

Island Evening

Gerald Mallett, '44

Sunset tints across a field, new-plowed, and dark
Beneath the stretching poplars; blurring the hills,
Cattle ponder dazedly; and liquid trills
Of sleepy sparrow or lonely woodlark
Tinkle bell-like unceasingly; a stark,
Ageless pine gropes proudly above and drills
The bleeding sky; from the dusky pond shrills
The frog, and o'er its deadened surface the spark
Of firefly winks magically. Along the shore
The elfin breezes woo the tireless waves.
The sun swoons redly below seas like fleece,
And clamouring crows beat hurriedly before
The coming gloom; a slit of moor braves
The fading light; and day succumbs to peace.

**A Layman Looks at the War**

Alumni Prize Essay

S. M. P. '41

The realization that many of his opinions do not spring spontaneously from his own mind is of the utmost importance to one who wishes to secure more than a superficial view of the conflict that is now raging in Europe. There are various external forces at work coercing minds with a subtle power. Daily, in even the most isolated parts of the country, the herald of the news, the instrument of the printer's power of persuasion, wends its triumphant way, meriting ever more and more the title of "Constructor of Public Opinion". In wartime, particularly, the newspapers, our ordinary sources of information, may become channels of a propaganda so extensive that a layman is led to doubt, or at least suspect, all the information he receives through them. Years after hostilities have ceased he may be able to get a true picture of the atrocities of Hitlerism in Poland, of the barbarities of Bolshevism in Finland. Time's discriminating hand, from the vantage

point of distance, will evaluate the events now obscured by their very nearness, and truth will emerge from the maze of propaganda which envelops it.

But truth is always truth, and right is always right, in spite of the diverse views of opponents in the present war. Thoughtful persons will look beyond the roaring guns and exploding bombs to the principles of truth and justice that are involved in this war and that give it a tremendous significance. Flagrant violations of natural rights of the individual and of the family, injustices in national affairs, and invasion of the very foundation of peaceful international relations are the evils which goaded the Allies into a struggle, undesirable but necessary.

The immediate cause of the war was the invasion of Poland in open violation of previous treaties and promises. Fulfilling their guarantees to the Polish government, Britain and France declared war on Germany and staked their very existence on the effort to rid the world of the nightmare of Nazi aggression. That policy of aggression is but one aspect of the Hitlerism which the Allies are pledged to overthrow. Even if there were no other reason for supporting the Allied cause, this one—their primary war aim—would be more than enough to gain them the sympathy and assistance of all those interested in preserving the best elements of the civilization in which we live. For National Socialism is a combinations of doctrines which, if successful by force of arms, would involve the complete destruction of a way of life that has been over a thousand years in the building, and for the preservation of which men are today laying down their lives.

Basing their belief on a theory proposed by Stewart Chamberlain that the Aryan race is naturally superior to all other races, the National Socialists, or Nazi, use this hypothesis as a justification of their daring outrages against the most sacred human rights. They arbitrarily refuse to heed the teachings of eminent anthropologists that the notion of race has a very weak scientific value and that scientists have been unable to prove the racial purity of any people and still less their inherent superiority. According to the Nazi, any means whatever which may preserve or improve their so-called blood purity of race is justified. This false basic principle of racism has produced many pernicious effects, a few of which are anti-Semitism, militarism, and hatred of other races.

In the classification of races in which the German occupies the first place, the Jew, for some inexplicable reason is given the lowest place. Against this unfortunate race the rulers of Germany have directed a persecution which illustrates so vividly a total disregard of human rights and dignity that one is constrained to conclude that the Nazis really believe their declaration that the distance between the highest and lowest of races is greater than that existing between the lowest type of human being and the ape. At the beginning of Hitler's rule, the Jews experienced a mild form of persecution in being permitted only a limited number of positions in the higher professions. Gradually the limitations were extended through boycotts, Jewish property was seized with the least excuse, Jews were deprived of all legal and civil rights, and large numbers of them were expelled from Germany in utter destitution.

Besides the suppression of non-German races, Nazism pledges itself to the improvement of the racial heritage of the German people. For the accomplishment of this end, particular emphasis is placed on physical development. Sound soldiers are more desirable than great thinkers. The German educational system makes the individual's natural right to normal intellectual progress subordinate to physical training, thus instilling into the hearts of the children the idea that the primary end of education is to enable the German people to take their place as the superior race. Trained from early youth according to the military standards of Hitler's schools, the rising generation naturally looks on war as the noblest of ideals and the proper means of accomplishing the German domination of the world. Such a form of glorified militarism leaves little room for confidence in any Nazi assertions of a desire for peace.

Political and social unification is the professed purpose of the emphasis placed on racial unity. On this pretext the rights of Poland, of Austria, of Czecho-Slovakia, have been mercilessly trampled on in order to bring all Germans within the Third Reich. In his recent Encyclical, *Summi Pontificatus*, our Holy Father, Pope Pius XII, deplors the fact that nations have forgotten "the law of human solidarity and charity which is dictated and imposed by our common origin and by the equality of rational nature in all men." In their longing for social

unity they have made the mistake of seeking it in superiority of race instead of in the unity of all mankind as children of God, their loving Father.

