

MEN, WOMEN AND WAR

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Men, women and war by Will Irwin

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WILL IRWIN

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AND WAR**

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G.B.

BY
WILL IRWIN

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1915



PREFACE

THIS is a fabric of stitched things. But I suspect that all of us who have been trying, by the poor mosaic of human words, to convey Armageddon, have shown the same fault, scattering imperfect treatment. The thing is vast beyond all human conception; and it is covered by mists of secrecy. We see merely a glimpse here and there, and with each glimpse comes such a rush of emotions and impressions that we fail through sheer despair of recording them all.

I have recorded myself in these scattering essays as an adversary of war; but I beg the reader to let nothing which I have said carry the implication that I would turn the hands of the more civilised European nations back from their task. Democracy, attacked without and within,

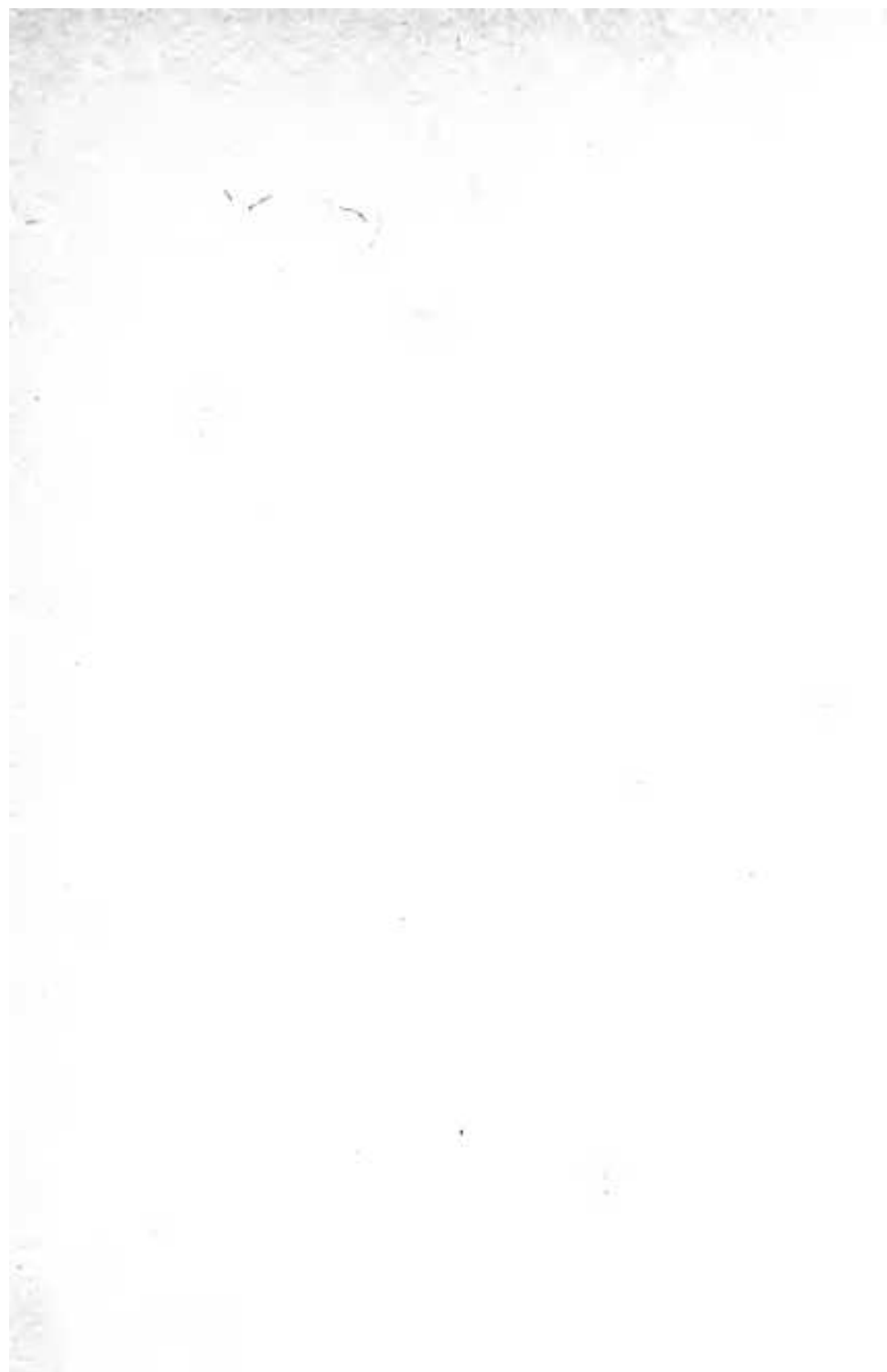
is on test. If the more civilised European nations fail, the end will be a worse thing than war. Those same civilised European nations, together with a submerged and silenced party in the less civilised nations, hope that this will be the end of warfare. Democracy is on test ; so, I feel, is real Christianity. In the teachings of Christ lie the seeds of Democracy. " Men are not equal ; some are strong and some are weak ; some are good and some are wicked ; but let us act on the theory that they are equal. Because I am strong, I will not oppress my brother who is weak, and because I am good I will not despise my brother who is evil." That canon of the new law became, in time, Democracy. The more civilised nations of Europe, joined with that nation which has such splendid possibilities of civilisation, are fighting this war against old, barbaric and Pagan conceptions of kingship. It is not political warfare ; it is a Holy War.

London : March, 1915.

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MEN, WOMEN AND WAR

I

DETAINED BY THE GERMANS

September, 1914

ON the nineteenth of that swiftly moving August of this terrible year, Brussels awaited with tempered apprehension the appearance of her conquerors. I am here obliged to recapitulate a history grown already stale when these lines go to press. Belgium had held back at Liège the German advance; but the heavy German siege guns had already come into position, and one read between the lines of the carefully censored reports that the resistance at Liège was over. There had been outpost fighting at Tirlemont, only an hour or two by motor car from Brussels. The populace of the Flemish metropolis lived in a mood of mingled grief, triumph, and