

War and the Survival of the Fittest—III*

Does Physical Conflict Between the Nations Select the Highest Type?

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BUT is not war a test of civilization? Ritchie in his "Social Studies" has announced the theory that modern wars are really in the last analysis conflicts between different types of civilization, or civilization at different stages of development in which the superior type is assured of victory. Thus war, if it does not subvert an inferior civilization, discredits it by branding it with the mark of inferiority. On the other hand, the superior civilization is exalted and glorified by victory. By this process the cause of civilization is said to be advanced.

In considering this argument we shall see that types of civilization are difficult of definition. If, however, we make the definition of type sufficiently simple to make every variation a different type, then we may admit that whenever two nations do meet in battle, it is a clash between two types of civilization or civilizations at different stages of development, at least, so far as civilizations can be articulated on the field of battle. It is, however, a different thing to say that these differences in civilization lead to war. To establish such a proposition would be difficult indeed when we remember that modern wars have been caused by a disturbance of the balance of war, by competition for markets, by the lust of imperialism and questions of national honor, all of which are not vitally connected with differences of civilization.

Granted, however, that, no matter what may have led to the war between two nations, they are actually different types of civilization, is the Court of War competent to give a fair verdict? It is quite true that war does retard, and in a measure discredit in the eyes of the world the civilization of the defeated nation; but can the merits of two types of civilization be decided upon the field of battle? Is fighting force the criterion of civilization? If such is not the case, then war may depreciate the superior type and exalt the inferior. In war the nation wins which is superior in fighting force, but the question which is to be decided is whether or not superiority of fighting power is determined by superiority of civilization. It is common enough for the defenders of the war idea to make such assertions, but a more careful examination of the factors which go to the determination of the issues of war reveal some which are quite independent of the character of the nation's civilization.

First, there are the natural conditions of the territory of the contending nations. A nation with a compact territory abounding in strong natural fortifications and defences has an immense advantage over another nation whose territory is scattered and without such natural advantages of warfare. But such advantages may be on the side of the evidently inferior civilization. The compact character of Russian territory is a great advantage for purposes of warfare over the scattered territory of Britain.

Again, one nation may have a great advantage over another from the character of its economic conditions. The very life of one nation may depend upon its maintenance of foreign commercial relations, and these being cut off it must soon give up, if it cannot win a speedy and decisive victory. Another depending less upon its foreign trade may be able to withstand the interruption of such trade for years. Granted that in the American Civil War the superior type of civilization did win—the civilization founded upon free labor over that founded upon slavery—yet it is evident that quite apart from their respective types of civilization the North had an immense advantage over the South in its economic conditions. The life of the South depended upon its export cotton trade, which was put an end to by the blockade of its ports. This meant the entire reorganization of the economic conditions of the South if it were to live. Whole States devoted to cotton growing were simply valueless to the Confederacy from an economic point of view. The North, on the other hand, was so situated with respect to economic conditions that a blockade of its ports, had the Confederacy been able to effect it, would have made a much smaller drain upon its strength. But such an immense advantage was in no way due to a superiority of civilization. If it be said that the economic disadvantage of the South was to be traced to slavery, it only needs to be said by way of reply that cotton growing for European markets is to this day a staple industry of the Southern States even when slavery has been abolished.

The size of the nation has not a little to do with deciding a conflict. If other things are equal, a nation of twenty millions can put twice as many men in the field as a nation of ten millions, and big battalions have always been considered one of the determining factors in war.

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But is bigness a criterion of civilization? Shall we say that the civilization of Russia is superior to that of Switzerland, or the type of life represented by Philip and Alva superior to that represented by William the Silent? When we remember the part played by little nations in the advancement of civilization we may be glad that in the course of history civilization has not been left to the mercy of the trampling battalions of armed hosts.

