

**JOSEPH PENNELL'S PICTURES OF WAR  
WORK IN ENGLAND, REPRODUCTIONS OF  
A SERIES OF DRAWINGS AND  
LITHOGRAPHS OF THE MUNITION WORKS  
MADE BY HIM WITH THE PERMISSION AND  
AUTHORITY OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT**

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Joseph Pennell's pictures of war work in England, reproductions of a series of drawings and lithographs of the munition works made by him with the permission and authority of the British government by Joseph Pennell

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# JOSEPH PENNELL'S PICTURES OF WAR WORK IN ENGLAND

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AND LITHOGRAPHS OF THE MUNITION WORKS  
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WITH NOTES BY THE ARTIST AND WITH  
AN INTRODUCTION BY H. G. WELLS



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## INTRODUCTION

**T**HERE is still a delusion that war is conducted and controlled by gentlemen in red tabs, gold lace, and spurs; that it is an affair in which infantry fights in formation, cavalry charges gallantly upon field-guns, and supply-trains of horse-drawn wagons follow up the Napoleonic manœuvres of the various generals. Some such idea seemed to prevail even in the highest quarters until the Battle of the Aisne. Things had happened at Liège and Namur that were a little perplexing, but it was only by the end of 1914 that the mass of people began to realize that there was a new sort of war in progress. The bright bayonet-blade of the old warfare had broken off and we were fighting with the butt-end. The armies of the world to-day are undergoing, rather belatedly, the same revolution that overtook our navies in the 'seventies and 'eighties. The engineer has got hold of them. The avalanche of change has started; it will not rest again until it has buried every scrap of the soldier's solemn paraphernalia of horse and drill as completely as it has buried the frigates and three-deckers of fifty years ago.

The form and texture of the coming things are not yet to be seen in their completeness upon the modern battlefield. One swallow does not make a summer, nor a handful of aeroplanes, a "tank"

or so, a few acres of shell-craters, and a village here and there pounded out of recognition do more than foreshadow the spectacle of modernized war on land. War by these developments has become the monopoly of the five great industrial Powers; it is their alternative to end or evolve it, and if they continue to disagree, then it must needs become a spectacle of majestic horror such as no man can yet conceive. It has been wise of Mr. Pennell therefore to make his pictures of modern warfare not upon the battlefield but among the huge industrial apparatus that is thrusting behind and thrusting up through the war of the gentlemen in spurs. He gives us the splendours and immensities of forge and gun-pit, furnace and mine-shaft. He shows you how great they are and how terrible. Among them go the little figures of men, robbed of all dominance, robbed of all individual quality. He leaves it for you to draw the obvious conclusion that presently, if we cannot contrive to put an end to war, blacknesses like these, enormities and flares and towering threats, will follow in the track of the tanks and come trampling over the bickering confusion of mankind.

There is something very striking in these insignificant and incidental men that Mr. Pennell shows us. Nowhere does a man dominate in all these wonderful pictures. You may argue perhaps that that is untrue to the essential realities; all this array of machine and workshop, all this marshalled power and purpose has been the creation of inventor and business organizer. But are we not a little too free with that word "*creation*"?

Falstaff was a "creation" perhaps, or the Sistine sibyls; there we have indubitably an end conceived and sought and achieved; but did these inventors and business organizers do more than heed certain unavoidable imperatives? Seeking coal, they were obliged to mine in a certain way; seeking steel, they had to do this and this and not that and that; seeking profit they had to obey the imperative of economy. So little did they plan their ends that most of these manufacturers speak with a kind of astonishment of the deadly use to which their works are put. They find themselves making the new war as a man might wake out of some drugged condition to find himself strangling his mother.

So that Mr. Pennell's sketchy and transient human figures seem altogether right to me. He sees these forges, workshops, cranes, and the like as inhuman and as wonderful as cliffs, or great caves, or icebergs, or the stars. They are a new aspect of the same logic of physical necessity that made all these older things, and he seizes upon the majesty and beauty of their dimensions with an entire impartiality. And they are as impartial. Through all these lithographs runs one present motif, the motif of the supreme effort of Western civilization to save itself and the world from the dominance of the reactionary German Imperialism that has seized the weapons and resources of modern science. They are arranged to shape out the life of a shell, from the mine to the great gun; nothing remains of their history to show except the ammunition dump, the gun in action, and the