

"THE FRUITS OF VICTORY"

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It has long been the vogue, among those who hold the public ear, to accept war as a biological necessity—inevitable and, in the main, even beneficial and profitable. Voicing such popular views, our Treitschkes, our Bernhardhis, our Roberts's, our Ludendorfs, and our Mahans have appealed to such sentiments as mystic patriotism, love of domination and hostility to the foreigner, and they have found powerful support in all countries.

Fifteen years ago Mr. Norman Angell gave to the world his GREAT ILLUSION, wherein he laid bare the fallacy of these views. That book has had an enormous circulation throughout the world, and its theories have been translated into fact in strikingly practical manner both by the war and by the peace that has followed the war.

Mr. Angell in his latest book, THE FRUITS OF VICTORY,* now appears before the public backed by all the prestige of the man whom events have vindicated. In THE GREAT ILLUSION he showed that the worshippers of force and international antagonisms were wrong and that nations have many more common than rival interests; that they are dependent on each other for economic well-being; that the suffering of one is the suffering of all whether victorious or conquered; that force always fails to gain economic ends; and that the ideas and impulses out of which war grows are anti-social and give us an unworkable society. In THE FRUITS OF VICTORY Mr. Angell is in the fortunate position of being able to appeal to recent events to support the views expressed fifteen years ago and to show conclusively that underlying both the war and the peace was the failure to realize the economic interdependence of States—the victor's dependence on the economic life of the vanquished. But though events have proved him right so far as he goes, Mr. Angell has missed an unequalled opportunity of dragging the whole question into the fuller light of day because he confines his inquiry within limits which are too narrow. Though again and again he insists that economic considerations are all-important in their bearing on the problem of war, and though to establish this truth is one of the main purposes of all his work, he has not succeeded in tracing these considerations to their source. War, and the impulse to war, is, he says, to be traced to wrong thinking and false beliefs about man's true relationship to man: for example, the habit of regarding nations as competitors rather than as customers; the belief that one people can gain if others lose; the habit of thinking of nations as if they were single individuals instead of vast collections of individuals differing in character and in views; the belief that one nation can gain by laying another under tribute and that bayonets can secure economic ends.

Mr. Angell stops too soon in his search for prime causes. More than once he starts on a line of thought which, if followed, would lead to really radical conclusions. As when he contests the assumption that "States are doomed to struggle together for the space and opportunities of a limited world"; or that "A nation in order to find outlets for expanding population and increasing industries . . . is necessarily pushed to territorial expansion." Or again where he urges that our task is to "find the conditions in which it will be possible for men to live at all with decent regard for their fellows" and that "certain notions con-

cerning the institution of private property will have to be changed" if men are to live in peace.

If these clues had been followed, Mr. Angell might have unearthed the prime causes of strife and succeeded in explaining why it is that man—the social animal—so easily falls victim to these anti-social beliefs. For man is not naturally anti-social. On the contrary, his primary instinct is association and co-operation with his fellows. If not debased by artificial conditions, men invariably live and work together instead of in isolation. Without association, civilization itself is not possible.

How comes it then, that with social instincts so deeply imbedded in human nature, men are so ready to harbour those anti-social and disintegrating beliefs to which Mr. Angell attributes rivalry and war? Why are they the victims of beliefs which lead them to violate their nature and instincts? It is not enough to say that a narrow nationalism is responsible and there to leave the matter. One must go further and inquire why men adopt such an anti-social outlook. The answer is that though man's natural impulses are overwhelmingly social, and though his interests lie all in harmonious living, certain institutions are tolerated that render the realization of his true self difficult or impossible.

So long as such institutions exist they will breed conditions making it impossible for "men to live at all with decent regard for their fellows"—a state of things which Mr. Angell declares will end in the fall of civilization. With these institutions bearing their fruit of bad social conditions it is not reasonable to expect men to "practise the art of living together" in peace.

When Mr. Angell wrote that "certain notions concerning the institutions of private property will have to be changed" we wish he had been more precise and had informed us what particular notions he had in mind. Why has he not explored this ground? Surely here we have the guide as to what we must do if men are to live in peace together. Given an institution like land monopoly which drives a dividing wedge right through society by making the perquisite of some what is the birthright of all and producing conflicting classes of landowners and landless, the "institution of private property"—the right of a man to what he has made—is torn from its proper use; class antipathies, rivalries, and conflicts (both private and international) arise, and man's social instincts are perverted.

If natural resources are withheld from use or are not adequately used, work becomes difficult to get and markets hard to find. Men are driven to the ends of the earth in search of new outlets. There they find men of other nations driven abroad in like manner and from the same cause. A fierce international competition ensues, bringing in its train all the suspicions, rivalries, hatreds and narrow nationalism, the futility of which Mr. Angell exposes. Thus are men's natural impulses changed by an unnatural environment, for with opportunities artificially restricted they are easily persuaded that one group gains by another's ruin and that bayonets can secure them a livelihood.

It follows that the essential remedy lies in changing our laws "concerning the institution of private property" wherever they limit opportunities by standing between man and nature's storehouse. The abiding obstacle to permanent peace is more deeply rooted than Mr. Angell's analysis would lead us to suppose. It has its source in the great wrong that separates man from his means of livelihood. It is difficult for the masses to rise to the great occasion when they are held down to lower levels by hard economic circumstances over which they seem to have little or no control. Man is a land animal, and first of all the land question must be so solved, for land monopoly is responsible for that artificial life which destroys all sense of brotherhood and gives plausibility to illusions which could not otherwise be entertained. The inexhaustible storehouse provided by nature for man's use must be thrown open on equal terms to every member of the community.

Opportunities and markets will then be so abundant that to earn a living without ousting one's neighbour will not present any difficulty at all, and man will appear to man as customer and co-worker rather than as rival and enemy.

Though in THE FRUITS OF VICTORY Mr. Angell has stopped short of the conclusion to which his arguments logically lead, we can thoroughly recommend a careful study of his work to all who welcome an honest attempt to expose the fallacies which lie behind the war mind.

* THE FRUITS OF VICTORY. By Norman Angell. Published by Wm. Collins & Sons. Price 8/6.