FROM CHAOS TO COSMOS: THE BUILDING OF A NEW ORDER AND THE NEED OF INTELLECTUAL CO-OPERATION

We spoke in an earlier discussion of the alternations produced in human evolution between order and disorder, attainment and painful striving, Cosmos and Chaos. "All things were together", said Anaxagoras, "till Thought came and arranged them." That process is being constantly repeated through history. Mankind strives to attain some satisfactory system of belief, of knowledge, of social organization, of daily habits. He attains it; and before long it fails in some detail to give satisfaction, or is upset by some new influence from outside. He finds, let us say, in the matter of belief the Catholic Church; in knowledge the Ptolemaic system of astronomy; in social organization the early Chinese Empire; in daily habits the law of the Jews or the fixed daily customs of the Moslems. If such a cosmos breaks down too soon, it is scarcely a cosmos, and has no influence; if it lasts too long, it is fatal to progress and collapses eventually in great disorder, as the history of China illustrates. Sooner or later man finds his ordered Cosmos fail him and he wanders once more out to

... the waste beyond God's peace,
To maddening freedom and bewildering light,
there to build afresh out of new materials the unattained Cosmos of his desire.

We suggested above that the age of Nineteenth-Century Liberalism was, comparatively speaking, a Cosmos. Not merely a great age, or an age in which society seemed on the whole successful, but an age possessing a definite form and character, in which people knew what to expect of the world and how to live in it.

The test of a Cosmos, apart from the general contentment which it produces, both moral and intellectual, is that the range of effective discussion or strife is limited and the extremes not unreconcilable. Now I think it will be admitted, if we take the foundations of society as being the family, the state, and something which for the moment we may call religion or fundamental belief, the Victorian Age in England did on the whole maintain towards these three ultimates a position fairly concordant with itself, or at least not torn by irreconcilable discords. With regard to marriage and the family, for instance, though all later Victorian literature is incessantly criticizing the institution and demanding reforms, there was in Great Britain a large basis of common agreement. In France or Italy, no doubt, it was easy to find Catholics who regarded marriage as indissoluble and divorce and remarriage as punishable with the pains of hell; while close beside them you would find the champions of mere promiscuity. Both views were eminently un-Victorian. The Victorian was in favour of
greater freedom in the marriage laws, much greater freedom in the education of children and the general relation of children to parents; he regularly derided feminine jealousy and masculine authoritarianism. But all parties alike believed generally in the duty of children to parents, parents to children, and married people to one another, and thought it an obvious disaster and disgrace if family affection markedly failed.

With regard to the state, there were no conspirators, neither to restore the Stuarts nor to overthrow the monarchy. Everyone accepted the principle of representative government; everyone accepted the constitution and everyone wished to improve it by some changes. No one advocated the use of violence or fraud in order to make the will of a minority prevail over that of the nation. There was a general agreement to praise freedom: some wanted much more of it and some only a little, but all were in favour of it, and scarcely any recommended attaining it by breaking the law. They believed in Parliament, and in all its implications: the value of free speech, the right of a minority to have a fair hearing for its unpopular views, the duty of representatives to deal honestly by their constituents, and the duty of all to submit when fairly outvoted. Along with these beliefs went a profound respect for political leaders, and a general expectation that they should be men of high personal character. A latent conflict between the ideas of Empire abroad and Democratic Freedom at home was reconciled by the rather
optimistic but by no means hypocritical theory that British rule was educating its subject peoples to be free.

