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*War and Its Effects.*—I lately read an article arguing that the United States was the only Great Power to come out of the war a winner, inasmuch as the others all lost the flower of their young manhood, whereas the American losses were so trifling as to be almost indiscernible. The theory has a fine plausibility, but I have a notion that an examination by a Galton or a Karl Pearson might reveal some holes in it. A long and difficult campaign, with wholesale butchery, might have actually done the country more good than harm—by holding the population within bounds, by reducing the number of professional war veterans and, above all, by stamping out hundreds of thousands of the relatively unfit.

The risk that a man runs in war, remember, is not simply the blind chance of getting shot; it is also the risk of succumbing to disease, of wearing out through hardship, of coming to his end through ignorance and stupidity. This second risk is probably far greater than the first. A veteran army, after four or five years of hard war, is composed of very superior men, as everyone knows. They have not only been relatively lucky; they have been relatively quick-witted and tough—in brief, relatively superior.

The American army came home substantially as it went abroad. Some of the weaklings were left behind, true enough, but surely not all of them. But the French and German armies probably left them all behind. The Frenchman who got through those bitter four years was certainly a Frenchman far above the average in vigour and intelligence; all of his brothers who were below the average were dead. In the German army it was found that, as year followed year in the field, the death rate from disease sharply and constantly declined, and with it the death rate from the enemy fire. The weaklings and the fools gradually disappeared; the men left were very vigorous men and, what is more, men with a natural talent for protecting themselves, which is to say, men of superior sense.

The notion that long wars exhaust a people is probably only partly true. They leave scars, but they also leave certain very valuable benefits. The Napoleonic series of wars, it is said, shortened the average stature of Frenchmen by three inches. Maybe it did—but it also made them tough. Is it so soon forgotten that the same people who were so tremendously butchered in the Thirty Years' War—perhaps the most sanguinary and exhausting contest in history—were ready in the next century to fight the Seven Years' War—a combat waged with superlative vigour and skill, and against the largest imaginable odds?