FEW of us, I think, can be too young, and certainly none of us are too old, to be able look back on the four years of the war as an experience standing by itself, sharply marked off from the rest of our lives. And one of the ways in which it differs, probably, from any other four years through which we have passed is that we have comparatively clear conceptions of what then happened to us as a nation.

Even now it may be that the chronological order of some things is fading from memory; but the great events and sufferings of the period are still present in our minds and still among the things which help to shape our political judgment. Probably never before those four years had we possessed in our own experience anything that we could call knowledge of what our nation was; and what conceptions we had attached to the names of foreign nations were even more vague or fragmentary. But under the shocks and stress of the war every one of us became conscious of the larger organism of which he was a part. As a nation we found ourselves, and we have not yet ceased to be self-conscious. Most of us indeed have fallen into the habit of connecting in our own minds many of the details of our daily experience with this new consciousness which has been forced upon us. It has chanced that since then one of my own duties has been to study Livy's record of the long struggle between Rome and Carthage some twenty-one centuries ago. That contest, which lasted sixteen years, shows certain features not without parallels in our own shorter ordeal. Both likenesses and differences may be worth our notice; especially if they can help us at all towards building up that more true and just and enduring conception of national life, indeed of civilised life as a whole, which is what we all earnestly, even though unconsciously, desire to

1 A lecture delivered at the Library on Wednesday, 10 October, 1923.
reach, when we ponder on the war and its issues. Most of us, it is true, are rather shy of moralising in public:—and though such temptations are supposed to be especially ensnaring to Professors, I will try to escape them by the old Cambridge habit of sticking closely to my text, I mean to the stories which Livy tells us, and by leaving them to suggest their own moral.

The period represented by the title of this lecture is one of twelve years\(^1\) during which Hannibal with his army was in Italy, a standing danger to the power, and sometimes even to the existence, of Rome. The three preceding years had been marked by the great disasters of the Trebia, Lake Trasimene and Cannae which are familiar to all students of history. Hannibal had three times wiped out great Roman armies, and after the last defeat, that of Cannae, in 216 B.C., men said despairingly in Rome that there was no Roman camp left in Italy, no Roman army and no Roman General. Certainly for several weeks there was no Roman army there except the garrison of Rome itself. Twelve years later we find Hannibal still unconquered but recalled by his own Government to defend Carthage against Scipio who had crossed to Africa, had won various victories over the Carthaginian generals, and who was to crown these victories in the following year (202) by the defeat of Hannibal himself at the battle of Zama.

My purpose is not to trace the whole chequered story of the Roman recovery; but rather to direct attention to a few smaller incidents rarely mentioned by modern historians, some of which may give us more intimate knowledge of the conduct and feeling of the Roman people itself during these years, and enable us to compare it with our experience in our own years of trial.

Of course, in some sense, all wars are alike; both sides have always things to suffer, both sides prove themselves capable of some barbarous and some noble deeds. Difficulties of supply and transport, and failures through the incompetence of commanders are certain to be heard of in any long war, and upon such matters we need not dwell. We may, however, note in passing among these more external resemblances that at the outset and long after, both we and the Romans had to contend with generalship vastly superior to anything we could find

\(^{1}\) 215-203 B.C.
for ourselves; that both we and the Romans had great difficulty in securing an adequate supply of munitions; that the armies of both were multiplied many times; and both took extraordinary measures for meeting the financial strain. But some of our more intimate troubles too, are not without their ancient analogues. We shall note in these twelve years the interference of political rivalries at home with the conduct of war in the field, such as partisan attacks on particular generals; troubles with objectors to military service; troubles with allies of doubtful loyalty; and there were remarkable reactions from the strain, not merely in the political but also in the religious life of the community.

