I have researched and provided the annotations to this text. The original document is at http://www.des.emory.edu/mfp/moral.html. William James (1842-1910), a psychologist and philosopher, brother of novelist Henry James, first delivered this speech at Stanford University in 1906. It was published as an essay in Representative Essays in Modern Thought edited by Harrison Ross Steeves, in 1913 (after James' death in 1910).

The Moral Equivalent of War

by William James

The war against war is going to be no holiday excursion or camping party. The military feelings are too deeply grounded to abdicate their place among our ideals until better substitutes are offered than the glory and shame that come to nations as well as to individuals from the ups and downs of politics and the vicissitudes of trade. There is something highly paradoxical in the modern man's relation to war. Ask all our millions, north and south, whether they would vote now (were such a thing possible) to have our war for the Union expunged from history, and the record of a peaceful transition to the present time substituted for that of its marches and battles, and probably hardly a handful of eccentrics would say yes. Those ancestors, those efforts, those memories and legends, are the most ideal part of what we now own together, a sacred spiritual possession worth more than all the blood poured out. Yet

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1 This essay was originally a speech delivered to students at Stanford University in 1906. It was later published in an essay collection.
2 Abdicate- give up or renounce
3 Vicissitudes - changing phases or conditions (ups and downs)
4 He is referring to the Civil War, which he lived through, though he was never a soldier because of health problems.
ask those same people whether they would be willing, in cold blood, to start another civil war now to gain another similar possession, and not one man or woman would vote for the proposition. In modern eyes, precious though wars may be they must not be waged solely for the sake of the ideal harvest. Only when forced upon one, is a war now thought permissible.

It was not thus in ancient times. The earlier men were hunting men, and to hunt a neighboring tribe, kill the males, loot the village and possess the females, was the most profitable, as well as the most exciting, way of living. Thus were the more martial tribes selected, and in chiefs and peoples a pure pugnacity and love of glory came to mingle with the more fundamental appetite for plunder.

Modern war is so expensive that we feel trade to be a better avenue to plunder; but modern man inherits all the innate pugnacity and all the love of glory of his ancestors. Showing war's irrationality and horror is of no effect on him. The horrors

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5 It’s important to note that James is talking to an audience of men only, on a topic that at the time was considered to be relevant only to men. Throughout this speech, James perceives war, and the virtues associated with war, to be masculine, and the alternatives, such as pacifism, to be threatening that masculinity. His attitudes and assumptions (like his racism) are typical of the time.

6 Pugnacity – having the tendency to pick fights.
make the fascination. War is the *strong* life; it is life *in extremis*\(^7\); war taxes are the only ones men never hesitate to pay, as the budgets of all nations show us.

History is a bath of blood. The *Iliad*\(^8\) is one long recital of how Diomedes and Ajax, Sarpedon and Hector *killed*. No detail of the wounds they made is spared us, and the Greek mind fed upon the story. Greek history is a panorama of jingoism\(^9\) and imperialism -- war for war's sake, all the citizens being warriors. It is horrible reading -- because of the irrationality of it all -- save for the purpose of making "history" -- and the history is that of the utter ruin of a civilization in intellectual respects perhaps the highest the earth has ever seen.

Those wars were purely piratical. Pride, gold, women, slaves excitement were their only motives. In the Peloponnesian\(^10\) war, for example, the Athenians ask the inhabitants of Melos (the island where the "Venus de Milo" was found), hitherto\(^11\) neutral, to own their lordship. The envoys meet, and hold a debate which

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\(^7\) *in extremis* - (Latin) in extremity.

\(^8\) *The Iliad* – A Greek epic poem about the Trojan war.

\(^9\) *Jingoism* – Extreme nationalism, usually characterized by a belligerent foreign policy.

