that we belong to a people who have been "fighting about half the time."

Thus it is, for instance, that we witness a revival of interest in Wordsworth, not that Wordsworth, the high-priest of Nature among the solitary Lakes, whom we have never forsaken, but the Wordsworth who sang exultantly of Carnage as God's Daughter. To-day we turn to the war-like Wordsworth, the stern patriot hurling defiance at the enemies who threatened our island fortress, as the authentic voice of England.

But this new sense of community with the past comes to us again and again on every hand when to-day we look back to the records of the past. I chance to take down the *Epistles* of Erasmus, and turn to the letters which the great Humanist of Rotterdam wrote from Cambridge and London four hundred years ago when young Henry VIII had just suddenly (in 1514) plunged into war. One reads them to-day with vivid interest, for here in the supple and sensitive brain of the old scholar we see mirrored precisely the same thoughts and the same problems which exercise the more scholarly brains of to-day. Erasmus, as his Pan-German friends liked to remind him, was a sort of German, but he was, nevertheless, what we should

now call a Pacifist. He can see nothing good in war and he eloquently sets forth what he regards as its evils. It is interesting to observe, how, even in its small details as well as in its great calamities, war brought precisely the same experiences four centuries ago as to-day. Prices are rising every day, Erasmus declares, taxation has become so heavy that no one can afford to be liberal, imports are hampered and wine is scarce, it is difficult even to get one's foreign letters. In fact the preparations of war are rapidly changing "the genius of the Island." Thereupon Erasmus launches into more general considerations on war. Even animals, he points out, do not fight, save rarely, and then with only those of other species, and, moreover, not, like us, "with machines upon which we expend the ingenuity of devils." In every war also it is the non-combatants who suffer most, the people build cities and the folly of their rulers destroys them, the most righteous, the most victorious war brings more evil than good, and even when a real issue is in dispute, it could better have been settled by arbitration. The moral contagion of a war, moreover, lasts long after the war is over, and Erasmus proceeds to express himself freely on the crimes of fighters and fighting.

Erasmus was a cosmopolitan scholar who habitually dwelt in the world of the spirit and in no wise expressed the general feelings either of his own time or ours. It is interesting to turn to a very ordinary, it may be typical, Englishman who lived a century later, again in a period of war and also of quite ordinary and but moderately glorious war. John Rous, a Cambridge graduate of old Suffolk family, was in 1623 appointed incumbent of Santon Downham, then called a town, though now it has dwindled away almost to nothing. Here, or rather at Weeting or at Brandon where he lived, Rous began two years later, on the accession of Charles I, a private diary which was printed by the Camden Society sixty years ago, and has probably remained unread ever since, unless, as in the present case, by some person of antiquarian tastes interested in this remote corner of East Anglia. But to-day one detects a new streak of interest in this ancient series of miscellaneous entries where we find that war brought to the front the very same problems which confront us to-day.

Santon Downham lies in a remote and desolate and salubrious region, not without its attractions to-day, nor, for all its isolation,

devoid of ancient and modern associations. For here in Weeting parish we have the great prehistoric centre of the flint implement industry, still lingering on at Brandon after untold ages, a shrine of the archaeologist. And here also, or at all events near by, at Lackenheath, doubtless a shrine also for all men in khaki, the villager proudly points out the unpretentious little house which is the ancestral home of the Kitcheners, who lie in orderly rank in the churchyard beside the old church notable for its rarely quaint mediaeval carvings.

Rous was an ordinary respectable type of country parson, a solid Englishman, cautious and temperate in his opinions, even in the privacy of his diary, something of a country gentleman as well as a scholar, and interested in everything that went on, in the season's crops, in the rising price of produce, in the execution of a youth for burglary or the burning of a woman for murdering her husband. He frequently refers to the outbreak of plague in various parts of the country, and notes, for instance, that "Cambridge is wondrously reformed since the plague there; scholars frequent not the streets and taverns as before; but," he adds later on better information, "do worse." And at the same time he is full of interest in the small incidents of Nature around him, and notes, for instance, how a crow had built a nest and laid an egg in the poke of the topsail of the windmill.