Note first for convenience three dates which divide the period into four parts. Immediately after Cannae in 216 B.C., the powerful city of Capua, wealthier even than Rome, threw in its lot with Hannibal. The first part of our period runs from 216 to 211 B.C., the year in which Hannibal made a dash upon Rome, though when he got there he did not venture to attack it—so strongly was the City fortified—; in which the two elder Scipios were defeated and killed in Spain, so that what remained of two Roman armies there was without a commander; and in which, on the other hand, Capua, after a long siege which Hannibal found himself unable to break, surrendered to the Romans and was absolutely destroyed. These are the great events of 211. The next date is 207 B.C. when Hasdrubal, bringing a great army from Spain to reinforce his brother Hannibal, was defeated and slain at the river Metaurus. Finally, when the younger Scipio had crossed to Africa in 204, Hannibal was constrained to follow him in the following year. These dates will provide enough framework to carry a few pictures chosen from Livy's story.

In choosing them I have been mainly guided by the wish to ascertain as nearly as we can what the Romans were actually thinking and feeling: and especially to trace the instinct which seemed to guide them even in the worst moments of doubt. Some aspects of this inner life appear in incidents which Livy felt to be characteristic of the time. In a former lecture, we found that this historian, however little he cared for precision in detail or statistics for their own sake, had a singular insight into the characters of individual men and a singular power of portraying what he saw. Not less, we shall realise, I hope, from the passages now to be examined, that there stood in his
imagination, more clearly cut even than the portrait of any one man, the figure of the Roman nation, with its weaknesses and follies, and its nobleness and strength, grown into a living whole. And even if I fail to convey to others the sense that Livy has impressed on me of this almost personal being, we shall in any case have seen something of human motive and human courage in one of the most striking epochs of the story of Europe.

We start from a position which seemed one of despair. In the battle of Cannae, the third of three great defeats, the Romans had lost over 48,000 slain and some 5000 prisoners, the total approaching five-sixths of the forces with which they began the war. Two Consular armies had disappeared. The profound anxiety of the Romans appears vividly in their religious proceedings. In his history of Roman Religious Experience, Dr. Warde Fowler has pointed out the effect of the disasters in popular psychology. The gods whom the State had worshipped with punctual care, and who had brought Rome, so its citizens felt, through centuries of danger to the headship of all Italy and to the mastery of the seas around it, these gods seemed now to have changed their divine minds. How else could they suffer their worshippers to fall into so great calamity?

Throughout the period two feelings prevailed, apparently in sharp contradiction, but springing from the same root. First, a feverish desire to secure the favour of their old gods by any and every method that could be suggested, a fear which led men to look hungrily for every indication of the Will of Heaven in the customary channels of omens, prophecy and divination; and side by side with this desire, a continual doubt of the efficacy of the old ways, and a search for newer and more powerful divine protectors, from whatever source the knowledge of them might be drawn. The professional exponents of established religion were quite hard worked; always called upon to produce some religious explanation of the appalling things that were happening, and to devise some new ceremonial which might impress men's imagination with a sense of duty performed and so renew their confidence in heaven. Livy makes clear what he thought himself of this whole business of prodigies and portents; but he makes not less clear, and this is where his insight is deeper than that of some modern writers, how indispensable to the popular mind of that century this religion was.

1 Ch. XIV.
After the battle of Trasimene in 217 the College of Pontiffs produced long lists of ritual duties which had been insufficiently performed; and from one of their sacred documents which was not merely open to convenient interpolation but offered great latitude when it came to be interpreted, the Sybilline Books, they ordered what was called a Sacred Spring, that is a vow payable five years hence by the whole community; which promised to offer to Jupiter every head of sheep and swine, goats and kine that was born in that fifth spring, if the Roman state survived so long. After Cannae in 216 their despair took a more sombre form, especially when it appeared that the vestal virgins of the year had polluted their office.

Besides these great adversities, men were put in fear with sundry prodigious tokens: and among others, in that one year, two vestal virgins, Opimia and Floronia, were detected of manifest unchastity: the one of them was buried alive, as the manner was, under the ground at the Colline Gate; the other killed herself.