\(^10\) *Peloponnesian War* - A long war between the Greek city-states of *Athens* and *Sparta*

\(^11\) *Hitherto* - until now
Thucydides ¹² gives in full, and which, for sweet reasonableness of form, would have satisfied Matthew Arnold¹³. "The powerful exact ¹⁴ what they can," said the Athenians, "and the weak grant what they must." When the Meleans say that sooner than be slaves they will appeal to the gods, the Athenians reply, "Of the gods we believe and of men we know that, by a law of their nature, wherever they can rule they will. This law was not made by us, and we are not the first to have acted upon it; we did but inherit it, and we know that you and all mankind, if you were as strong as we are, would do as we do. So much for the gods; we have told you why we expect to stand as high in their good opinion as you." Well, the Meleans still refused, and their town was taken. "The Athenians," Thucydides quietly says, "thereupon put to death all who were of military age and made slaves of the women and children. They then colonized the island, sending thither five hundred settlers of their own."

Alexander's ¹⁵ career was piracy pure and simple, nothing but an orgy of power and plunder, made romantic by the character of the hero. There was no rational purpose in it, and the

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¹² Thucydides - An ancient Greek historian and general.
¹³ Matthew Arnold - English essayist, poet, and literary critic
¹⁴ Exact – (This is the verb) to force or compel something to be given.
¹⁵ Alexander (the Great) – An ancient Greek ruler who conquered most of the known world.
moment he died his generals and governors attacked one another. The cruelty of those times is incredible. When Rome finally conquered Greece, Paulus Aemilius was told by the Roman Senate to reward his soldiers for their toil by "giving" them the old kingdom of Epirus. They sacked seventy cities and carried off one hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants as slaves. How many they killed I know not; but in Etolia they killed all the senators, five hundred and fifty in number. Brutus was "the noblest Roman of them all," but to reanimate his soldiers on the eve of Philippi he similarly promises to give them the cities of Sparta and Thessalonica to ravage, if they win the fight.

Such was the gory nurse that trained soldiers to cohesiveness. We inherit the warlike type; and for most of the capacities of heroism that the human race is full of we have to thank this cruel history. Dead men tell no tales, and if there were any tribes of other type than this they have left no survivors. Our ancestors have bred pugnacity into our bone and marrow, and thousands of years of peace won't breed it out of us.

The popular imagination fairly fattens on the thought of wars. Let public opinion once

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16 Paulus Aemilius – A consul and general in ancient Rome.
17 Brutus – A politician of the late Roman republic.
18 Philippi – A city in northern ancient Greece.
19 Cohesiveness – sticking together, being coherent.
reach a certain fighting pitch, and no ruler can withstand it. In the Boer war 20 both governments began with bluff, but they couldn't stay there; the military tension was too much for them. In 1898 our people had read the word "war" in letters three inches high for three months in every newspaper. The pliant politician, McKinley, was swept away by their eagerness, and our squalid war with Spain became a reality.

At the present day, civilized opinion is a curious mental mixture. The military instincts and ideals are as strong as ever, but they are confronted by reflective criticisms which sorely curb their ancient freedom. Innumerable writers are showing up the bestial side of military service. Pure loot and mastery seem no longer morally allowable motives, and pretexts 21 must be found for attributing them solely to the enemy. England and we, our army and navy authorities repeat without ceasing, are solely for "peace." Germany and Japan 22 it is who are bent on loot and glory. "Peace"

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20 Boer war – two wars fought between England and two independent Boer republics (in Africa), from 1880 to 1881, and from 1899 to 1902.
21 Pretexts – fictitious reasons designed to conceal the real reasons.
22 Japan- At the time of this speech, relations between the U.S. and Japan were quite tense. Global Security (“The Japan War Scare of 1906-1907”) explains the situation as follows: After Japan's striking victory over Russia in 1904-05, fear of Japanese territorial advances fueled the anti-Japanese immigration forces—movies, novels and newspapers reiterated accusations that Japanese in America were merely agents of the Emperor. In early March 1905, both houses of the California legislature passed anti-Japanese resolutions. The Asiatic Exclusion League, formed primarily by labor groups in May 1905, mounted a campaign to exclude Japanese and Koreans from the United States. In May 1905, the San Francisco
in military mouths today is a synonym for "war expected." The word has become a pure provocative, and no government wishing peace sincerely should allow it ever to be printed in a newspaper. Every up-to-date dictionary should say that "peace" and "war" mean the same thing, now *in posse*\(^{23}\), now *in actu*\(^{24}\). It may even reasonably be said that the intensely sharp *preparation* for war by the nations is *the real war*, permanent, unceasing; and that the battles are only a sort of public verification of the mastery gained during the "peace"-interval.