But Rous's Diary is not concerned only with matters of local interest. All the rumours of the world reached the Vicar of Downham and were by him faithfully set down from day to day. Europe was seething with war; these were the days of that famous Thirty Years' War of which we have so often heard of late, and from time to time England was joining in the general disturbance, whether in France, Spain, or the Netherlands. As usual the English attack was mostly from the basis of the Fleet, and never before, Rous notes, had England possessed so great and powerful a fleet. Soon after the Diary begins the English Expedition to Rochelle took place, and a version of its history is here embodied. Rous was kept in touch with the outside world not only by the proclamations constantly set up at Thetford on the corner post of the Bell Inn—still the centre of that ancient town—but by as numerous and as varied a crop of reports as we find floating among us to-day, often indeed of very similar

character. The vicar sets them down, not committing himself to belief but with a patient confidence that "time may tell us what we may safely think." In the meanwhile measures with which we are familiar to-day were actively in progress: recruits or "voluntaries" were being "gathered up by the drum," many soldiers, mostly Irish, were billeted, sometimes not without friction, all over East Anglia, the coasts were being fortified, the price of corn was rising, and even the problem of international exchange is discussed with precise data by Rous.

On one occasion, in 1627, Rous reports a discussion concerning the Rochelle Expedition which exactly counterparts our experience to-day. He was at Brandon with two gentlemen named Paine and Howlet, when the former began to criticise the management of the expedition, disputing the possibility of its success and then "fell in general to speak distrustfully of the voyage, and then of our war with France, which he would make our King the cause of"; and so went on to topics of old popular discontent, of the great cost, the hazard to ships, etc. Rous, like a good patriot, thought it "foul for any man to lay the blame upon our own King and State. I told them I would always speak the best of what our King and State did, and think the best too, till I had good grounds." And then in his Diary he comments that he saw hereby, what he had often seen before, that men be disposed to speak the worst of State business, as though it were always being mismanaged, and so nourish a discontent which is itself a worse mischief and can only give joy to false hearts. That is a reflection which comes home to us to-day when we find the descendants of Mr. Paine following so vigorously the example which the parson of Downham reprobated.

That little incident at Brandon, however, and indeed the whole picture of the ordinary English life of his time which Rous sets forth, suggest a wider reflection. We realise what has always been the English temper. It is the temper of a vigorous, independent, opinionated, free-spoken yet sometimes suspicious people among whom every individual feels in himself the impulse to rule. It is also the temper of a people always prepared in the face of danger to subordinate these native impulses. The one tendency and the other opposing tendency are alike based on the history and traditions of the race. Fifteen centuries ago, Sidonius Apollinaris gazed inquisitively

at the Saxon barbarians, most ferocious of all foes, who came to Aquitania, with faces daubed with blue paint and hair pushed back over their foreheads; shy and awkward among the courtiers, free and turbulent when back again in their ships, they were all teaching and learning at once, and counted even shipwreck as good training. One would think, the Bishop remarks, that each oarsman was himself the arch-pirate.[1] These were the men who so largely went to the making of the "Anglo-Saxon," and Sidonius might doubtless still utter the same comment could he observe their descendants in England to-day. Every Englishman believes in his heart, however modestly he may conceal the conviction, that he could himself organise as large an army as Kitchener and organise it better. But there is not only the instinct to order and to teach but also to learn and to obey. For every Englishman is the descendant of sailors, and even this island of Britain seemed to men of old like a great ship anchored in the sea. Nothing can overcome the impulse of the sailor to stand by his post at the moment of danger, and to play his sailorly part, whatever his individual convictions may be concerning the expedition to Rochelle or the expedition to the Dardanelles, or even concerning his right to play no part at all. That has ever been the Englishman's impulse in the hour of peril of his island Ship of State, as to-day we see illustrated in an almost miraculous degree. It is the saving grace of an obstinately independent and indisciplinable people.

Yet let us not forget that this same English temper is shown not only in warfare, not only in adventure in the physical world, but also in the greater, and—may we not say?—equally arduous tasks of peace. For to build up is even yet more difficult than to pull down, to create new life a still more difficult and complex task than to destroy it. Our English habits of restless adventure, of latent revolt subdued to the ends of law and order, of uncontrollable freedom and independence, are even more fruitful here, in the organisation of the progressive tasks of life, than they are in the organisation of the tasks of war.

That is the spirit in which these essays have been written by an Englishman of English stock in the narrowest sense, whose national and family instincts of independence and warfare have been transmuted into a preoccupation with the more constructive tasks of life.

It is a spirit which may give to these little essays—mostly produced while war was in progress—a certain unity which was not designed when I wrote them.

[1] O'Dalton, *Letters of Sidonius*, Vol. II., p. 149.

## II

### EVOLUTION AND WAR

The Great War of to-day has rendered acute the question of the place of warfare in Nature and the effect of war on the human race. These have long been debated problems concerning which there is no complete agreement. But until we make up our minds on these fundamental questions we can gain no solid ground from which to face serenely, or at all events firmly, the crisis through which mankind is now passing.