It may be paradoxical to suggest that in a time so conspicuous for free-thought, and even for scepticism, a time when an observant English clergyman could attend the services of over a hundred different religious bodies in London alone, there was any general agreement on religion. Yet I believe, in the truest sense of that slippery word, there was. If, looking beneath the dogmatic creeds which people fight about and the conflicting sects to which they belong, we try to consider the sort of fundamental belief on which they seriously act, the sort of faith by which they really live and for which they would, if necessary, incur danger and sacrifice, I think there was a large degree of concord at the heart of the Victorian Age. Take a Broad Churchman, a strict Nonconformist, a Secularist preacher, an enlightened Conservative M.P. with no great interest in religion, and put to them some of the fundamental issues which would have roused violent dissensions in other periods of history: ought the poor to be educated, ought Jews or heretics to be persecuted, is a hell of eternal torment consistent with the goodness of God, is a man bound to live for others as well as for himself, is there some purpose or some good end towards which man is striving and by which the suffering of life is in some sense and to some degree justified?—there would be a consensus of
opinion in the Nineteenth-Century England far greater than at any other time. There was a real and enthusiastic escape from the dominion of unproved dogma; an acceptance of the results of science, provided, of course, they are duly guaranteed by the authorities; and a no less firm acceptance of what are loosely called "Christian morals", i.e. the lines of conduct approved by the general experience of the Christian nations and developed by two thousand years of human progress. The divergences were matters for discussion, not mortal oppositions. The general agreement prevailed over the occasional difference.

I do not wish to labour the point, but I think most people will agree that this Cosmos has largely broken down. We find at the present day among the educated classes a larger amount of violent oppositions, a much smaller one of steady general concord. In religion we have a reaction towards Roman Catholicism and imitations thereof; a great output of new and more or less fantastic superstitions drawn indifferently from the mysterious East or the neurotic West; also a large and outspoken rejection of all religion and particularly of all morality. These oppositions cannot easily be resolved or reduced to agreement. They involve extremes of reaction, religious, military, and political, together with extreme licence and rebellion.

There is an increase of pacifism together with an increase of militarism. We have the Pact of Paris for the Renunciation of War and public
services and rejoicings to celebrate it. We have a Conservative Prime Minister saying that one more war in the West will be the end of civilization. Yet nationalism, the stupidest and most dangerous of public vices, ramps and rages, not only in countries like China, where it was provoked by long oppression, but in America and even Scotland, which are commonly supposed to rule the world.\footnote{Where, for example, in modern history could one find a parallel to the following decree, permitting certain classes of foreigners to reside temporarily in Rumania? And probably Rumania is not the worst offender in this respect! A decree concerning the extension of permits authorizing foreigners to reside in Rumania came into force on October 8th. The main provisions of the decree are as follows:—

"(i) Extensions for three years will be granted to:—
"Foreigners born in Rumania and resident permanently in the country, with the exception of those born in the annexed provinces who opted for another nationality.
"Foreigners who served in the Rumanian Army during the war.
"Foreigners of Rumanian origin."

It then explains that extensions for two years and for one year will be granted to certain very limited classes. Then: "Permits will not be extended for foreigners in the following categories:—
"Commercial clerical personnel, engineers and chemists, with special exceptions, or those who had been admitted by the Central Immigration Commission.
"Workmen in the petrol, mining, sugar, chocolate, and tobacco industries, and all manual workers in general, with the exception of skilled workers and foremen (not including drillers in the petrol industry).
"All foreigners who do not fall into the categories enumerated in the list of those whose permits may be extended." (The Times, October 16, 1928.)}
of military organizations in schools, of constant talk about bombs, tanks, poison gases, and all the circumstances of war. Take all the leading Christian nations, Great Britain, France, Germany, and America: each one, though partially consoled by the consciousness of its own virtue, is profoundly disturbed by the militarism of all the rest. To take one slight but significant piece of evidence: there is in Gilbert and Sullivan's opera, *H.M.S. Pinafore*, a parody of a patriotic song; the original audiences, of course, saw it was a parody and laughed at it, but post-war audiences think it is a real patriotic song and applaud! I do not know if there is a greater clash than before between poverty and extravagance. I cannot pretend that all Victorians lived within their income; the Rawdon Crawleys would confute me if I did. But I think it is generally true that we are almost all, in the middle and upper classes at any rate, poorer than we were; and there is little doubt that we are more of us overdrawn at the bank. Another fact seems to me peculiarly symptomatic of what I call Chaos as against Cosmos. The Victorian public was seriously interested in the main work on which the nation was engaged. It respected Parliament; it read parliamentary debates; its newspapers were full of political matter and of serious argument. I suggest that the present-day public is not interested in the main affairs of the nation. Newspapers do not report the debates in Parliament. They give that space to crimes and betting news and interviews with passing celebrities such
as cinema stars, athletes, pugilists, jockeys, dancers, and criminals. I am not raising any moral issue here. Nor am I forgetting that the England of the 'eighties wept hot tears over the departure of the elephant Jumbo from the Zoo to America. I only suggest that when a community as a whole is not interested in the great main issues which it itself has to decide, but turns aside to almost anything else as a diversion, that is a sign of Chaos as against Cosmos. In a Cosmos people give their minds to the main thing that they are doing. The main prizes of public life go to the real leaders, not to pugilists and cinema stars. One would not feel much confidence in an army in which the football champion or the man who sang funny songs was more admired and better paid than the General.

