

it is life and nurture and beauty and austerity, just as war is death and waste and filth and corruption. Peace has nothing to do with muddled diplomacy and corrupt concessions and the exploitation of the poor, with slum dwellings and huge dividends and a world divided into the idle and the overworked. Peace is full of risks, but they are the risks of giving, not of taking, life. Peace is full of hardships, but they are the bracing necessary hardships that we can cheerfully bear together in the brotherhood of man.

We have "a long way to go." But we shall get there some day if we never lose our courage or deny our faith.

H. M. SWANWICK.

### BACH'S CHRISTMAS MUSIC IN ENGLAND AND IN GERMANY.

I was at the Temple on Christmas Eve for Bach's music. The shimmering double church was full of old and elderly men, of women of all ages, with a sprinkling of soldier-lads, brought along, on what may be their last Christmas in this world, by their mothers and sisters and sweethearts. Everyone—but it was perhaps that my own eyes and heart were opened—everyone seemed so altered from other perfunctory times, grave, sincere, aware of all it meant.

With the first rasping notes of the organ, tearing the veil of silent prayer, there came before my mind, as when a cloud-rent suddenly shows depths of solemn moonlit sky, the fact that *There* also, *There* beyond the sea and the war chasm, in hundreds of churches of Bach's own country (I can see the Thomas-Kirche at Leipzig, where he was Cantor, and the church of his birthplace, Eisenach), *There*, at this very moment, were crowds like this one at the Temple, listening to this self-same Christmas Music. *There* also elderly men, stay-behinds, and many, many women, old and young, and a sprinkling of soldier-lads brought for that, maybe, last Christmas at home and on Earth. Praying like these silently kneeling around me, and praying for the same mercies: Give us, O God, strength to live through these evil times, or, if so be, die to some purpose; suffer not, O Lord, who seest our hearts, that we be crushed in this war not of our making; teach us to forgive the cruel folk who hate us; give us such peace as will never be broken. Forgive us, deliver us; remember, O Father, the peace and goodwill which were promised with Thy Son.

Something like that, articulate or not, is welling up with unshed tears and silent sobs in those kneeling crowds, behind those screening hands, both on this side and on yonder, of the shallow seas and the unfathomable ocean of horror and hatred. They are united, these English and those German crowds, in the same hopes and fears and prayers, even as, unsuspecting, they are united in the same sequences of melody, the same woofs of harmonies wherewith, across two hundred years, that long dead but undying organist of Leipzig enmeshes, draws together, nooses and nets our souls to lift them, clarified, close embraced, nay consubstantial, into the presence of the new born, the eternally reborn, Hope of the World.

They are thinking and feeling the same, those German and these English crowds. They are played into unanimity not only by Bach with his tunes and counterpoints, but by the ruthless hands of our common calamity. The same heroic, or resigned, or despairing modes; saddest of all, perhaps, the brief snatches of would-be cheerfulness, and beneath all individual, all articulate differences, the unanalysable harmonies of collective sorrow.

They have come, those German women like these English ones, to seek rest in this church and this music after their day in hospitals and relief offices and committee rooms. They also have brought along with them their soldiers, their boys or their lovers, home perhaps for the last time; brought them from old peaceful habit, or because one can feel nearer together, without the unnerving fear of words and glances, here in this church, side by side, embracing in the music and in God. And, the service over, they will many of them, German women like English, go back to their homes, light up the Christmas tree, pull the paper caps and the favours out of the crackers, and laugh and play, so that the children at least may forget the war, and remember only that the Christ Child has been born once more. German and English, the same burdens have been brought to the church, been laid down in the prayer and the music; the same burdens have been shouldered again. Never have we and they been closer together, more alike and akin, than at this moment when War's cruelties and recriminations, War's monstrous iron curtain, cut us off so utterly from one another.

United, moreover, in the common feeling of Christmas. For a symbol turns the simple fact we can singly know into the myriad applications we can together feel. And the Child Christ, whom, orthodox or unorthodox, we are all celebrating, was not born once, but is born always, over and over again. He lies in every cradle, the incarnate, unblemished hope of every land and every generation. And He is the Redeemer because every new life, like every new day after the winter solstice, like the wheat quickening in the winter furrow, is the redemption of our Present by our Future, the deliverance by our Hope from our Despair. Enmity dies and is forgotten, being accidental, changeable, sterile, and against the grain of life. But peace and goodwill on earth is born for ever anew, because it is born of the undying needs of our common humanity.

That is the message of Bach's Christmas music, his cosmic thunders hushed into pastoral flutings; the message of the long-deceased German organist to us English who listen; the message of us listening English back to Bach's fellow-countrymen united with us in listening and in sorrowing and hoping.

VERNON LEE.

### WOMEN'S PREROGATIVE.

It has been said by a leading American feminist that "In warfare, *per se*, we find maleness in its absurdest extremes." Here, we are told, is to be studied the whole gamut of basic masculinity, from the initial instinct of combat, through every form of glorious ostentation, with the loudest possible accompaniment of noise. War shows us that men are very far from the civilisation they profess, certainly; but if that were all there would be good reason for surprise that with the advent of more rational habits of thought and action such methods of settling disputes have not long ago passed into oblivion. But that is not all, and it is precisely on our understanding this fact that the hopes of the future are based.

War is the prerogative of man in a special sense, and it is because he feels this so strongly that the difficulty of gaining a hearing for views which tend fundamentally to disparage the value of war is so great. For to men war involves that element of sacrifice, of giving up one's life for others in a noble cause, that has made argument with the martyr an impossibility in all ages. To a man it is the basest treachery that anyone should breathe a word in opposition to the cause he has undertaken to defend. To do so would be to minimise the chances of success, to weaken the something which gives him driving power, and to encourage the warriors against whom he is pitted. Hence it is that as far as men are concerned it is impossible to conceive the hypothesis, so long as war lasts, that one's own side may not be entirely in the right; and hence it is that the realisation of the true position of one's adversary which might so often lead to an early cessation of hostilities is inconceivable to each and all of the nations concerned in any struggle.

But the spirit of sacrifice involves more than the unflinching course from which the martyr must look neither to the right hand nor to the left. It involves an enthusiasm which no amount of argument can overcome: a denial of self which it would be unjust to depreciate. To obey the call of King and country is a duty as sacred as the behest that a man should lay down his life for a friend: it is superior to reason: it can brook no counter considerations. In a word, as far as man is concerned the outbreak of war implies the immediate closing of every opening through which the possibility of a rapprochement might contrive to enter, and the war is left to pursue its horrible course unless some powerful neutral intervenes to separate the embittered combatants—an improbable and dangerous proceeding. All works with the inevitability of fatalism, and any suggestion of a possible alternative is regarded as the highest treason.

Meanwhile the millions of non-combatants look on aghast. Some cheer—and these form "public opinion": all hope their own side will win, for in case of victory they will at least come in for the minimum of personal misfortune and share in the honour and glory—and in the pickings. It would be high treason, as aforesaid, to do otherwise, for that is the male code of honour in war time. *And in war time only men matter.*

Such, at any rate, has been the view hitherto: and to a large extent such is the view to-day. It is true that in primitive times warfare frequently had as its ultimate object the capture of females, but, for all that, women in war time are a negligible factor. They just lapse, except for camp problems, and in so far as something must be found for some of them to do. Men must preserve a discreet silence: what women say or think