It has been widely held that war has played an essential part in the evolutionary struggle for survival among our animal ancestors, that war has been a factor of the first importance in the social development of primitive human races, and that war always will be an essential method of preserving the human virtues even in the highest civilisation. It must be observed that these are three separate and quite distinct propositions. It is possible to accept one, or even two, of them without affirming them all. If we wish to clear our minds of confusion on this matter, so vital to our civilisation, we must face each of the questions by itself.

It has sometimes been maintained—never more energetically than to-day, especially among the nations which most eagerly entered the present conflict—that war is a biological necessity. War, we are told, is a manifestation of the "Struggle for Life"; it is the inevitable application to mankind of the Darwinian "law" of natural selection. There are, however, two capital and final objections to this view. On the one hand it is not supported by anything that Darwin himself said, and on the other hand it is denied as a fact by those authorities on natural history who speak with most knowledge. That Darwin regarded war as an insignificant or even non-existent part of natural selection must be clear to all who have read his

books. He was careful to state that he used the term "struggle for existence" in a "metaphorical sense," and the dominant factors in the struggle for existence, as Darwin understood it, were natural suitability to the organic and inorganic environment and the capacity for adaptation to circumstances; one species flourishes while a less efficient species living alongside it languishes, yet they may never come in actual contact and there is nothing in the least approaching human warfare. The conditions much more resemble what, among ourselves, we may see in business, where the better equipped species, that is to say, the big capitalist, flourishes, while the less well equipped species, the small capitalist, succumbs. Mr. Chalmers Mitchell, Secretary of the London Zoological Society and familiar with the habits of animals, has lately emphasised the contention of Darwin and shown that even the most widely current notions of the extermination of one species by another have no foundation in fact.[1] Thus the thylacine or Tasmanian wolf, the fiercest of the marsupials, has been entirely driven out of Australia and its place taken by a later and higher animal, of the dog family, the dingo. But there is not the slightest reason to believe that the dingo ever made war on the thylacine. If there was any struggle at all it was a common struggle against the environment, in which the dingo, by superior intelligence in finding food and rearing young, and by greater resisting power to climate and disease, was able to succeed where the thylacine failed. Again, the supposed war of extermination waged in Europe by the brown rat against the black rat is (as Chalmers Mitchell points out) pure fiction. In England, where this war is said to have been ferociously waged, both rats exist and flourish, and under conditions which do not usually even bring them into competition with each other. The black rat (*Mus rattus*) is smaller than the other, but more active and a better climber; he is the rat of the barn and the granary. The brown or Norway rat (*Mus decumanus*) is larger but less active, a burrower rather than a climber, and though both rats are omnivorous the brown rat is more especially a scavenger; he is the rat of sewers and drains. The black rat came to Northern Europe first – both of them probably being Asiatic animals – and has no doubt been to some extent replaced by the brown rat, who has been specially favoured by the modern extension of drains and sewers, which exactly suit his peculiar tastes. But each flourishes in his own environment; neither of them is adapted

to the other's environment; there is no war between them, nor any occasion for war, for they do not really come into competition with each other. The cockroaches, or "blackbeetles," furnish another example. These pests are comparatively modern and their great migrations in recent times are largely due to the activity of human commerce. There are three main species of cockroach—the Oriental, the American, and the German (or Croton bug)—and they flourish near together in many countries, though not with equal success, for while in England the Oriental is most prosperous, in America the German cockroach is most abundant. They are seldom found in actual association, each is best adapted to a particular environment; there is no reason to suppose that they fight. It is so throughout Nature. Animals may utilise other species as food; but that is true of even, the most peaceable and civilised human races. The struggle for existence means that one species is more favoured by circumstances than another species; there is not the remotest resemblance anywhere to human warfare.