Some time ago I was in Paris during a by-election and was able to read the literature put out by the various candidates for the arrondissement in which I was staying. There were twelve of them; six at most would have been regarded as sane by a Victorian Englishman, four as, shall we say, "dotty", and two—a Fascist and a Communist—as obviously insane. After the first ballot all the reasonable candidates disappeared, the contest lay between the two madmen, and eventually the maddest got in. I do not for a moment give that incident as a proof of any great change; it is merely an illustration. The result—I was generally informed—did not at all represent the views of the majority of the voters; it
represented the breakdown of political machinery and the general impotence of common sense. Chaos instead of Cosmos.

How did this breakdown come about? One thinks first of the direct action of the war. Of course, one must never forget the heroism and self-sacrifice demanded of the actual fighting soldier; but for the nation as a whole the effect of the long-continued war was to teach, not discipline, but indiscipline. In the first place, war is in its essence a formal repudiation of all social laws. Every weapon, every method, every form of violence and fraud, are legitimate for the sake of victory; inevitably, as the repugnance instinctively felt for such methods is once overcome, there grows up a tendency to use them not merely for victory in war, but for any purpose which is strongly desired. The ice is broken and people become familiar with strange doings. Again, when young men are facing danger and death for their country, great indulgence is felt for them. One forgives much licence, and even smiles at it. Inevitably the licence spreads to those who are not facing death. If Jack, the soldier, on his leave home, runs riot and is never criticized, why should not his brother Tom run riot equally? Why not his sister Jane?

In public life also war makes a change. Law is silent, custom is broken through, the constitution is set aside, the liberty of the individual is treated as a trifle. The objects of the war are won, not by reasonableness and fairness, not by scrupulous
care to be in the right, and to do justice to your opponent—they are won by just the opposite qualities: by push, aggression, violence, ruthlessness and trickery, by always snatching the most you can and pressing every advantage, fair or foul. A generation largely brought up in such an atmosphere can hardly understand the deep respect for law and personal liberty, for reasonableness and fair play, for the ideal of citizenship and of honour, which is a natural growth in a peaceful and civilized society.

Education, of course, suffers. There is general loss of discipline among boys whose fathers and elder brothers are away at the war and even their mothers largely occupied away from home. The normal and healthy reaction of Youth against the authority of Age is intensified, partly by this, and still more by the killing off of an intermediate generation. The elder brother or the young uncle is in ordinary circumstances an interpreter between one generation and the next; but for the present age the elder brothers, uncles, and young fathers were mostly killed off, and the young left face to face with men forty and fifty years older.

One other strange influence of the war on public life must also be remembered. As it continued, as the first enthusiasm passed away, and too many young men were killed, as the propaganda became more and more extravagant and mendacious and its lies began to be found out, as the hardships and perhaps the brutalities of the fighting itself increased, there came a widespread
loss of faith in the whole meaning and purpose of the war. Men were murdering each other, and apparently had to go on murdering each other—poor devils!—on both sides; but let no one insult their intelligence by telling them that it was all for noble objects. Their daily life in the army was beset by false pretences, "scrounges" and "wangles". Could they be sure that the whole war itself was not really a "wangle" of some kind, for the benefit of unknown brass-hats or politicians or financiers? And if those exalted persons could "wangle" and "prosifer" with men's blood, why should their victims not do the same? The blind cynicism produced by the war in many types of mind has been unforgottably described by C. E. Montague.