The man who had committed the fault with Floronia, was by the chiefe Priest so beaten with rods in the Comitium, that he died under his hand. This heinous offence falling out among so many calamities, was reckoned, as usually it is, for a portentous sign; and therefore the Decemvirs were commanded to search the Sibylline Books. And Fabius Pictor was sent to Delphi, to consult with the Oracle of Apollo, and to learn by what prayers and offerings they might pacify the gods, and what would be the end of so great and fearful miseries. In the meanwhile, out of the learning contained in those Books of Destiny, there were performed certain extraordinary sacrifices: among which a Gaul together with a Gallic woman; likewise a Grecian man and woman, were let down alive in the Beast market and shut into a vault under the ground, stoned all about: a place aforetime embrued and polluted with the blood of mankind sacrified, a rite most unnatural to the religion of the Romans. When they had sufficiently (as they thought) pacified the gods—

they turned to matters of war, so Livy concludes.—Note his phrase "as they thought;" and his disgust at the barbarous use of human sacrifice. Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum, when the whole community was acting under stress of fear.

Every year we find a set of prodigies recorded and expiated at great cost; as Livy tells us the demand created the supply: “the

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1. 22. 57. 6. In this lecture as in others my renderings are based on the Elizabethan version of Philemon Holland.
2. 24. 10. 6. quae quo magis credebant simplices ac religiosi homines, ex plura nuntiabantur.
more that people believed in the prodigies the more prodigies were announced." Take a part of one \(^1\) of these lists (in 207 B.C.):

Before the Consuls went forth there was a nine-days sacrifice celebrated, because at Veii it had rained stones from heaven. And after one prodigious sight was once minded and spoken of, there were (as it is commonly seen) others also reported: namely, that in Minturnae the temple of Jupiter, and the sacred grove of Marcia were smitten with lightning; and at Atellae the wall and gate. The men of Minturnae spake also of a more fearful thing, to wit, that there ran a river of blood in their very gate. Last of all, at Capua \(^2\) a wolf entered the gate at night, and worried and dismembered one of the watchmen.

These wonderful signs were expiated with sacrificing greater beasts, and a supplication was holden for one day, by virtue of a decree from the Pontiffs. . . . And men's minds were no sooner freed of one religious scruple, but they were troubled again with another. For word was brought, that at Frusino there was an infant born, as big as ordinary a child is at four years of age. And the thing was not so strange for bigness, as for that it was born doubtful, whether it were male or female. The wizards that were sent for out of Etruria said that this was a foul monster, and that it should be had forth of the dominion of Rome, and drowned in the deep, so as it might touch no ground. Whereupon they put it alive in a coffer, and when they had carried it a good way into the sea, they flung it in. Moreover the Pontiffs made a decree that certain virgins in three companies, nine apiece, should go through the city and sing certain canticles.

In one passage \(^3\) Livy cannot conceal his scorn for "the degraded superstition which thrusts the gods into connexion with the most trivial occurrence," such as the fact that some mice had injured the gilding of a particular image; and yet immediately afterwards he points out that the subsequent defeat and death of Marcellus in that year (208) was, in the popular mind, connected with these same portents.

Of the various elements which were brought in to reinforce, as men supposed, the waning power of the old City gods, the most conspicuous were the increased attention paid to Apollo \(^4\) and the worship of the Great Mother who was supposed to be somehow contained in a meteoric stone which was brought with great pomp from Asia Minor.

\(^{127.37.}\)

\(^2\) By Capua now is meant only the shadow of what before 211 had been a great city; now there was only tanquam urbs, aliqua aratorum sedes (26. 16. 7-8). The wolves had realised the difference.

\(^3\) 27. 23. 4.

\(^4\) The Ludi Apollinares were established in 212 B.C.
in 205 B.C. and installed in a Temple at Rome,—all in accordance with instructions by the Pontiffs. Of more private, though widespread, innovations, the worship of Bacchus, which thirty years later we find all over Italy, is the most striking example. It is clear, as Dr. Warde Fowler has pointed out, that the old city-religion never recovered from the shock of the war; and that with this loosening of the bonds of primitive superstition, there began a more liberal attitude towards the idea of deity in general. It is natural to compare such effects with the new temper of which most of us are conscious here and now in many of our straiter forms of dogma or sect; for these in their turn have been shaken by the war of our own day. We all know how denominational barriers have shrunk and crumbled since 1914; and a learned friend of mine who is wont to seek occasional diversion in the correspondence columns of (what used to be called) the evangelical weeklies represented to me the change of feeling which he noted about serious matters in a characteristic way.