It is plain that on this subject civilized man has developed a sort of double personality. If we take European nations, no legitimate interest of any one of them would seem to justify the tremendous destructions which a war to compass it would necessarily entail. It would seem that common sense and reason ought to find a way to reach agreement in every conflict of honest interests. I myself think it our bounden

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School Board announced a policy of removing Japanese students to the one Oriental school so that "our children should not be placed in any position where their youthful impressions may be affected by association with pupils of the Mongolian race." ...When the news of this reached Japan, violent anti-American protests broke out. The Government of Japan was outraged by the San Francisco school policy, claiming that it violated the 1894 treaty between the US and Japan. Leading Japanese officials expressed frustration with the treatment of Japanese immigrants in the United States.

http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/japan1906.htm

\(^{23}\) *in posse* (Latin) as a possibility
\(^{24}\) *in actu* (Latin) as a fact
duty to believe in such international rationality as possible. But, as things stand, I see how desperately hard it is to bring the peace-party and the war-party together, and I believe that the difficulty is due to certain deficiencies in the program of pacifism which set the military imagination strongly, and to a certain extent justifiably, against it. In the whole discussion both sides are on imaginative and sentimental ground. It is but one utopia against another, and everything one says must be abstract and hypothetical. Subject to this criticism and caution, I will try to characterize in abstract strokes the opposite imaginative forces, and point out what to my own very fallible mind seems the best utopian hypothesis, the most promising line of conciliation.

In my remarks, pacifist though I am, I will refuse to speak of the bestial side of the war-regime (already done justice to by many writers) and consider only the higher aspects of militaristic sentiment. Patriotism no one thinks discreditable; nor does anyone deny that war is the romance of history. But inordinate ambitions are the soul of any patriotism, and the possibility of violent death the soul of all romance. The militarily-patriotic and the romantic-minded everywhere, and especially the professional military class, refuse to admit for a moment that war may be a transitory phenomenon in social evolution. The notion of a sheep's paradise like that revolts,
they say, our higher imagination. Where then would be the steeps of life\(^9\)? If war had ever stopped, we should have to re-invent it, on this view, to redeem life from flat degeneration.

Reflective apologists\(^{30}\) for war at the present day all take it religiously. It is a sort of sacrament. Its profits are to the vanquished as well as to the victor; and quite apart from any question of profit, it is an absolute good, we are told, for it is human nature at its highest dynamic. Its "horrors" are a cheap price to pay for rescue from the only alternative supposed, of a world of clerks and teachers, of co-education\(^{31}\) and zoophily\(^{32}\), of "consumer's leagues" and "associated charities," of industrialism unlimited, and feminism\(^{33}\) unabashed. No scorn, no hardness, no valor anymore! Fie upon\(^{34}\) such a cattleyard of a planet!

\(^{29}\) the steeps of life – the most difficult or “steepest” parts of life. James is being poetic here, and may not realize he’s plagiarizing from a hymn written in 1896, “Climb the steeps of life, my brother” by Marian Froelich.

\(^{30}\) An apologist argues in favor of something.

\(^{31}\) co-education – men and women attending the same institution of higher education. In 1906 the most prestigious private colleges and universities were single-sex, as Stanford was when James delivered this speech to (male) Stanford students.

\(^{32}\) zo-ophily – love of animals.