The sum-total of these various effects of the war period amounted to what is called a loss of standard. Every wholesome society has its own standards; and almost the whole *raison d'être* of a wise conservatism is to see that those standards are upheld. The daily conduct of human beings is seldom governed by appeals to their reason or to general principles; what moves them is the spell of their traditions and customs, and the expectations which their fellows have formed of them. A man is not often deterred from a course of action by the reflection that it is not in accordance with the Gospels or does not make for the greatest happiness of the greatest number; he will hesitate at once if he is reminded that it is not done, or not
professional, or not decent. There is a kind of conduct that is expected of people, according to their profession or circumstances; and the expectation has a very strong binding force. It is just this standard of expectation that was temporarily broken down by the war. Those most affected ceased to care whether a thing was considered professional, or “good manners”, or conduct befitting a gentleman. This rejection of conventions would, of course, be all to the good if in their stead were substituted some higher principle; but it is only a rare nature that will reject convention for the sake of Christian duty or the service of mankind. For the vast majority, when conventions go the things that take their place are Pleasure, Money, and Passion. By passion I mean some strong and immediate motive as contrasted with one that is high or remote; and it is the habit of acting on high and remote motives that builds up character. Furthermore, as long as people mainly behave as they are expected to behave, there is mutual confidence and trust. Trade is unhampered by suspicion, and representative institutions work. When the standard fails, you cannot trust your customer, your man of business, your elected representative. When Mussolini spoke of “trampling on the rotting corpse of Liberalism”, he might almost as well have called it “the rotting corpse of conservatism or constitutionalism”; the thing that was rotting was the civilized pre-war society, based on representative institutions, normal expectations and mutual trust, murdered by
the war and its satellites. To realize the extent to which this process has gone we should remind ourselves of the fate of parliamentary government throughout the world. The system which before the war was considered to be essential to civilization, at any rate if civilization was to advance, is now in peril of its life.

It has been overthrown in Italy, Spain, Poland, Lithuania, Serbia, and Russia, and we must not conceal from ourselves that even in the great parliamentary nations it is at present working ill. In France, at the time of the financial crisis, it almost ceased to operate: so many deputies continued, for the sake of winning their seats, to make pledges which they knew to be impossible of fulfilment. In Germany it has been almost impossible to form a government; the various groups were too much concerned with their party warfare to be able to co-operate for the good of the nation. In America the elections are felt to be more and more of a sham, and the issues between the two great parties less and less real. In England Parliament has not quite recovered its prestige after the degradation of the election in 1918: the parties of the Left are torn by faction; and a system of voting which is calculated to give power to a minority is deliberately continued. The war spirit, with its mistrust of fair dealing, its actual preference for a little spice of fraud and of violence in public life, is not yet extirpated, even in the traditional home of parliamentary government.
So much for the effects of the war: but we must not be misled. The war is not responsible for the whole change. The war only precipitated and misdirected a development which was bound to come in the natural course of progressive human history. Quite apart from the war there were other causes at work, calculated to break up the prosperous and established order of Nineteenth-Century England. There were economic causes: the gradual loss of Great Britain's industrial and commercial pre-eminence through the competition of larger nations, like America, and better educated nations, like Germany; the weakening of Great Britain in her great fortress, the coal trade, and the partial supersession of coal itself by oil, in which Great Britain has no great advantages, and by electricity based on water-power, where she is markedly weak. The price of wheat was rising, and industrial populations suffering in consequence. The invention of aircraft was destroying the value of Britain's insular position and imperilling her command of the sea. All these causes operating at a time when international co-operation and good will were vitally necessary to civilization, were spreading an atmosphere of bitter international competition and bitter class struggles at home. For in a falling market both capital and labour suffer, and each imputes its own suffering to the fault of the other. Meantime, of course, other inventions, such as the development of motor traffic, telephones and wireless, and other social conditions, such as the wider distribution of
wealth among the working and shop-keeping classes, were in part at least counteracting these depressive tendencies, while in part they were hurrying on new social changes. In the main, I think, they tend towards a unifying of the nation; but I will not dwell upon the subject now.