He had found, he said, a number of high authorities to be unanimous in the view that new instructions had been issued to St. Peter; in the case of those who fell in the war, at all events on the side of the Allies, passport-formalities at the Golden Gate were completely suspended. The truth is that there are some kinds of dogma which may maintain themselves in ordinary times but which collapse under stress of some natural feeling strongly stirred in the whole community. Hard and fast doctrines about the future life, preached from scores of pulpits fifty years ago, suddenly broke like bubbles when every other home was mourning a father or a son.

Now it was far from an accident that the noble family or group of noble families which made the Scipionic Circle and which was left by the war in a position of unmistakable leadership in Roman society, was also enthusiastic for Greek culture and with it for the study of Greek philosophy. After the Punic War we find the poet Ennius and (a little later) Terence, each in his own way devoted to the task of spreading Greek ideas, working under the protection of the Scipios; and a generation later Scipio Aemilianus, the friend of Polybius, was also closely associated with the famous Stoic Panaetius. Through

1See the Senatus Consultum de Baccalibus of 186 B.C.; Livy, 39. 8-19.
2Cic. Ac. II. 2. 5.
the influence of this circle and of other men like-minded, there came into Rome not merely the fresh current of Greek analysis and enquiry, steadily dissolving the older civic religion, but also the teachings of the most active Greek philosophy of the century, namely Stoicism. And in Stoicism, as has so often been pointed out, lay the main current of progress for the human spirit, a current which two centuries later was mingled in the deeper tide of Christianity. However distressing therefore the process of disillusion which began in the Punic War might and did appear to high-minded onlookers at the time, there can be no doubt that it contributed something to the humanising of Europe.

But if the calamities of the war, especially in its first three years, so deeply overthrew the old confidence of the Roman people, how did they recover it? What was it that in the end won them the victory over Hannibal, a greater general than any they had known? No one will suggest that it was the military prowess of any one man, deeply as they were indebted to the caution of Fabius and the more brilliant gifts of Scipio, to mention only these. Both great men failed seriously more than once; and neither of them could have had a chance of mending his country's fortunes but for the conditions through which they were chosen and by which in the long run they were supported. If the answer is to be put into a single phrase it can only be this—the victory was won by the genius and the character of the Roman people. It has not been quite fully realised how frequently in crises of the war individual judgment failed completely but the Roman popular instinct made a right decision. If ever a war was won by a nation and not by a single man, it was the war against Hannibal.

Take for instance the fundamental problem of finance. Judge from a single scene (in 215 B.C.) the way in which this part of the burden was borne.

But as the number of them that paid taxes was greatly diminished by so great overthrows of the armies, so those few that remained, if they were to be burdened with exactions many times increased, would be plagued and ruined another way, therefore it was concluded that unless the Commonweal were supported by credit, she could not sustain herself by her own wealth. So it was agreed, that Fulvius the Praetor must assemble all the people together and declare unto them the

\[1\] See Prof. E. V. Arnold's *Stoicism at Rome*, p. 20, footnote.
\[2\] 23. 48. 9.
necessity that the Commonweal was driven into; and must exhort all
them that had enriched themselves by taking the contracts issued by the
State, that they should now make a present of a period of time to the
Commonweal; for it was out of the Commonweal that they were
grown to their present riches; and that they should undertake to furnish
the armie in Spaine with all the supplies which it now needed, on
condition that they be paid therefor first of all creditors out of the common
chest, when it should be again stored with money. Thus the Praetor
made declaration of these matters in the open assembly of the people,
and withal appointed a certain day, whereupon he minded to put forth
the contracts for the soldiers’ clothing and corn to be provided for the
Spanish army, and all the other things now requisite for the fleet.
When the day was come, there presented themselves unto him three
companies of nineteen men, purposing to take these contracts, making
only two requests, the one that while they were engaged in this public
service, they should be exempt from service in the army; the other that
whatsoever they shipped, should be transported at the risk of the
Commonweal against all enemy force or violence of tempest. Both
these requests being granted, they took upon them the matter, and so
the Commonweal was served, by the money of private persons.