But the most important consideration of all with respect to war as a test of civilization is the fact that different types of civilization cannot always be expressed in terms of war as a common denominator. If all nations that ever do come into conflict accepted the military ideal as the first expression of national life, and if, under the guidance of this ideal, they all maintained their national life at the highest point of military efficiency, then, other things being equal, the highest type of civilization would be able to produce the most efficient national fighting force. But all nations are not under the dominion of this ideal to the same extent. There are in this respect two distinct types of national life, the military and the industrial. The one is devoted to the arts of war and aims at the best possible preparation for war at all times. The temper of the people, their traditions and ideals and their form of social organization are all adapted to this end. The other is devoted to the arts of peace; they have a genius for commerce and having at the same time a turn for idealism sufficient to give them confidence in a national policy of fair play and peace, the energy of the nation is devoted to the development of trade and commerce, education, social reform and such other enterprises as come within the purposes of a peaceful people. The national taste and temper is not conducive to military enterprises. Of course, we do not find perfect representatives of either type, but it is easy to find approximations, e. g., Switzerland and Holland approaching the industrial type, and Russia approaching the military type. The military type is always prepared for war to the utmost of its ability, the industrial type rarely is; and preparedness quite apart from staying power is a great advantage in war.

Of course a nation so entirely dominated by the military ideal that its commerce and natural resources remained undeveloped and its masses downtrodden and exploited for military purposes would soon prove inefficient for purposes of war. Its administration would likely become corrupt, its exchequer exhausted and its people lacking in character. The nation bent on military efficiency will see to the character of its people, for serfs and slaves never yet fought as citizens, and to its exchequer, for the most splendid army needs rations and war is the most expensive of all national enterprises. It will look to all influences that shape the character of its citizens and add to the material wealth of the nation, for these have much to do with its military efficiency. If there be added to this the highest degree of militarism compatible with it then we have a nation at its highest point of fighting efficiency.

But nations otherwise equal may differ widely in the degree of their military preparations for war. Germany, France and Russia are apparently carrying their utmost while Holland, Switzerland and Norway are carrying comparatively little. Suppose these nations were in other respects equal, there is no doubt but the best armed and most prepared nation would have an immense advantage in war. Let us take an actual case, that of the threatened war between Britain and the United States over the Venezuela boundary in 1892. One would say there was no great disparity between the characters of these peoples or their material resources; but Britain certainly had a great advantage in her degree of military preparedness. On the one side was a navy equal to any other two of the world's navies, and on the other was the mere nucleus of a navy that might in twenty years become respectable. This disparity in preparedness for war was due first to the different situations geographically and economically of the two nations in question, which surely had nothing to do with the character of their civilization; and in the second place to the difference of the two nations in their liking for militarism and belief in it. This latter feature, state it as we may, is more marked in some nations than in others. As some men are by nature more pugnacious and have more faith in force than others, so some nations by temper are more warlike and have more faith in militarism than others. But because one nation maintains itself at the highest possible degree of military efficiency and preparedness, is this an evidence of its superiority of type over that of

nations whose immediate military efficiency and preparedness is far from the standard which it might maintain were it a little more possessed of the military spirit? If it were certain that both nations had to fight for their existence, then to be unprepared would be an evidence of the kind of stupidity that the "Army and Navy Club" charge against the people of Britain. But to assert that a nation must fight in order to live is to beg the question. That remains to be seen. If it is asserted that the superiority of civilization is evidenced by the accuracy with which a nation foresees a coming conflict, it may be replied that the causes of war are not always discernible. The Venezuela boundary trouble could not be foreseen by the United States as the conflict with Russia was foreseen by the Japanese. Moreover, any extraordinary strengthening of military power may precipitate a war, as witness the German war panic of two years ago. Preparedness for war is, in a measure at any rate, determined by factors which are not necessarily criteria of civilization—faith in force, the military spirit, exigencies of domestic and world politics, international relationship, etc.

It may be granted that the civilization of a nation counts very much in war; commercial, educational and political development and organization all make for efficiency of national fighting force. There are, however, many features of civilization and these among the highest and most worthy which cannot be expressed in terms of war and consequently cannot help a nation on the battlefield, no matter how highly developed they may be. This is particularly true of art. Napoleon stabling his horses in a room on a wall of which was painted Leonardo de Vinci's "Last Supper" is evidence of the poverty of the contribution art can make to the fighting efficiency of a nation. The only poetry and music which serves the ends of war is that of the jingo and music hall variety. If Shakespeare and Goethe and Tolstoi have made any contribution to the civilization of their respective countries it was not such as could be expressed in terms of war.