Dissolvent agencies of an intellectual kind have been at work, not in one nation alone, but among the more educated classes throughout the world. The advance of science, or rather the sporadic advances made here and there over the whole realm of science, had largely upset the coherent cosmology, if I may use the term, of the generation of Huxley and Darwin. Not only were the advances very great—enough in themselves to be rather disturbing—they were also separate and unco-ordinated. No synthetic genius has yet arisen to enable us once more to see the world as a coherent whole. Evolution became less intelligible and less helpful to morals; more mechanical, as in Mendelism; more loose and mystical, as in Bergson and his followers. Curiously enough, I believe the increasing study of the insect world had a disturbing effect. Such advanced social systems based on such unimagined horrors made human morals seem like the make-believe ethics of the nursery. Above all, the whole conception of physics was, to a great extent, transformed. Matter disappeared, atoms were no longer indivisible, radiation seemed for a time at least to transmute something into nothing and to give an excuse for believing in miracles. Lorentz’s
transformation and Einstein’s theory of relativity reduced physical events to formulae which might be stated but—I here quote an extremely high authority—are not meant to be understood. The doctrine of gravitation, the very foundation of physical science, turned out to be only a formula, not a statement of fact, and not an entirely correct formula at that. The effect of this immense change in the scientific conception of the world has been, if I am not mistaken, to shake the general belief in science, therefore in knowledge, therefore in reason. Nothing was certain. Every supposed truth was overthrown. Life was a gamble. I have seen the facts about radiation seriously used as an argument for no longer questioning the miracle of the Gadarene swine: since the one story was not more surprising than the other! On the other hand, I have heard the discrediting of Victorian science used as a basis for discrediting Victorian morals. The fact is that a clear conception of the world as an intelligible, or apparently intelligible, whole is an immense influence towards regular and law-abiding conduct. Morality and decent living depend so much on the recognition of oneself as being only a member of a great ordered whole, not an isolated being whose sole purpose is its own happiness.

Let me dwell on this point for a moment. The very word “Cosmos” in the sense of world-order was created by the astronomical discoveries of the fourth century B.C. That age produced, I would suggest, a coherent and soul-satisfying view of the
world on which the Western races of men have really been living ever since. By the discoveries of that age, so men believed, “the stars, which had always moved men’s wonder and worship, were proved to be no wandering fires, but parts of an immense and apparently eternal order. One star might differ from another star in glory, but they were all alike in their obedience to law. The order or Cosmos of the heavens was a proven fact; therefore the Purpose of God was a proven fact; and though in its completeness inscrutable, it could at least in part be divined from the fact that all these varied and eternal splendours had for their centre our Earth and its ephemeral master, Man”. Man was shown to be the central point of the universe, the focus of the loving purpose of God.1

This conception of astronomy lasted for two thousand years till it was overthrown by Copernicus. When Copernicus proved that, after all, the earth was not the centre, when later astronomers showed that the earth was a comparatively insignificant part of the solar system and our solar system itself only one among multitudes, the shock to the whole religious and moral system of thought was incalculable. If ever the mediæval Church neglected its opportunities, it was in not burning Copernicus. A world that is not anthropocentric is a world in which man does not vitally matter, and man’s poor anthropomorphic conceptions of religion and morality, of divine “justice” or

1 See *Five Stages of Greek Religion*, pp. 124 ff.
“benevolence” can hardly hope to be objectively valid. Sin has no effect whatever on the solar system. Nay, if we believe certain recent writers on physics, our whole conception of matter is helplessly subjective: not only such phrases as “attraction” and “repulsion” are mere anthropomorphic metaphors, but the same seems to be true of “matter”, “time”, and even “position”. The physical world is not only non-moral, it is more alien from man than the human mind can conceive.¹ In reality the shock of the Copernican system was so great that, I would suggest, on the whole the human race has refused to pay any attention to it. We still act and feel as if the earth were the central star and the man the central being. The other conception was not only shocking; it was not comprehensible enough to form a basis of belief.