You will observe there is no hint of any five per cent. or six per
cent. interest to be paid on the sums they thus advanced. Patriotism
had not become a profitable private investment.

Notice next a few cases of the wisdom shown by various com-
manders not of the first rank, men whose names scarcely appear in
history at all.

An incident (reminding one rather of our troubles with the “Black
and Tans”) in which the dangers of the use of irregular forces were
happily forestalled, is recorded of the year 210 B.C. when by the
capture of Agrigentum (following on that of Syracuse), the island of
Sicily was finally reduced to peace. During the war the different com-
munities of the island had taken different sides and nearly every town
had been fighting with its neighbour. The Roman governor, Laevinus
by name, saw that it was urgently necessary to encourage these com-
munities to resume their proper work of growing corn, and that not for
their own sake merely, but to produce food for Rome. During the
hostilities a band of nondescript ruffians, 4000 strong, most of whom,
as Livy briefly puts it,1 “had committed capital crimes both when they
lived in their own states and afterwards,” had been of much use on
the Roman side; but their way of living, “by brigandage and plunder”

¹26. 40. 17.
was a thorn in the side of any peaceful community. Laevinus did not feel equal, while the war lasted, to the task of reforming their morals; but they must be got out of Sicily; so he put them all on ship-board and transported them to Rhegium, a Roman colony much distressed by the nearness of Hannibal's army and the hostility of the half-barbarous Bruttians all round them, who had taken Hannibal's side. The 4000 irregulars were likely, says Livy, to be "very serviceable to the men of Rhegium who needed a force used to brigandage" for harrying the land of the Bruttians.

In the year 208 B.C. when the doughty Marcellus was defeated and killed through his own imprudence in a reconnoitre, his body came into Hannibal's possession. His colleague Crispinus also had received a serious wound in the engagement, from which he died a month or two later; but he had enough foresight to send round to all the neighbouring towns a warning that Marcellus was dead, and that Hannibal was in possession of his ring with its seal: and that therefore if they received any letters purporting to be sealed by Marcellus they might know at once that they were forged by Hannibal. So he brought it about that Hannibal suffered a considerable defeat instead of securing possession of the town of Salapia. In fact he was forced to retreat to the Southern extremity of Italy near Locri, whence he was afterwards able to emerge only for short spaces of time.

But perhaps the most striking case of soldierly judgment in a commander on the second line, is the way in which a member of the great Sempronian family, an ancestor of the Cracchi, dealt with an army of what the Romans called volunteers; that is to say, of men who enlisted as slaves in the hope of earning their freedom. The enrolling of such men was always regarded as a desperate expedient, but after Cannae age-limits and all others had to go. Sempronius, after more than a year of training decided to venture on a battle.

"Now," said Sempronius, "the time has come of acquiring the liberty which so long you have hoped for. To-morrow you are to confront your enemies with banner displayed, and to fight in a plain and open ground, where without fear of any ambush, the trial may be made with valour. Whosoever therefore can bring me the head of an enemy, him my pleasure is to make free immediately; but whosoever giveth ground and turneth back, on him will I do justice as on a bond-

\footnote{\textsuperscript{1} 27. 28.} \footnote{\textsuperscript{2} 24. 14. 6 (214 B.C.).}
slave. Now every man hath his future condition lying in his own hands: for the promise is not mine only but that of Marcellius the consul and ratified by all the Senate.”

If we may accept the story as it stands—and there are reasons against supposing it to be a fiction—this somewhat primitive method of proving one’s valour, to produce an enemy’s head, turned out to be highly inconvenient. Sempronius soon corrected his mistake and ordered the heads of slain enemies to be left as they were; adding that if the battle was won, he would enfranchise his whole army without distinction.

