

THE OCCULT SIDE OF THE WAR

PART II

AN OPERATION FOR SPIRITUAL CATARACT

For many months one subject has been uppermost in the minds of millions of people in the Western world, namely the War. It has been lamented by all; all the combatants have sought to excuse themselves for participating and to place the responsibility upon the shoulders of their adversaries. Thus, for the first time in the world's history, admitting that war is wrong. Tons of ink and paper have been used by the contending powers to inculcate their enemies that they may exculpate themselves, and soothe an aching conscience. But neither excuses nor attempts of incrimination of others can ease the aching hearts of millions of people who clamor for a solution of the problem, and sometimes feel almost like asking themselves whether God still cares for His world or whether he is passively permitting this dreadful slaughter.

In order to arrive at a right understanding of the matter it is necessary to realize that each human being is surrounded by a subtle aura invisible to the majority, but readily perceived by one who has cultivated his Spiritual perception. This aura is colored according to the vibrations that each man sets up within, by his likes and dislikes; it is an accurate color index of his character. As his habits change, this color cloud takes on different tints. Through this aura he views the world, as through a glass, and it colors all with whom he comes in contact, so that he imagines that they have the same virtues and vices which he himself possesses, and on the principle that when a tuning fork is struck it calls forth sounds from another of identical pitch, he actually calls out in those whom he meets, the traits which are in himself, a fact within the experience of all. Who has not been roused to anger when in the presence of one who had lost his temper, or felt irritability when discussing any subject with an irritable man? Similarly the nations see each other through the Invisible cloud of the National group spirit and imagine each other to be vastly different from what they really are. It is significant that Englishmen and women who lived in Germany before the war began, were firmly convinced that that country was right, before they were compelled to leave for home, and Germans who resided in England were equally fanatical in their support of that country and denounced Germany as the aggressor. But their return to their native heath, and breathing in the national race spirit, soon changed their attitude, and they all began to see 'the other side,' and give allegiance to their own group spirit.

Thus, the war is not the outcome of individual hatred, for have not we heard how soldiers in the trenches fraternized whenever opportunity offered? But it is the work of the race spirits who guide the nations on their path of progress, or rather, we should say, it is permitted by them, for it is the Brothers of the Shadow, the black forces that have fostered the evil side of national life; pride, arrogance and the pursuit of pleasure to wean humanity away from the more serious side of life. And therefore the race spirits of the nations, which are always working for good, have permitted this war; not exactly as a punishment, but as a means of bringing them back to the real purpose of existence.

That much has long been known to the writer, but he knew and felt in his innermost heart that there must be another, greater, purpose and that the good to be attained must be

commensurate with the suffering involved in its attainment; hence it must be a great and wonderful good, a blessing to humanity of inestimable importance. But what? We remember the words of Christ, "I came not to bring peace, but a sword;" we have always regarded peace as the ideal, however, and have been at a loss to reconcile this saying with the Sermon on the Mount. Can it be that there is a hidden virtue in the war that we have not hitherto perceived, a virtue that may justify it as a means to an end? That was the perplexing problem.

Long months the writer has suffered in silence on account of the awful slaughter that has been going on in Europe. It is no easy matter to labor nightly among the distressing scenes of the battle field, bringing succor to the wounded, and working with the slain of many nations in the invisible worlds, in an endeavor to soothe their anguish and still their resentment, and at the same time keep poised sufficiently to carry on the work at headquarters in the day time. During that time students in various countries have urged that we take a stand for the side that they favored, and write our ideas concerning the war. Naturally, we would not take a stand against any of our brethren. Fellowship includes the whole world, universal love was never needed more than at present. We have endeavored to give it the fullest expression possible to us. And regarding 'writing': while we felt and knew the ultimate outcome of this great calamity must be good, we had no light, and it has never been our custom to deal in platitudes, or to fill our pages with words, only words, so we worked and prayed for light, month after month, until at last the suspense became unbearable.

Lately, the agony of that vast mass of humanity, among whom we have labored for so many months, seemed to concentrate itself in our presence as a great WHY? written in letters of blood and flame during our waking hours, and though alone, and all was outwardly still, the sound of that great Why? seemed to fill Heaven and Earth in its intensely passionate appeal for an answer.

At last, I could stand it no longer, and when the Elder Brother who is my mentor appeared in response to my cry of distress, I put the question. The rule of the Great Order is that Lay Brothers must use all endeavors to solve their own problems and only ask for assistance as a last resort, but though hitherto diffident on that account, the agony of a million men seemed to surge through my throat when I saw him so calm and collected: "I know that your heart is not calloused, Brother, that it beats with compassion for the millions so great that even this agony of sympathy which is now rending my breast is as nothing in comparison; how then can you be so calm while millions of men suffer unbelievably, and what is the purpose of this cruel conflict?"

Never has music sounded so sweetly in my ear; never have I experienced such a sense of relief, such a complete revulsion of feeling. I seemed to leap from the slough of despair to the pinnacle of praise and thanksgiving, when the answer came in that voice, always vibrant with kindness and compassion, but on this occasion those qualities were so intensified that words fail to describe it:

"Cease your sorrow, my Brother, and be of good cheer. If you had a friend who had lost his sight because of a cataract, and he were forced to undergo an operation, you would probably feel sorry for the present pain, but you would rejoice at the impending restoration of his vision and mayhap, in the joy of anticipation, you would almost forget the present pain.

"Similarly in the case of this war, the world has become spiritually blind, the intellect will admit nothing it is unable to prove, as one proves a mathematical problem. Doubt and skepticism have grown as giant weeds among the leaders of thought, and the mad pursuit of pleasure, the indulgence of the senses and the indifference of anything that makes for soul growth are common characteristics among the masses. Neither preaching nor praying can awaken the world. Therefore the Invisible Leaders of Evolution permitted the Brothers of the Shadow to tempt the rulers of the nations, and thus the dogs of war were unleashed with what seemed unmitigated calamitous results.

"But rejoice, this is in reality an operation for spiritual cataract on a large scale. It is the death knell of the age of agnosticism and skepticism regarding the spiritual verities, for it will open the spiritual vision of so many that their testimony will carry weight with those who remain blind, and the Western world will turn to God with a new zeal that could not have been roused by a thousand years of preaching.

"As we taught you in the beginning, and as recorded in the *Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception*, mankind is still in the most dangerous part of the path of progress, which we call 'the 16 paths to destruction,' and never in all of the previous races has it come so dangerously close to the brink. But rejoice! and again I say rejoice! for the danger is past, the war has saved the world from an infinitely worse fate, and soon it will resound with praise to God for the blessing wrought by the curse of war."

As those of our readers who are not familiar with the Rosicrucian Teachings may not understand, the reference to the 16 paths and their bearing on this problem, and also, as it may not be patent to all what is meant by the operation for spiritual cataract, and how the war can open the spiritual vision, we will continue this article next month for the purpose of elucidating these points. In the meantime, the following articles from the *Literary Digest* will show that the prediction made is already beginning to be verified.

(Continued in Jan 1916 *Rays*)