\(^{33}\) Feminism – The 19\(^{th}\) amendment which gave women the right to vote was passed in 1920. In 1906, at the time of this speech, the suffragists (feminists who sought to win the right to vote) had become very visible and active, and were winning a great deal of popular support.

\(^{34}\) Fie upon – an expression of disgust.
So far as the central essence of this feeling goes, no healthy minded person, it seems to me, can help to some degree partaking of it. Militarism is the great preserver of our ideals of hardihood, and human life with no use for hardihood would be contemptible. Without risks or prizes for the darer, history would be insipid 35; indeed; and there is a type of military character which everyone feels that the race should never cease to breed, for everyone is sensitive to its superiority. The duty is incumbent on mankind, of keeping military character in stock -- if keeping them, if not for use, then as ends in themselves and as pure pieces of perfection, -- so that Roosevelt's 36 weaklings and mollycoddles 37 may not end by making everything else disappear from the face of nature.

This natural sort of feeling forms, I think, the innermost soul of army writings. Without any exception known to me, militarist authors take a highly mystical view of their subject, and regard war as a biological or sociological necessity, uncontrolled by ordinary psychological checks or motives. When the time of development is ripe the war must come, reason or no reason, for the justifications pleaded are invariably

35 Insipid – bland, dull, and uninteresting.
36 Roosevelt's – Theodore Roosevelt, in office at the time, was the 26th President of the U.S. (not to be confused with his cousin, Franklin D. Roosevelt, the 32nd President). “He is well remembered for his energetic persona, his range of interests and achievements, his leadership of the Progressive Movement, his model of masculinity, and his “cowboy” image.” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theodore_Roosevelt)
37 Mollycoddles – a man or boy who is used to being coddled or pampered. Roosevelt did in fact use the phrase “weaklings and mollycoddles” in public speeches.
fictions. War is, in short, a permanent human *obligation*. General Homer Lea, in his recent book *The Valor of Ignorance*, plants himself squarely on this ground. Readiness for war is for him the essence of nationality, and ability in it the supreme measure of the health of nations.

Nations, General Lea says, are never stationary -- they must necessarily expand or shrink, according to their vitality or decrepitude. Japan now is culminating; and by the fatal law in question it is impossible that her statesmen should not long since have entered, with extraordinary foresight, upon a vast policy of conquest -- the game in which the first moves were her wars with China and Russia and her treaty with England, and of which the final objective is the capture of the Philippines, the Hawaiian Islands, Alaska, and whole of our Coast west of the Sierra passes. This will give Japan what her ineluctable vocation as a state absolutely forces her to claim, the possession of the entire Pacific Ocean; and to oppose these deep designs we Americans have, according to our author, nothing but our conceit, our ignorance, our commercialism, our corruption, and our feminism. General Lea makes a minute technical comparison of the military strength which we at present could oppose to the strength of Japan, and concludes that the Islands, Alaska, Oregon and
Southern California, would fall almost without resistance, that San Francisco must surrender in a fortnight to a Japanese investment\textsuperscript{38}, that in three or four months the war would be over and our republic, unable to regain what it had heedlessly neglected to protect sufficiently, would then "disintegrate," until perhaps some Ceasar \textsuperscript{39} should arise to weld us again into a nation.

A dismal forecast indeed! Yet not unplausible\textsuperscript{40}, if the mentality of Japan's statesmen be of the Ceasarian \textsuperscript{41} type of which history shows us so many examples, and which is all that General Lea seems able to imagine. But there is no reason to think that women can no longer be the mother of Napoleonic or Alexandrian characters; and if these come in Japan and find their opportunity, just such surprises as \textit{The Valor of Ignorance} paints may lurk in ambush for us. Ignorant as we still are of the innermost recesses of Japanese mentality, we may be foolhardy to disregard such possibilities.