But, however that may be, there were discoveries in another realm which had a more shattering effect even than those in physics.

There was perhaps no subject in which the nineteenth century had made such great advances and discoveries as in the study of human character. If one takes scientific psychology, one might fairly say that the advance made between Bentham and William James was greater than that between

¹ See, for example, Anthropomorphism and Physics, by T. Percy Nunn, Hertz Lecture to the British Academy, 1926. I ought to add that, in my opinion, whatever bearing these arguments may have on a transcendental theory of ethics they do not touch a human theory. If sin has no effect on the solar system, neither has prussic acid; but it remains poisonous.
Aristotle and Bentham. If one takes the more synthetic and imaginative understanding of character which shows itself day by day in practical life but is registered most clearly in the novel, it is difficult to over-estimate the psychological gap between Fielding and Smollett on the one hand and George Eliot or Tolstoy on the other. We may observe, too, that the advance had a markedly Victorian character: it was an advance in sympathy, in imaginative understanding, in what the Greeks called *mimēsis* or artistic creation. The Victorian novelist knew his human beings as a dog-lover knows his dogs, not as a vivisectionist knows them. The knowledge as it spread enabled men to understand and get on with one another. Its effect on morals may be measured by the moral gap between the same groups of novelists; it made ideals higher and judgments more profound and more charitable.

But since then the vivisectionist in psychology has been at work. The discoveries made seem to be real; their value has often been proved in practical medicine. But they have not been co-ordinated, they have hardly been sifted and tested; in many respects they are incredible, in others terribly open to misunderstanding. Psychology is perhaps about where Chemistry was in the days of the Alchemists. I think the new discoveries will in course of time prove to be a great help to civilized mankind, both in the conduct of our own lives and in the judgments we form about others, but for the present there seems little doubt
that the effect has been anarchical and destructive. Impulses hitherto regarded as unspeakably obscene or fantastically malignant and wicked have not only been recognized as real, but have received a quite disproportionate welcome from the public. What is almost worse, a number of activities which have hitherto been accounted noble or charitable or unselfish are now exposed as so many forms of common cruelty and sensuality and vanity masquerading in the plumes of fabulous virtues. I say "fabulous" because the old traditional ideals of humility, chastity, and unselfishness are by the new doctrines analysed away into mere psychological errors. As I said, I feel sure that in time this will right itself. The discovery of true facts must in the long run be helpful in dealing with life; but I do consider that for the time being the advent of psycho-analysis has had a most destructive effect on the cosmos of our moral ideas. It has made chaos if anything has.

There is one more element which must not be forgotten in estimating the change that has come over the educated classes in the present generation—that is, the increased emancipation and education of women. Again, I am convinced that the emancipation must in the long run be beneficial; the improved education is already enormously so. If anyone doubts it, I recommend him to visit a number of the new high schools and county secondary schools for girls throughout the country and compare, not merely the manners, but the general moral, imaginative, and intellectual
influences existing in the schools with those prevalent in the homes from which most of the children come. The advance of about a century is being made in one generation. The increased freedom, as always happens, will be abused by the lower types, and will be a source of strength and good training to the higher. I see a good deal in newspapers and bad novels about the depravity of the modern young woman. And I can quite believe that a certain aimless and idle type of young person both behaves worse and is worse in a condition of freedom than when under strict mechanical control; but I can only say, and say with emphasis, that in my own limited experience, such as it is, I am constantly impressed by the high and strong character shown by the young and more or less emancipated women in the universities and in public work.