But when they were returned laden with booty into the camp, they found there were almost 4000 of the voluntary soldiers who had fought but faintly, and had not broken into the enemy’s camp with the rest; these for fear of punishment had seized a little hill not far from the camp, and there remained. But the morrow after, being brought away from thence by their commanders they arrived again at the camp, just when Gracchus had summoned his soldiers to an assembly. There, after Gracchus had first rewarded his old soldiers with military gifts each according to his good service in that battle, then, as concerning the slave-volunteers he said this much: that he had rather they were all commended by him, good and bad one with another, than that one of them that day should taste of any punishment: and therefore he pronounced them all free to the benefit, happiness, and felicity, both of the Common-weal, and of themselves. At this word, they lifted up their voices aloud with exceeding cheerfulness first congratulating and embracing one another, then lifting their hands on high and praying of the gods all good blessings for the people of Rome, and especially for Gracchus. “Then” (quoth Gracchus) “before I had made you all alike free, I would not set upon any of you, either the mark of a stout soldier, or that of a coward. But now I have discharged the promise made to you by the Common-weal; and for fear lest the difference between prowess and cowardice should be forgotten, I will take express order that the names of all of those, whose conscience accuses them of avoiding the hazard of battle, and who erewhile withdrew themselves apart, be brought to me; they shall be called forth every one by name, and I will compel them to take an oath that (unless it be for sickness) so long as they shall continue in soldiery, they will neither eat nor drink but standing upon their feet. And this punishment (I am sure) ye will willingly take in good part,—if ye consider better of it and see that ye could not have had any lighter mark of shame for your cowardly service.”

By this judicious (and humorous) compromise he strengthened the

1 That meant he was to be crucified.
discipline of his army, and at the same time secured the gratitude of all the volunteers by fully discharging his pledge.

In some cases it was men of the rank and file merely whose loyalty or insight proved decisive. In 207 B.C. a foraging party of Roman privates caught a body of six horsemen (four Gauls and two Numidians), who were carrying the famous despatch from Hasdrubal announcing his arrival in Italy to his brother Hannibal. These foragers took their prisoners to their commander who handled them straitly and got from them the despatch, which without unsealing he sent at once to the Consul Claudius who was in command in the South. This incident, as we know, was the real turning point of the war, because it enabled Claudius to make his famous forced march to join his colleague Livius on the Metaurus and with this doubled army to defeat Hasdrubal.

Or, again, how was Tarentum a town and harbour of vital importance, won back for the Romans? By the act of a private soldier in the army of Fabius. This soldier learnt from his sister who was in the town that she was being honoured by the attentions of the commander of the Bruttian garrison which was keeping the town for Hannibal. The private soldier at once saw a chance of turning this news to good account. By means of this sister the soldier, whose name even is not recorded, was introduced to the Bruttian commander and persuaded him to betray the town to the Romans.

But the most striking case of a private soldier's action was after the overwhelming defeat of the two older Scipios in Spain in the year 212. Both commanders had fallen and their armies were reduced to fragments. The survivors of one of the armies were collected by a young cavalry trooper called Marcius, who succeeded not only in fortifying a camp, but in uniting all the remnants of both armies. Chosen commander by the soldiers themselves, he inflicted a serious defeat on the Carthaginians, taking one of their camps and keeping the Roman cause safe until in response to a despatch from him to the Senate a new commander arrived.

But these individual achievements, however striking, are less instructive than the cases in which the courage and wisdom of the community as a whole somehow prevailed over personal or partisan failings in their leaders.

\[1\] 27. 15. 9. \[2\] 25. 37.
In the year after Cannae the first of the thirty tribes called on to vote for new consuls had nominated two men of whom one was practically untried in the field and the other had been tried and proved to be more or less incompetent. Livy records a speech in which the old Dictator Fabius talks to the people like a father, warning them that this is no time for experiments; they must choose the best Consuls they can get; so the tribe humbly went back and voted again, and all the tribes followed its example in choosing now the Dictator himself as one of the two Consuls. Incidentally we note the neglect of precedent by appointing to a Consulship the man who was actually holding the election but constitutional precedents in war time were things that the Romans knew how to deal with.