Other militarists are more complex and more moral in their considerations. The \textit{Philosophie des Krieges}, by S. R. Steinmetz is good example. War, according to this author, is an ordeal instituted by God, who weighs the nations in its balance. It is the essential form of the State, and the only function in which peoples can employ all their powers at once and convergently\textsuperscript{42}. No victory is possible save as the resultant of

\textsuperscript{38} Investment – a siege or blockade.

\textsuperscript{40} Unplausible – implausible, doesn’t seem true or likely.

\textsuperscript{41} Ceasarian – like Julius Ceasar, one of history’s greatest generals, of ancient Rome.

\textsuperscript{42} Convergently – the characteristic of coming together, or merging.
a totality of virtues, no defeat for which some vice or weakness is not responsible.
Fidelity, cohesiveness, tenacity, heroism, conscience, education, inventiveness, economy, wealth, physical health and vigor -- there isn't a moral or intellectual point of superiority that doesn't tell\textsuperscript{43}, when God holds his assizes \textsuperscript{44} and hurls the peoples upon one another. Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht\textsuperscript{45}; and Dr. Steinmetz does not believe that in the long run chance and luck play any part in apportioning \textsuperscript{46} the issues.

The virtues that prevail, it must be noted, are virtues anyhow, superiorities that count in peaceful as well as in military competition; but the strain is on them, being infinitely intenser in the latter case, makes war infinitely more searching as a trial. No ordeal is comparable to its winnowings\textsuperscript{47}. Its dread hammer is the welder of men into cohesive states, and nowhere but in such states can human nature adequately develop its capacity. The only alternative is "degeneration."

Dr. Steinmetz is a conscientious thinker, and his book, short as it is, takes much into account. Its upshot can, it seems to me, be summed up in Simon Patten's words, that mankind was nursed in pain and fear, and that the transition to a "pleasure

\textsuperscript{43} Tell – have a force or effect.
\textsuperscript{44} Assizes – A trial or judgment.
\textsuperscript{45} Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht – (German) According to Friedrich Max Müller (http://www.giffordlectures.org/Browse.asp?PubID=TPTOPR&Volume=0&Issue=0&ArticleID=3), "this is one of those pregnant sayings of [Johann Christoph Friedrich von] Schiller's which have a far wider application than we at first suspect... Literally translated they mean, 'the history of the world is the judgment of the world.' But in German, the judgment of the world means at the same time 'the day of judgment,' or 'doom's day.'"
\textsuperscript{46} Apportioning - distributing or allocating proportionally
\textsuperscript{47} Winnowings – Processes that separate inedible chaff, such as the outer protective shell, from edible wheat.
economy" may be fatal to a being wielding no powers of defence against its degenerative influences. If we speak of the fear of emancipation from the fear-regime, we put the whole situation into a single phrase; fear regarding ourselves now taking the place of the ancient fear of the enemy.

Turn the fear over as I will in my mind, it all seems to lead back to two unwillingnesses of the imagination, one aesthetic, and the other moral; unwillingness, first, to envisage a future in which army-life, with its many elements of charm, shall be forever impossible, and in which the destinies of peoples shall nevermore be decided quickly, thrillingly, and tragically by force, but only gradually and insipidly by "evolution," and, secondly, unwillingness to see the supreme theatre of human strenuousness closed, and the splendid military aptitudes of men doomed to keep always in a state of latency and never show themselves in action. These insistent unwillingnesses, no less than other aesthetic and ethical insistencies, have, it seems to me, to be listened to and respected. One cannot meet them effectively by mere counter-insistency on war's expensiveness and horror. The horror makes the thrill; and when the question is of getting the extremest and supremest out of human nature, talk of expense sounds ignominious\(^{48}\). The weakness of so much merely negative criticism is evident -- pacifism makes no converts from the military party. The military party denies neither the bestiality nor the horror, nor the expense; it only says that these things tell but half the story. It only says that war is worth them; that, taking human

\(^{48}\) Ignominious – degrading or shameful.
nature as a whole, its wars are its best protection against its weaker and more cowardly self, and that mankind cannot afford to adopt a peace economy.