But the point which I wish to make is a simple one. We have here also an element of chaos. It will not be possible or desirable to impose on educated women who are earning their own livelihood in the world the same standards of manners and morals that were imposed on the women of Miss Austen or Dickens or Thackeray. One can expect far more of them: more vigour, more public spirit, more sincerity, more reasonableness. What degree of freedom they will demand in return will, I think, mainly be settled by themselves—not, of course, by the type that pursues cocktails and night clubs, but the type which seriously counts in the formation of character and
of opinion. It cannot be doubted, and the subject cannot without some dishonesty be avoided, that great changes of opinion are taking place in the whole question of sexual morality. The Victorian standard has been shaken by the emancipation of women, by the discoveries in psychology, by the increasing importance and ever-widening practice of birth-control. Cosmos has been succeeded by chaos, and we must eventually find our Cosmos again.

What is the way? Curiously enough it is in international relations, the very spot where the nineteenth century showed its most fatal weakness, that we seem most conspicuously to have discovered the right method for rebuilding our ordered world. We have invented the League of Nations: before we fight we confer, and when conference gives no immediate answer, we convoke disinterested experts and set them to study the question. The League of Nations is in many ways a slow and comparatively weak instrument compared with, say, a national Parliament; but its essential method is perhaps wiser than that of Parliament. It is not content to vote down minorities. It works on and on till it wins their agreement. It almost never decides a question without real inquiry into the facts, and the inquiry is always made by disinterested persons, chosen for their special competence, and not dependent on Governments or popular votes. This last point is of cardinal importance. Governments can negotiate
where their respective interests coincide or where both sides can drive a profitable bargain. Wherever there is real difficulty, where it is necessary either to take a wide view or a disinterested view or to look any considerable distance ahead, Governments are apt to be the worst negotiators possible. For normally every Government is possessed by a devil, the devil of the massed and organized selfishness of its nation. A Government can seldom afford to be generous or far-seeing in international negotiations, or the Opposition will accuse it of betraying the nation’s interest to foreigners; and, as if the normal selfishness of human nature were not sturdy enough to be trusted, the nation will be urged by politicians and newspapers, first to formulate its extreme demands as just rights, and then—in mere love of righteousness—to insist on those just rights to the last inch. Almost every successful undertaking in recent international business has been first handled by disinterested experts, free from the clamour of national and party jealousies, and then passed on for Governmental approval when the hard brain-work was over. That is the regular League method.

There is one small organ of the League called the Committee of Intellectual Co-operation; but in reality Intellectual Co-operation is the characteristic instrument by which the League does most of its work. Say Austria is threatened with bankruptcy. How can she be rescued? Such an enterprise has never been undertaken before. However, a committee of financial and economic
advisers is set to work. Punctilious care is taken that no private interest, and equally no national interest, shall affect the inquiry. A scientific and reasonable scheme is thought out, handed complete to the Council of the League, and so put into operation. If representatives of Governments had formed the committee, they would probably have spent all the time in fighting for small national advantages till there was no Austria left to save.—Say plague, typhus, malaria, and various epidemics are spreading through the world: the League selects the most suitable physicians it can find in its various states, adds others from Russia and America, and sets them to co-operate on the problem. They meet, they collect and compare evidence, and eventually devise a scheme for dealing with the epidemics, better and more effective than would have been dreamed of before the existence of the League. The Governments approve it; and, by the help of grants from the Rockefeller Foundation, the League puts it into effect.—Say that the currencies of most nations in Europe are breaking down, as they were in 1921; what is to be done? Call a conference of financial experts; let them show what is wrong and recommend remedies; let their report be recorded and published. Then, as soon as public opinion in the various states is calm enough to listen to reason, the Governments will carry out the advice. So it was hoped, and so in fact they have done.—Last year, again, to meet the dangerous stagnation of commerce, the falling off of sales and the increase
of unemployment, the greatest effort of all was made. A great conference was called, not of Government representatives—for the Governments were all deeply pledged to the game of ruining one another—but of disinterested economists chosen or approved by the Governments of fifty-two states. If all the chief economists of the world thought out the problem together, and if a great majority recommended the same way out, it would be much easier for Governments to change their policy without losing votes. They did think it out together, and in their main recommendations they were unanimous. Unfortunately, the economic policy of most Governments is conducted by people with very little knowledge of economics, and subservient to a public opinion with almost none; but there before us is the advice, the unanimous advice, of the best economists of all civilized nations. Governments can follow it if they like, and European commerce will then, in all probability, be saved.

