

## There Must Always Be London

DECADENCE, as a measure of moral value, is another word, sadly in need of definition. It means deterioration, decay, a falling off in quality. But that is all relative to some accepted standard. From the point of view of a fascist individual liberty is a decadent concept; while in the dictionary of the individualist idolatry of the State is evidence of decaying moral fibre. It all depends on the standard one starts from.

But human behavior in itself suggests a very definite and objective standard by which to measure decadence. Every effort of struggling, climbing, developing civilization has been toward the greater production of goods and services. Left to his own devices, unrestricted by taboos or enslavement, man seeks always new ways of gratifying his insatiable desires; first it is necessities, then it is luxuries which straightway become necessities, and the flame of intellectual curiosity lights up the productive process.

Decadence is the reverse of this process. When man begins to destroy production, to curb desires, to prohibit intellectual curiosity, he has deteriorated. He no longer behaves in the likeness of man. He is akin to the predatory beast, which destroys only.

Decadent, then, by the only standard which can be evolved from man's own behavior throughout his known history, is the Hitlerian German. Interesting indeed will be the inevitable research studies of the economic and political conditions that produced this barbaric atavism; the guilt for this metamorphosis of the industrious, creative and scholarly German into the most destructive instru-

ment of modern civilization undoubtedly will be laid at the door of some of his victims. But this does not mitigate his complete depravity.

The attack on London is perhaps the final proof that he has lost every vestige of *menschlichkeit*. The wanton destruction of human lives is only one phase of complete decadence. But here is a city which through centuries of travail has become the heart of the world. It is the center of exchanges which for nearly two hundred years has facilitated the myriad manifestations of man's ingenuity for making goods and rendering services, not only in England, not only in the British Empire, but in every corner of the globe, in Germany itself. Its banking system, its insurance system, its maritime system, its facilities for disseminating essential information on market conditions, to mention but a few of the services developed within London, has made possible millions of productive specializations.

The world cannot get along without a London. And so vast and complicated a commercial keyboard is built only by a long and tedious process of adjustment and readjustment, by trial and error. A planner may devise an army of destruction, but a London is the product of an expanding civilization. So that if the hideous German plan were successful, which is unthinkable, a new London would have to be evolved before world production would regain its former peak. How long that would take would depend upon how soon man were permitted to resume his natural bent for production. London replaced Rome, but only after a dozen centuries.