Pacifists ought to enter more deeply into the aesthetical and ethical point of view of their opponents. Do that first in any controversy, says J. J. Chapman, then move the point, and your opponent will follow. So long as antimilitarists propose no substitute for war's disciplinary function, no moral equivalent of war, analogous as one might say, to the mechanical equivalent of heat, so long they fail to realize the full inwardness of the situation. And as a rule they do fail. The duties, penalties, and sanctions pictured in the utopias they paint are all too weak and tame to touch the military-minded. Tolstoi's pacifism is the only exception to this rule, for it is profoundly pessimistic as regards all this world's values, and makes the fear of the Lord furnish the moral spur provided elsewhere by the fear of the enemy. But our socialistic peace-advocates all believe absolutely in this world's values; and instead of the fear of the Lord and the fear of the enemy, the only fear they reckon with is the fear of poverty if one be lazy. This weakness pervades all the socialistic literature with which I am acquainted. Even in Lowes Dickinson's exquisite

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49 Analogous – similar to.
dialogue, high wages and short hours are the only forces invoked for overcoming man's distaste for repulsive kinds of labor. Meanwhile men at large still live as they always have lived, under a pain-and-fear economy -- for those of us who live in an ease-economy are but an island in the stormy ocean -- and the whole atmosphere of present-day utopian literature tastes mawkish and dishwatery to people who still keep a sense for life's more bitter flavors. It suggests, in truth, ubiquitous inferiority.

Inferiority is always with us, and merciless scorn of it is the keynote of the military temper. "Dogs, would you live forever?" shouted Frederick the Great. "Yes," say our utopians, "let us live forever, and raise our level gradually." The best thing about our "inferiors" today is that they are as tough as nails, and physically and morally almost as insensitive. Utopians would see them soft and squeamish, while militarism would keep their callousness, but transfigure it into a meritorious characteristic, needed by "the service," and redeemed by that from the suspicion of inferiority. All the qualities of a man acquire dignity when he knows that the service of the collectivity that owns him needs him. If proud of the collectivity, his own pride rises in proportion. No collectivity is like an army for nourishing such pride; but it has to be confessed that the only sentiment which the image of pacific cosmopolitan industrialism is capable of arousing in countless worthy breasts is shame at the idea of belonging to such a collectivity. It is obvious that the United States of America as they

50 Mawkish – sickly sentimentality.
51 Ubiquitous – found everywhere.
52 Meritorious – deserving of honor or esteem.
exist today impress a mind like General Lea’s as so much human blubber. Where is the sharpness and precipitousness\(^{53}\), the contempt for life, whether one's own or another's? Where is the savage "yes" and "no," the unconditional duty? Where is the conscription? Where is the blood-tax? Where is anything that one feels honored by belonging to?

Having said thus much in preparation, I will now confess my own utopia. I devoutly believe in the reign of peace and in the gradual advent of some sort of socialistic equilibrium. The fatalistic view of the war function is to me nonsense, for I know that war-making is due to definite motives and subject to prudential checks and reasonable criticisms, just like any other form of enterprise. And when whole nations are the armies, and the science of destruction vies in intellectual refinement with the science of production, I see that war becomes absurd and impossible from its own monstrosity. Extravagant ambitions will have to be replaced by reasonable claims, and nations must make common cause\(^{54}\) against them. I see no reason why all this should not apply to yellow\(^{55}\) as well as to white\(^{56}\) countries, and I look forward to a future when acts of war shall be formally outlawed as between civilized peoples.

All these beliefs of mine put me firmly into the anti-military party. But I do not believe that peace either ought to be or will be permanent on this globe, unless the

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\(^{53}\) Precipitousness – abruptness, decisiveness.

\(^{54}\) make common cause – unite to achieve a shared goal.

\(^{55}\) Yellow – Asian (at the time, Asian people were considered to have yellow skin, just as Native American Indians were considered to have red skin). His assumption that skin color is significant is typical of his time.