One could easily cite other cases. In all the principle has been the same. The first need is disinterested good will, the next is to pool the best brains of all nations for the common service of all. That is Intellectual Co-operation.¹

The particular committee which bears the burden of that unattractive name has so far attacked chiefly some technical problems, concerned

¹ For the exposition of this idea see especially Learning and Leadership, by A. E. Zimmerm, Assistant Director of the Institute of Intellectual Co-operation in Paris.
with the standardization of scientific terms, the preservation of documents, the co-ordination of bibliography for several sciences, the rights of authors, artists, and inventors, and the like, into which I need not enter. But its method is regularly the same: to convolve a committee of persons from different countries who know or care most about the subject in question, and set them to study it and make a report. Is there, or ought there to be, any property in scientific discovery, as there is in patents and copyright? If so, how can it best be assured with the least hindrance to industry? Can any method be found, without trenching on the independence of national systems of education, for making the rising generation throughout all the states of the League acquainted with the principles and practice of the League and familiar with the thought of international co-operation as the normal method of civilization? Let a sub-committee of educationists from different countries get to work on the problem and see what they suggest. As you know, they met and formed the scheme; the Assembly unanimously thought it a good scheme, and it is now being carried out. Last year the Committee laid the foundation of what may in the long run be an even greater work. It arranged a conference of the higher schools of International Politics, the institutions where in London, Paris, Berlin, and other capitals historians and publicists study the current international problems of the world. The conference took place; and will be succeeded
by others. And henceforth the expert political schools of Germany, France, England, Italy, and the other nations will be in regular touch with one another. A short time back such cooperation would have been contrary to all precedent. Knowledge would have been kept back. Both sides would have made avoidable mistakes. And in the last resort some difficult problem would have been doubly confounded by fighting instead of being solved by Intellectual Co-operation.

There is a story—a story whose historical veracity I must firmly decline to guarantee—about the foundation of the University of Buffalo, close by Niagara Falls. It relates that a group of wealthy and conscientious Americans looked at the millions of tons of water crashing over the Falls and considered what a terrific instrument of power was there for the hands of those who knew how to use it, what good it might do if used well and what harm if used wrongly. “We must have some first-rate electricians”, they said, “to show how the power can be developed. We must have some experts on public health and town-planning and municipal government to show how it can best be used for public utility. We shall need an historian or two, to tell us if ever any community was in such a position before, and if so, what they did about it. We shall certainly need a Professor of Moral and Political Philosophy; and we shall hardly be safe without one or two clergymen to enable us to resist temptation.” In the upshot,
there was nothing for it but to found the whole University of Buffalo!

I feel that the world is at present confronted by not one but many Niagaras. How formidable and how often misdirected are the influences of the Press, the cinema, the wireless, the control of the air, the power of advertisement and of education; of powerful combines controlling monopolies or quasi-monopolies in such raw materials as oil and rubber, or even iron and coal! One can think of a dozen other forces, some of which have been mentioned in these lectures. Are these forces to be guided or not guided? Nay, guided they must be, if not by some effort of intelligence and good will, then by the stream of competitive money-making, by the struggles of the market, by the desire to cater for the widest and lowest taste, by the poison of antagonistic nationalisms, by the intrigues of interested parties, by the madness of armed conflict. Surely by now we know a better method. We have the instruments for practising it. Man has, in the last issue, only one weapon for dealing with the innumerable problems which bewilder and which may destroy him, the weapon of thought. Thought may go wrong; but it is the best guide we have, if it is patient, if it is based on study, if unwarped by personal interests and moved by the spirit of good will. Need we ask no more? Yes, just a little more. We may ask something of that spirit which, since the very beginnings of history, men have expected and found in the average common soldier—a will to endure
hardship for the sake of duty and to use life as one who knows of things better than life.

That granted, I look to Intellectual Co-operation among men of good will for the restoring of our lost Cosmos and the ultimate wise guidance of the world.