Again a few years later we hear of a spiteful attack on Marcellus; some tribune recounted to the people his mistakes, which had, in fact, been grave enough; but Marcellus stood up before them and set forth the much longer list of his successes; so they made him Consul again.

A more important case in which the common goodwill prevailed over private bitterness was in the election of Livius in 208 B.C. for the Consulship of the following year. Livius had been Consul some years before and after the end of his office had been accused before the people of some real or supposed breach of duty and condemned to a fine. This he had taken bitterly to heart; he retired into private life far from Rome and lived on his farm for eight years. His friends in the Senate had with difficulty persuaded him to come back, and now the majority of the Senate were eager that he should be made Consul again. The only man in the whole city that opposed this, was Livius himself, to whom this dignity was being offered. He blamed the levity and inconstancy of the people: saying, that they had had no pity of him when it was needed,—namely, while he was in question and was wearing the garments proper to an accused man; but now against his will, they offered him the white robe of a candidate for the Consulship. Thus (quoth he) they punish, thus they honour the same persons. If they took me for a good and honest man, why condemned they me, as they did, for a guilty one? If they found me in fault, what cause have they to trust me with a second Consulship, who used the former so badly? As he argued in this wise, the Senate reproved him:

1 24. 8.  2 27. 21.  3 27. 34.
"Like as the curstness and rigour of parents is to be mollified by patience on their children's part, even so the hard dealing of a man's country is to be mitigated by patience and sufferance."

So Livius gave way, and consented further, at the entreaty of the Senate, to lay aside, during his term of office, his old personal quarrel with his colleague Claudius. The soundness of the people's judgment was signally vindicated by the victory which these two consuls together won over Hasdrubal at the Metaurus in the following year. When one reads this story, and compares it with the sorry record of the Committee in 1915 which decided on the tragic adventure of Gallipoli, it is impossible not to wonder whether that calamity need have happened if the animosities of individual politicians and commanders could have been controlled by public opinion in England as they were in ancient Rome.

But perhaps the most striking case in which the popular instinct prevailed over personal jealousies, was in the critical moment, in 205 B.C., when it was determined whether or not young Scipio Africanus, after his triumphant expulsion of the enemy from Spain—a process which had taken six years to accomplish—was to be allowed to cross into Africa to attack them in their nest. Scipio was determined to go, and he had let it be understood that if the Senate failed to give him the commission, he meant to carry it over the Senate's head by a vote of the popular assembly. Such a precedent would have been a disaster to the Senate, in fact it would have anticipated the fall of the constitution by nearly a century.

How was it settled?

The Tribunes of the people intervened with one of those transparent but valuable shams in which politicians take delight; the right thing is done; but done in such a way that to the defeated party is given the privilege of stating loudly that it has triumphed!

The Tribunes persuaded the Senate that it must give way; and they persuaded Scipio to leave the matter to the Senate. Scipio therefore withdrew his threat; but the result was that he was sent to govern Sicily with permission to cross into Africa if he wished.

1 27. 35. 6.
Lastly let me give you Livy’s account of two examples of statesmanship not connected with the names of any individuals but springing straight from the instinct of the community. They concerned two difficulties strangely parallel to two which we also had to face. The first is the way in which in 209 B.C. the Romans handled what was practically the revolt of twelve out of their thirty colonies, that is the communities of Latin citizens in different parts of Italy to which they always looked for loyal support. Envoys from these twelve colonies complained bitterly of the length of time during which many of their citizens had been kept at the front, and flatly refused to supply any more men.