But there is no room for God in the Nazi State, just as truly as there was no room in the inn of Bethlehem. The whole system of National Socialism is based on the assumption that absolute and supreme authority is vested in the State and especially in the Fuehrer in whom the spirit and will of the nation are considered to find their most complete expression. From this theory flows a whole train of injustices that threaten the very foundations of our civilization. Could Christian nations sit idly by and see all that makes for human liberty tottering under the blows of those who deny the very basis of authority, that "there is no power but from God" (Rom., XIII, 1)?

Conditions in Germany today prove that when man flouts the justice he owes to God, there is nothing to restrain him from injustices towards his neighbor. The State is the end of everything, "the supreme criterion of the moral and juridical order, and therefore forbids every appeal to the principles of natural reason and of the Christian conscience" (*Summi Pontificatus*). A firm and unrelenting pressure is placed on the people to ensure their submission to the means established to exalt the State. Every form of economic and social life, of national and international relations is under the rigid control of the government, dominated completely by Hitler.

In the schools only Nazi doctrines may be taught, and the texts have been revised so that the youth of Germany have constantly dinned into their ears Nazi ideals of history, race, politics and economics. Family rights have no place in these ideals, and parents, therefore, are not free in regard to the education of their children, but must conform to the standards that tend to glorify the State. A carefully censored press urges on the people the necessity of a passive acceptance of restraint that Germany may be enabled to take the position her leaders claim it deserves among the nations.

Even in the realm of religion, the State claims complete authority as the interpreter and guide of the destiny of the German people. The sanctuary of the conscience is ruthlessly invaded and that freedom of worship so highly prized by Christian nations is no longer permitted. Religion, which acknowledges God's supreme authority,

interferes with the totalitarian theories of the State, and for this reason Nazi leaders are exerting every effort in their power to saturate all their subjects with godless ideals of life. On the Church in particular their wrath has fallen, and even the profession of friendship can no longer camouflage the reality of the enmity that is revealed by the hard facts of the persecution. Rights of religious education are utterly disregarded, the press is deprived of the least vestige of freedom, and everything possible is done to make the practise of religion difficult. With insidious ingenuity, means of undermining the influence of the clergy with their people and of restricting their ministrations have been devised and executed, in order to hasten the de-Christianization of the country. And these attacks are in direct violation of Hitler's solemnly pledged word in the Concordat of 1933.

Experience has shown that the promises of the Nazi dictator are absolutely worthless and that the destruction of good faith, the heart and life-blood of justice, by the deification of the State, renders peaceful intercourse between nations impossible. Repeatedly Hitler has made solemn promises, and repeatedly he has broken them. It is plain, therefore, that complete autonomy of the State "leaves the stability of international relations at the mercy of the will of rulers while it destroys the possibility of true collaboration directed to the general good" (*Summi Pontificatus*).

Only when these grave dangers that threaten the foundations of civilized order are removed can there be any hope of security. The cause for which the Allies fight is the cause of civilization, one of vital interest to all who desire liberty and justice. Consequently, when we pray for peace, we pray not only that the horrors of war may cease but that the injustices which caused it may be remedied, and that we may be established under the sure protection of Divine standards of morality in a united world.

It is useless, however, to talk of tearing down the barriers of hatred that separate the nations unless the individuals comprising them have in their hearts love for their fellows and respect for their own ideals that lift them above the petty selfishness that lies at the basis of the world's problems. Herein is the opportunity for each of us to share in the great crusade against the forces of evil. We cannot all take up arms to assist in overcoming the

enemies that oppose the Christian principles of justice, but we can aid in bringing about the union of individuals that must precede the union of nations in mutual peace and charity. Brotherly love among individuals is the bud from which blossoms forth love among nations in the fulfilment of the law of universal charity which Christ established in His kingdom on earth.

When the reign of Christ in the hearts of men is recognized, and all mankind meets in the unity of faith, "where there is neither Gentile nor Jew" (*Col.*, 111, 11), the torch of justice will blaze in triumph over the world. Then only will be realized that peace which is the "fruit of justice" (*Isaias*, XXX1, 17), the peace of which the angels sang when Christ was born in Bethlehem, "peace on earth to men of good-will" (*St. Luke*, 11, 14).



Spring

For months the sickly sun had vainly fought
To overcome the winter's mighty powers;
And now in better health, works longer days
With aid of breathing winds, and soothing showers.
The snowbanks, backbone of the winter's guard,
Are turning traitor by becoming rain,
While here and there, hid in some sheltered nooks,
Small scattered remnants beg for life in vain.
For spring will give no quarter; all must go
Who helped usurping winter hold his sway,
And summer's cheerful armies dressed in green
Will soon again rule o'er a world made gay.

Kennedy Mooney, 41



The youth who thinks only of his manners attains
nothing but manners; he who thinks only of the comfort
and pleasure of others is the gentleman.

It's easy finding reasons why other folks should be
patient
—George Elliot