We may pass on to the second claim for war: that it is an essential factor in the social development of primitive human races. War has no part, though competition has a very large part, in what we call "Nature." But, when we come to primitive man the conditions are somewhat changed; men, unlike the lower animals, are able to form large communities—"tribes," as we call them—with common interests, and two primitive tribes can come into a competition which is acute to the point of warfare because being of the same, and not of two different, species, the conditions of life which they both demand are identical; they are impelled to fight for the possession of these conditions as animals of different species are not impelled to fight. We are often told that animals are more "moral" than human beings, and it is largely to the fact that, except under the immediate stress of hunger, they are better able to live in peace with each other, that the greater morality of animals is due. Yet, we have to recognise, this mischievous tendency to warfare, so often (though by no means always, and in the earliest stages probably never) found in primitive man, was bound up with his superior and progressive qualities. His intelligence, his quickness of sense, his muscular skill, his courage and endurance, his aptitude for discipline and for organisation—all of them qualities on which civilisation is based—

were fostered by warfare. With warfare in primitive life was closely associated the still more fundamental art, older than humanity, of dancing. The dance was the training school for all the activities which man developed in a supreme degree—for love, for religion, for art, for organised labour—and in primitive days dancing was the chief military school, a perpetual exercise in mimic warfare during times of peace, and in times of war the most powerful stimulus to military prowess by the excitement it aroused. Not only was war a formative and developmental social force of the first importance among early men, but it was comparatively free from the disadvantages which warfare later on developed; the hardness of their life and the obtuseness of their sensibility reduced to a minimum the bad results of wounds and shocks, while their warfare, being free from the awful devices due to the devilry of modern man, was comparatively innocuous; even if very destructive, its destruction was necessarily limited by the fact that those accumulated treasures of the past which largely make civilisation had not come into existence. We may admire the beautiful humanity, the finely developed social organisation, and the skill in the arts attained by such people as the Eskimo tribes, which know nothing of war, but we must also recognise that warfare among primitive peoples has often been a progressive and developmental force of the first importance, creating virtues apt for use in quite other than military spheres.[2]

The case is altered when we turn from savagery to civilisation. The new and more complex social order while, on the one hand, it presents substitutes for war in so far as war is a source of virtues, on the other hand, renders war a much more dangerous performance both to the individual and to the community, becoming indeed, progressively more dangerous to both, until it reaches such a climax of world-wide injury as we witness to-day. The claim made in primitive societies that warfare is necessary to the maintenance of virility and courage, a claim so fully admitted that only the youth furnished with trophies of heads or scalps can hope to become an accepted lover, is out of date in civilisation. For under civilised conditions there are hundreds of avocations which furnish exactly the same conditions as warfare for the cultivation of all the manly virtues of enterprise and courage and endurance, physical or moral. Not only are these new avocations equally potent for the cultivation of virili-

ty, but far more useful for the social ends of civilisation. For these ends warfare is altogether less adapted than it is for the social ends of savagery. It is much less congenial to the tastes and aptitudes of the individual, while at the same time it is incomparably more injurious to Society. In savagery little is risked by war, for the precious heirlooms of humanity have not yet been created, and war can destroy nothing which cannot easily be remade by the people who first made it. But civilisation possesses—and in that possession, indeed, civilisation largely consists—the precious traditions of past ages that can never live again, embodied in part in exquisite productions of varied beauty which are a continual joy and inspiration to mankind, and in part in slowly evolved habits and laws of social amenity, and reasonable freedom, and mutual independence, which under civilised conditions war, whether between nations or between classes, tends to destroy, and in so destroying to inflict a permanent loss in the material heirlooms of Mankind and a serious injury to the spiritual traditions of civilisation.

It is possible to go further and to declare that warfare is in contradiction with the whole of the influences which build up and organise civilisation. A tribe is a small but very closely knit unity, so closely knit that the individual is entirely subordinated to the whole and has little independence of action or even of thought. The tendency of civilisation is to create webs of social organisation which grow ever larger, but at the same time looser, so that the individual gains a continually growing freedom and independence. The tribe becomes merged in the nation, and beyond even this great unit, bonds of international relationship are progressively formed. War, which at first favoured this movement, becomes an ever greater impediment to its ultimate progress. This is recognised at the threshold of civilisation, and the large community, or nation, abolishes warfare between the units of which it is composed by the device of establishing law courts to dispense impartial justice. As soon as civilised society realised that it was necessary to forbid two persons to settle their disputes by individual fighting, or by initiating blood-feuds, or by arming friends and followers, setting up courts of justice for the peaceable settlement of disputes, the death-blow of all war was struck. For all the arguments that proved strong enough to condemn war between two individuals are infinitely stronger to

condemn war between the populations of two-thirds of the earth. But, while it was a comparatively easy task for a State to abolish war and impose peace within its own boundaries—and nearly all over Europe the process was begun and for the most part ended centuries ago—it is a vastly more difficult task to abolish war and impose peace between powerful States. Yet at the point at which we stand to-day civilisation can make no further progress until this is done. Solitary thinkers, like the Abbé de Saint-Pierre, and even great practical statesmen like Sully and Penn, have from time to time realised this fact during the past four centuries, and attempted to convert it into actuality. But it cannot be done until the great democracies are won over to a conviction of its inevitable necessity. We need an international organisation of law courts which shall dispense justice as between nation and nation in the same way as the existing law courts of all civilised countries now dispense justice as between man and man; and we further need, behind this international organisation of justice, an international organisation of police strong enough to carry out the decisions of these courts, not to exercise tyranny but to ensure to every nation, even the smallest, that measure of reasonable freedom and security to go about its own business which every civilised nation now, in some small degree at all events, already ensures to the humblest of its individual citizens. The task may take centuries to complete, but there is no more urgent task before mankind to-day.[3]