Again, it is very difficult to define the different types of national civilization because of the ever-increasing stratification of society, due largely to world movements and organizations. University life at Heidelberg, Oxford, Harvard and Moscow has much in common. A student from one would find himself much more at home, in point of taste, temper and view-point, at any of the others than in many social circles in his own land. The trader whose business outlook takes him beyond his own nation is not so much stranger among traders of other countries who operate in a wide field as in the company of government officials of his own country. The socialist and trades-unionist of one nation is on the friendliest terms with his brother in another nation and understands him, while he does not like and perhaps does not understand the capitalist of his own. They represent different types. This stratification of society works two ways. In the first place it shows us a variety of types in each nation, and in the second place it shows us that these types are found in other nations.

As a matter of fact, we usually judge of the national life by that which controls the government, since it dictates the national policy. But this type does not always adequately represent the life of the nation. In the case of Germany, for instance, the Emperor with the support of the militarists and Prussian junkers control the government, but the great and growing body of social-democrats have ideals of national life of quite another type, though they are as yet powerless to express them in national policy. But nothing is more certain than that if they continue to develop in strength as they have in the past twenty years they will control the national policy of Germany. Even now it is a question if they do not more adequately express the spirit and ideals of the great body of the people than do those in power. At any rate when such diverse types exist within a nation and when they are each represented in other countries it is difficult to see how the victory of one nation over another exalts the type of civilization represented by the victor.

One thing, however, usually happens among these various types within a nation through war—a war always means the exaltation and strengthening of the military type. This has been so well understood by arbitrary rulers, that from time immemorial it has been recognized that to engage the attention of a people in war is a most efficient way of turning their minds from much needed social reforms at home. A German war would undoubtedly set back the cause of social democracy in that nation and prolong the present type of national policy. The school of Gen. Homer Lea got its footing in the American

commonwealth after the Spanish war. The Boer war no doubt sowed the seeds of militarism in the younger nations of the British empire which have brought forth our tin-pot navies.

To sum up our answer to the contention that war is a test of civilization in which the superior type is strengthened and exalted: we have granted that civilization has much to do in deciding a war between nations, but we have pointed out that other factors enter into his trial by force. The size of the nation, its geographical features, its economic conditions all contribute towards the issue of a war and these may as likely be on the side of the inferior civilization as on that of the superior, bribing, as it were, the court of war. Besides this, nations differ in respect of martial spirit and faith in force which makes a great disparity in their preparedness for war, and military preparedness is among the most effective forces in a conflict of arms, but it cannot be claimed that the type of civilization thus unprepared is in any way inferior. Moreover, it is difficult when we remember the stratification of society to differentiate types of national life. Each nation embraces different types and the general effect of war is to exalt and strengthen the military type at the expense of the others.

IV.

May we not go a step farther and ask, if war does not select the superior type, does it not actually impede the only rational process of selection among various types of civilization? Conflict is indeed the condition of progress, but there are other conflicts than those of force. There is such a thing as a conflict of ideas: new ideas are ever at war with old and in the long run the fit survive, i. e., those which best cohere with the body of accepted truth. Views, theories, hypotheses, philosophies are ever engaged in a struggle for existence; Berkeley struggles with Locke and Kant with Hume. The fittest under the circumstances and as a whole survive. Only it is not a process of natural selection as in the lower orders of life where organism struggles with organism and environment, but a process of rational selection in which thoughts struggle one with another in being adapted to a great body of accepted truth. The one is natural since it proceeds on the plane of natural forces, the other is rational since it proceeds on the plane of intellect and idea. In one case it is a conflict of physical force, in which of course intelligent direction counts much, whereas physical force does not, and in the nature of things cannot, enter into the other.

Let us suppose that two philosophers representing conflicting schools of thought coming together—and so far as we know ideas can never come into conflict except through the media of human organisms—and each presenting his views to the other. If they had time enough and patience enough and sufficient of the friendly mind there would be a real process of rational selection in which the true view would prevail. Even with much less time and patience either or both views might be considerably modified as a result. But they are men as well as philosophers and suppose that in the course of their argu-

mentation their prejudices and passions became so inflamed that they forgot themselves and took off their coats and fell to fighting. There would be other results than bruises and flushed faces; for our purposes the chief of these would be a sudden stop to the process of rational selection that was proceeding so favorably. Hate and bitterness would confirm each philosopher in his own views and close the doors of his mind against the views of the other, and not only would this be true of the symposium in question, but very likely of all future symposiums. Probably each would find it difficult to bring a friendly mind to the consideration of the views held by the other, no matter who expounded them, for philosophers are still men and thinkers are organisms. In such an unfortunate experience we have a process of rational selection being interrupted by a process of natural selection. It would be difficult to find a philosopher, be he ever so skilled in giving good reasons for bad causes, who would defend the result of this conflict of force as a vindication of a superior philosophy.

