

CHAPTER XXV
AMERICA AND THE MENACE OF
IMPERIALISM

War is the inevitable outcome of the imperialistic struggle which has been going on all over the world during the past fifty years. And wars will continue, and armaments will be perfected with industrial expansion, the increase in the political power of the industrial classes and the struggle for markets which are only to be found in foreign countries. There is bound to be collision so long as the world is parcelled out into possessions from which other nations can be excluded. This is inevitable. And this is one of the important problems of peace. It is highly important to the United States. Not because foreign trade is so necessary to us as a people, but because of the insistence of the great monopolized industries which are already so powerful in our life, and which, even before the war, were declaring for "dollar diplomacy," for the support

of the State Department and of the President for aid in the promotion of loans, concessions, and privileges in Mexico and Central America, in South America, and in China. These interests have grown vastly more powerful as a result of the war. Surplus wealth has appeared in America. We have become a creditor nation. Our banking resources are greater than those of the imperial banks of the rest of the warring world. On the termination of the war we shall be almost the only country to which the world can come for loans and aid in the development of their resources. Billions of dollars will be sought from us, not alone by Europe but by Asia, Africa, the Near East, South and Central America. Already the great iron and steel interests are looking toward the iron-ore deposits of China. Suggestions have appeared in the press as to a financial rapprochement between the banking interests of England and the United States for the exploitation of the resources of other countries. A continuous and quiet propaganda is being carried on for the creation of a public opinion that will support the doctrine of diplomatic support to trade, the making of loans, :

the export of "surplus" capital to other countries, and the necessity for a great navy as a potential and menacing agency to other Powers and weaker states.

Economic imperialism is always subtle. How much more insistent these agencies will be when peace ends the profitable contracts, when the shipping and industries of the warring Powers find their way into markets now occupied by us, when our colossal ship-building programme has made this country a great maritime power, and our iron, steel, and munition industries, our wool and our cotton factories, and a multitude of mushroom industries that have come into existence are threatened with closing, and millions of men are confronted with the possibility of reduced wages or of being thrown out of employment altogether. Then America will be in a receptive mood for a "strong" foreign policy, for the use of our diplomatic agencies, and even our navy for the promotion of overseas trade and commerce and for finding new territories to be exploited by American finance.

This is the after-war menace. It cannot be lightly disposed of. It is the menace of imperial-

ism and of future wars as well. It is also a menace to democracy.

For our own protection, if for no other, the peace which follows should end imperialism. It should end the idea that the lands of helpless peoples are the happy hunting-grounds of exploiters, and that their wealth and the labor of the people may be despoiled by the nation which by chance, by intrigue, or by conquest first plants its flag upon their shores.

America has a right to insist that the sacrifices it has made in the name of democracy shall not be used against democracy, and that the peace conferees shall not employ the assistance we have loaned to the struggle for humanity against humanity. Belgium, Alsace-Lorraine, and Serbia are not the only sacrifices on the altar of *Macht*. There are many other races and peoples that are claiming the right to self-determination. They are not alone in Europe. They too are entitled to political freedom; they too have aspirations to be assured.

And the peace which follows should not be a white man's peace alone. It should be a white, yellow, and black man's peace. It is not neces-

sary that backward peoples shall be thrown back to the old savagery or that the world shall exclude itself from the food and the raw materials in which it stands in need. All this can be assured in another way as has been suggested in the preceding chapters. But America and the whole Christian world has a right to insist that the professions we have been making of carrying civilization to other peoples shall not be a blind for exploitation, for oppression, for the sale of munitions and the reduction of other peoples to a slavery that has been abolished at home. The world owes it to itself to remove the reproach which has come to be identified with its professions in every weak and backward country on the earth.