These considerations are very elementary, and a year or two ago they might have seemed to many—though not to all of us—merely academic, chiefly suitable to put before schoolchildren. But now they have ceased to be merely academic; they have indeed acquired a vital actuality almost agonisingly intense. For one realises to-day that the considerations here set forth, widely accepted as they are, yet are not generally accepted by the rulers and leaders of the greatest and foremost nations of the world. Thus Germany, in its present Prussianised state, through the mouths as well as through the actions of those rulers and leaders, denies most of the conclusions here set forth. In Germany it is a commonplace to declare that war is the law of Nature, that the "struggle for existence" means the arbitration of warfare, that it is by war that all evolution proceeds, that not only in savagery but in the highest civilisation the same rule

holds good, that human war is the source of all virtues, the divinely inspired method of regenerating and purifying mankind, and every war may properly be regarded as a holy war. These beliefs have been implicit in the Prussian spirit ever since the Goths and Vandals issued from the forests of the Vistula in the dawn of European history. But they have now become a sort of religious dogma, preached from pulpits, taught in Universities, acted out by statesmen. From this Prussian point of view, whether right or wrong, civilisation, as it has hitherto been understood in the world, is of little consequence compared to German militaristic Kultur. Therefore the German quite logically regards the Russians as barbarians, and the French as decadents, and the English as contemptibly negligible, although the Russians, however yet dominated by a military bureaucracy (moulded by Teutonic influences, as some maliciously point out), are the most humane people of Europe, and the French the natural leaders of civilisation as commonly understood, and the English, however much they may rely on amateurish methods of organisation by emergency, have scattered the seeds of progress over a large part of the earth's surface. It is equally logical that the Germans should feel peculiar admiration and sympathy for the Turks, and find in Turkey, a State founded on military ideals, their own ally in the present war. That war, from our present point of view, is a war of States which use military methods for special ends (often indeed ends that have been thoroughly evil) against a State which still cherishes the primitive ideal of warfare as an end in itself. And while such a State must enjoy immense advantages in the struggle, it is difficult, when we survey the whole course of human development, to believe that there can be any doubt about the final issue.

For one who writes as an Englishman, it may be necessary to point out clearly that that final issue by no means involves the destruction, or even the subjugation, of Germany. It is indeed an almost pathetic fact that Germany, which idealises warfare, stands to gain more than any country by an assured rule of international peace which would save her from warfare. Placed in a position which renders militaristic organisation indispensable, the Germans are more highly endowed than almost any people with the high qualities of intelligence, of receptiveness, of adaptability, of thoroughness, of capacity for organisation, which ensure success in the

arts and sciences of peace, in the whole work of civilisation. This is amply demonstrated by the immense progress and the manifold achievements of Germany during forty years of peace, which have enabled her to establish a prosperity and a good name in the world which are now both in peril. Germany must be built up again, and the interests of civilisation itself, which Germany has trampled under foot, demand that Germany shall be built up again, under conditions, let us hope, which will render her old ideals useless and out of date. We shall then be able to assert as the mere truisms they are, and not as a defiance flung in the face of one of the world's greatest nations, the elementary propositions I have here set forth. War is not a permanent factor of national evolution, but for the most part has no place in Nature at all; it has played a part in the early development of primitive human society, but, as savagery passes into civilisation, its beneficial effects are lost, and, on the highest stages of human progress, mankind once more tends to be enfolded, this time consciously and deliberately, in the general harmony of Nature.

[1] P. Chalmers Mitchell, *Evolution and the War*, 1915.

[2] On the advantages of war in primitive society, see W. McDougal's *Social Psychology*, Ch. XI.

[3] It is doubtless a task beset by difficulties, some of which are set forth, in no hostile spirit, by Lord Cromer, "Thinking Internationally," *Nineteenth Century*, July, 1916; but the statement of most of these difficulties is enough to suggest the solution.