\(^{56}\) White – Western (his assumption that western civilization is “white” is typical of his time).
states, pacifically organized, preserve some of the old elements of army-discipline. A permanently successful peace-economy cannot be a simple pleasure-economy. In the more or less socialistic future toward which mankind seems drifting we must still subject ourselves collectively to those severities which answer to our real position upon this only partly hospitable globe. We must make new energies and hardihoods continue the manliness to which the military mind so faithfully clings. Martial virtues must be the enduring cement; intrepidity, contempt of softness, surrender of private interest, obedience to command, must still remain the rock upon which states are built -- unless, indeed, we wish for dangerous reactions against commonwealths, fit only for contempt, and liable to invite attack whenever a centre of crystallization for military-minded enterprise gets formed anywhere in their neighborhood.

The war-party is assuredly right in affirming and reaffirming that the martial virtues, although originally gain by the race through war, are absolute and permanent human goods. Patriotic pride and ambition in their military form are, after all, only specifications of a more general competitive passion. They are its first form, but that is no reason for supposing them to be its last form. Men are now proud of belonging to a conquering nation, and without a murmur they lay down their persons and their wealth, if by so doing they may fend off subjection. But who can be sure that other

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57 Severities – physical discomforts and hardships.
58 Hardihoods – resolute courage, fortitude, and audacity.
59 Manliness – having characteristics (stereotypically) considered masculine, such as strength and virility.
60 Intrepidity – characteristics of fearlessness and endurance.
61 Specifications – specific examples.
aspects of one's country may not, with time and education and suggestion enough, come to be regarded with similarly effective feelings of pride and shame? Why should men not some day feel that is it worth a blood-tax to belong to a collectivity superior in any respect? Why should they not blush with indignant shame if the community that owns them is vile in any way whatsoever? Individuals, daily more numerous, now feel this civic passion. It is only a question of blowing on the spark until the whole population gets incandescent\(^\text{62}\), and on the ruins of the old morals of military honor, a stable system of morals of civic honor builds itself up. What the whole community comes to believe in grasps the individual as in a vise. The war-function has grasped us so far; but the constructive interests may some day seem no less imperative, and impose on the individual a hardly lighter burden.

Let me illustrate my idea more concretely. There is nothing to make one indignant in the mere fact that life is hard, that men should toil and suffer pain. The planetary conditions once for all are such, and we can stand it. But that so many men, by mere accidents of birth and opportunity, should have a life of nothing else but toil and pain and hardness and inferiority imposed upon them, should have no vacation, while others natively no more deserving never get any taste of this campaigning life at all, -- this is capable of arousing indignation in reflective minds. It may end by seeming shameful to all of us that some of us have nothing but campaigning, and others nothing but unmanly ease. If now -- and this is my idea -- there were, instead of

\(^{62}\) Incandescent – full of bright light.
military conscription, a conscription of the whole youthful population to form for a certain number of years a part of the army enlisted against *Nature*, the injustice would tend to be evened out, and numerous other goods to the commonwealth would remain blind as the luxurious classes now are blind, to man's relations to the globe he lives on, and to the permanently sour and hard foundations of his higher life. To coal and iron mines, to freight trains, to fishing fleets in December, to dishwashing, clotheswashing, and windowwashing, to road-building and tunnel-making, to foundries and stoke-holes, and to the frames of skyscrapers, would our gilded youths be drafted off, according to their choice, to get the childishness knocked out of them, and to come back into society with healthier sympathies and soberer ideas. They would have paid their blood-tax, done their own part in the immemorial human warfare against nature; they would tread the earth more proudly, the women would value them more highly, they would be better fathers and teachers of the following generation.