Now the soul of civilization is in idea and ideal entertained by a people and in some measure articulated in their common life. It is impossible to define it in the totality of its expressions. It does however include the scientific knowledge of the people and its application to life, their methods of production and exchange expressed in their commercial institutions, their social and educational ideals expressed in their appropriate institutions and their larger views of life and the universe expressed in their philosophy and religion. If we could have a sort of composite photograph of these features of a nation's life it might be taken as a very fair representation of its civilization. In each of those features it will be noted that it is a matter of ideal and method of life; that is, the conceived and accepted ends of life together with methods by which their realization is attempted. These include the essential features of a civilization. Now in the case of both ideals and methods a process of rational selection naturally proceeds. There is only one way in which one ideal of life may be proved superior to another, and that is by showing that its realization would bring more satisfaction to life than the realization of the other, or that in its life can better realize itself than in the other. But how can this be determined except by reflexion sufficient to give presumptive evidence that one will give more satisfaction than another and then by actual experiment? The two must be reflected upon and judged by impartial minds, and in the long run people will choose what gives them most satisfaction. Whatever closes the mind against one ideal or prejudices the mind against it either puts this ideal out of the process of rational selection or so far handicaps it. This is what passion and strife always do; and war means national passion and strife. Suppose two nations living side by side, entertaining different ideals, say of government, one the ideal of democracy, the other the ideal of aristocracy. Should they live together long enough in friendly intercourse so as to become familiar each with the other's ideal and marked the degree of satisfaction which each derived

from the measure of its realization, one ideal would profoundly modify the other, and if other things were equal their ideals of government would continue to approximate each other until at last they became identical. One ideal would not necessarily push the other out of the field, in all probability one would modify the other until the final ideal would be such as could not be adequately characterized as either democracy or aristocracy. But, suppose these two nations are led into war through a conflict of interests arising out of the diversity of their governmental ideals, how would this affect the process of rational selection which is naturally proceeding? It would immediately cease just as truly as the argumentation of the philosophers when they took to fistieuffs. The ideal conflict would give place to the physical. The heat and passion of war blinds the eyes of a nation so that it cannot appreciate the worth of its antagonist's ideals. Not only so, but just in proportion as the conflict has arisen through these conflicting ideals the one nation will keep its mind closed against the ideal of the other long after the physical struggle is over. Free intercourse and a friendly mind are always necessary to the process of rational selection among national ideals, and both of these are impossible when there is an appeal to the arbitrament of the sword.

It is not necessary to speak at length upon questions of method by which nations endeavor to realize their ideals and which are features of their peculiar civilizations. Here likewise a process of rational selection proceeds under favorable circumstances, the chief of which are free intercourse and a friendly mind. Efficiency of method is keenly scrutinized where there is a common ideal, and the most efficient speedily adopted when it is demonstrated to be such. But even in the case of methods war seriously hinders the process by blinding a people's eyes to the merits of their enemies' methods and by keeping a knowledge of such methods from them, the former by failure to appreciate through hate, the latter by ignorance through national isolation.

In answering the question, does war decide the superior type of civilization, we must then bear in mind the difference between natural and rational selection, the one operating in the field of natural forces, the other in the field of ideas and ideals. And since the soul of civilization is in idea and ideal the only true process of selection among different types is the rational. The prime condition of such a process of selection is the open mind on the part of each and friendly intercourse between them. Only when they are brought together and surveyed with impartial and dispassionate eyes can one be said to gain the ascendancy over the other. But this is what war makes impossible. It separates peoples of different types, it interrupts friendly intercourse, and above all it sows the seeds of hate and bitterness and distrust which make impartial and rational competition impossible. Instead then of saying that war is a conflict of civilization in which the fit is perpetuated, it seems truer to say that it is the greatest known hindrance to any such conflict.