Such a conscription\(^6\), with the state of public opinion that would have required it, and the many moral fruits it would bear, would preserve in the midst of a pacific

\(^6\) Conscription – compulsory enrollment (usually in military service).
civilization the manly virtues which the military party is so afraid of seeing disappear in peace. We should get toughness without callousness, authority with as little criminal cruelty as possible, and painful work done cheerily because the duty is temporary, and threatens not, as now, to degrade the whole remainder of one's life. I spoke of the "moral equivalent" of war. So far, war has been the only force that can discipline a whole community, and until an equivalent discipline is organized, I believe that war must have its way. But I have no serious doubt that the ordinary prides and shames of social man, once developed to a certain intensity, are capable of organizing such a moral equivalent as I have sketched, or some other just as effective for preserving manliness of type. It is but a question of time, of skilful propagandism\(^64\), and of opinion-making men seizing historic opportunities.

The martial type of character can be bred without war. Strenuous honor and disinterestedness\(^65\) abound everywhere. Priests and medical men are in a fashion educated to it, and we should all feel some degree of its imperative if we were conscious of our work as an obligatory service to the state. We should be *owned*, as soldiers are by the army, and our pride would rise accordingly.

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\(^64\) Propagandism – use of propaganda, the spreading of ideas and arguments in support of a cause, such as a war.

\(^65\) Disinterestedness – The characteristic of not being partisan, not caring which side wins.
We could be poor, then, without humiliation, as army officers now are. The only thing needed henceforward is to inflame the civic temper as part history has inflamed the military temper. H. G. Wells⁶⁶, as usual, sees the centre of the situation. "In many ways," he says, "military organization is the most peaceful of activities. When the contemporary man steps from the street, of clamorous insincere advertisement, push, adulteration, underselling and intermittent employment into the barrack-yard, he steps on to a higher social plane, into an atmosphere of service and cooperation and of infinitely more honorable emulations. Here at least men are not flung out of employment to degenerate because there is no immediate work for them to do. They are fed and drilled and trained for better services. Here at least a man is supposed to win promotion by self-forgetfulness and not by self-seeking. And beside the feeble and irregular endowment of research by commercialism, its little shortsighted snatches at profit by innovation and scientific economy, see how remarkable is the steady and rapid development of method and appliances in naval and military affairs! Nothing is more striking than to compare the

⁶⁶ H. G. Wells (1866-1946) – One of the earliest writers of what we now call science fiction, author of The War of the Worlds, The Time Machine, and many other books, he also wrote political and social commentary, and was a socialist and a pacifist.
progress of civil conveniences which has been left almost entirely to the trader, to the progress in military apparatus during the last few decades. The house-appliances of today, for example, are little better than they were fifty years ago. A house of today is still almost as ill-ventilated, badly heated by wasteful fires, clumsily arranged and furnished as the house of 1858. Houses a couple of hundred years old are still satisfactory places of residence, so little have our standards risen. But the rifle or battleship of fifty years ago was beyond all comparison inferior to those we now possess; in power, in speed, in convenience alike. No one has a use now for such superannuated things."

Wells adds that he thinks that the conceptions of order and discipline, the tradition of service and devotion, of physical fitness, unstinted exertion, and universal responsibility, which universal military duty is now teaching European nations, will remain a permanent acquisition when the last ammunition has been used in the fireworks that celebrate the final peace. I believe as he does. It would be simply preposterous if the only force that could work ideals of honor and standards of efficiency into English or American natures should be the fear of being killed by the Germans or the Japanese. Great indeed is Fear; but it is not, as our military enthusiasts believe and try to make us believe, the only stimulus known for awakening the higher ranges of men's spiritual energy. The amount of alteration in public opinion which my

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67 Superannuated – antiquated, not up-to-date.
utopia postulates is vastly less than the difference between the mentality of those black warriors who pursued Stanley's party on the Congo with their cannibal war-cry of "Meat! Meat!" and that of the "general-staff" of any civilized nation. History has seen the latter interval bridged over; the former one can be bridged over much more easily.

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68 Postulates – predicts or proposes.
70 European explorers in Africa perpetuated the myth that cannibalism was commonplace in Africa, when it was actually quite rare.