Gambia Mahogany

THE more intensively the forest flora of East Africa is investigated, the larger becomes the list of genera and species, which have been known heretofore as native only to tropical West Africa. This list includes a number of important forest trees, which extend from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean. Gambia or African mahogany (*Khaya senegalensis*, Juss.) is perhaps the most important one that has this extensive range of growth. It is found in the forests bordering Mombo River and along the caravan route which leads from Tanga to Masinde in German East Africa. Here the tree associates with several species of *Parkia*, *Pterygota* and *Ficus*. This tree, which is very important commercially, is more abundant in West Africa, where it has been exploited for over twenty-five years. Its timber has been one of the chief sources of revenue for Sierra Leone, Lagos, Kamerun, Angola and parts of Congo. The tree is found also in the upper Nile region, especially in the sections known as Djur and Nyssaland, but it is rare at this distance from the coast. According to authentic references in botanical literature, this tree is very common in the neighborhood of Cape Verde and along the Gambia River, where it is called Gambia mahogany by the English colonists. In the French provinces the tree is known as cal or cal-cedro. The negroes of West Africa have named it "hie," "jallow," "dubina," and "oganwo."

The first observations in regard to the distribution of this tree were made by Guillemain and Perrottet in their "Flora Senegambia." In this work they state that Gambia mahogany is among the largest and most beautiful trees along the coast of Gambia and on elevated parts of Cape Verde peninsula. It is very abundant in the district of Bargny, where it forms the principal stand of the forests. In Senegal this tree is now being planted on a commercial scale by the French, because it produces a very valuable wood, which has attained considerable importance in the trade. Upon the whole there is

scarcely a tree in West Africa which deserves more attention; for, when the beauty and usefulness of its wood are taken into account, there is no other tree that can compare with it.

African mahogany is a name given to a good many other woods that are now being cut and sold, but the name "Gambia" mahogany is applied only to the wood of *Khaya senegalensis*, which is prized beyond all others as a substitute for the genuine mahogany (*Swietenia mahagoni*, Jacq.). Gambia mahogany is a large and very beautiful tree and yields one of the most abundant and useful timbers. It frequently attains a height of over 100 feet and an average trunk diameter above the enormous buttresses of over 3 feet. The tree is usually perfectly straight, so that splendid and most valuable boards may be cut from the logs. The wood is best suited for carpentry and cabinet work, and is used extensively for making handsome and expensive furniture. In color and figure it often resembles the true mahogany of tropical America, but it is somewhat softer, paler, slightly coarser, and is more liable to check in seasoning. The natives make boats of great strength and durability out of single logs of this tree. The tree yields a gum which was formerly collected and exported as a substitute for gum arabic.

The West African mahogany trade began in 1886, and the industry has attained such proportions that the output of tropical American mahogany has not increased in spite of the fact that there has been an enormous enlargement in the use of so-called mahogany. African kinds are shipped into the United States in large quantities, and the best grades are cheaper than similar grades of the true mahogany from Cuba or Mexico. The wood is somewhat paler red and works with greater difficulty than the tropical American mahogany, and is less valuable on this account. Since the tree is so widely distributed and the wood procurable in such large quantities and at so many ports along the west coast of Africa,

it has come into extensive use both in Europe and in America. Some of the logs are beautifully figured and the wood is highly esteemed for the best grades of furniture.

It is difficult to predict what the prospects for the Gambia mahogany will be in West Africa in ten years from now. The supply seems almost inexhaustible, but it is more than likely that the easily accessible trees will soon be cut and inferior substitutes will take its place. No less than twenty other species, most of them entirely unrelated, are now being exploited and shipped to the large markets under the name of African mahogany. Many of them are very good woods, but all of these imitations now sold under the comprehensive trade name of African mahogany are deficient in some of the estimable qualities which characterize the original African or Gambia mahogany.

It is practically impossible to secure accurate statistics as the kinds and amounts exported from the various shipping points. That the industry as a whole is increasing is chiefly noticeable from the figures of imports of so-called African mahogany into this country. Out of the total quantity of true and substitute mahoganies imported during 1910, which was 44,524,000 board feet, about 19,000,000 feet were African substitutes.

Quantity and Value of True and Substitute Mahoganies (Unsawed) Imported from 1901-1910.

Year.	Quantity—M. feet.	Value.
1901	32,281	\$1,752,612
1902	44,795	2,361,483
1903	48,387	2,783,679
1904	50,370	2,690,382
1905	31,844	1,977,894
1906	36,619	2,470,072
1907	51,899	3,263,718
1908	41,678	2,566,954
1909	39,828	2,479,976
1910	44,524	3,224,152