The Consuls, amazed at this unexpected turn, being desirous to deter the disaffected colonies from so detestable a resolution, supposed they would prevail more by chastising and rebuke, than by gentle dealing: and therefore they replied to the deputies that they had presumed to say unto the Consuls what the Consuls could not find in their hearts to deliver in the Senate House. For this was not a mere refusal of war-service, but no better than an open revolt from the people of Rome. Therefore they were best to return again speedily into their several colonies, and consult with their neighbours and countrymen, as though nothing at all had been said... When the Consuls had dealt with them a long time in this manner, the envoys, nothing moved with their words, made answer again. That neither they knew what message to take home; nor would their town-councils know what new resolution to take; since they had not any more men to be mustered for soldiers, nor money to provide for their pay. The Consuls seeing them so stiffly and obstinately bent, made report thereof to the Senate. Whereupon every man was stricken into so great trouble of mind, that many of them declared that the empire of Rome was come to an end. The like, said they, the rest of the Colonies will do: all our confederates and allies are combined to betray the city of Rome unto Hannibal. But the Consuls comforted the Senate, and bade them be of good cheer, saying, that all the other eighteen colonies would continue loyal and fast in their duty. Upon the aid of these eighteen colonies, the Roman state at this time rested and stood; and these all were highly thanked both in the Senate, and in the assembly of the people. As for the other twelve colonies which had refused to do their obedience, the Senate gave express command that they should not be so much as once named: and that the Consuls should neither give them their dispatch, nor retain them, nor so much as speak unto them. This silent kind of rebuke without word-giving, seemed to suit best with the majesty of the people of Rome.

1 27. 9. 8.  
2 27. 10. 9. 
25
 Afterwards, in 204 B.C. they were punished; each town was ordered to provide a contingent twice the size of the largest that it had ever sent, and these to be taken from their wealthiest citizens and to be sent on foreign service. The colonies declared this impossible, but soon found it wise to obey.

The second case is the treatment given to a large body of men—some 10,000 to start with and in the end considerably more—who were known as the Soldiers of Cannae, that is the men who ran away from the great battle and afterwards, by one road and another, drifted back to this or that Roman force. By the end of the year 216 they were all under the command of Marcellus. Their history as a body precisely covers the period with which we have been concerned, from 215 to 203, and nothing could be more characteristic of the Roman attitude to the war. We all know that this problem, though it was rarely mentioned in public reports, was one which a great number of our own Company-commanders, and even Brigadiers, if not Divisional Officers, had to face at different moments of the war on the Western front; and I suppose that the instinct of an English General was to distribute as widely as possible among his different units the men who had shown themselves unreliable, so as to abolish, as far as possible, any corporate traditions of slackness which might have contributed to their plight. The last thing, I fancy, that would occur to an English commander would be to form them up in a corps by themselves, and he would not dream of keeping them for twelve years outside the fighting zone.

Now note briefly what happened in Italy in 216 B.C. A few months after the disaster of Cannae the Romans had lost 25,000 men (that is the whole of two legions with their contingents of allies) in another overwhelming defeat in the North of Italy by the Gauls, who had lured the Roman Commander into the midst of a forest which they had then literally brought down upon his head. They overturned on to the advancing legions a crushing weight of trees, whose trunks had been carefully sawn through beforehand, for a great distance on either side of the track. Yet this tragical addition to their losses did not make the Senate less zealous for the quality of the Roman forces. On the contrary, directly after this, they gave instructions to Marcellus
to weed out carefully from his force any soldiers who had had any share in the rout at Cannae; and to the number of 10,000 they were transported to Sicily, with the grim instructions that they were to serve there without pay, on menial duties only, and with no leave of absence and no completion of service, until the army of Hannibal should have left Italy. So there they sailed, a disgraced and dejected multitude; two years later their numbers were increased from a curious source. In 214 B.C. the Censors drew up a list of all the men of military age in Rome (they proved to be over 2000 in number) who had had no official exemption from military service but who had not offered themselves for service since the beginning of the war. They were bundled out of Rome and sent to join the Soldiers of Cannae in Sicily under the same conditions. Not exactly an encouraging (or even welcome) set of newcomers! In 209 B.C. the number was increased by the addition of the survivors of a serious defeat suffered at Herdonea—many hundreds more dumped upon this human dust-heap.

What was the effect of this treatment on the minds of these men? That question is naturally put by any one who has thought at all (and which of us has not?) on the problem of our own disaffected citizens; for that is the name by which I should describe the Conscientious Objectors, though I do not wish by the word disaffected to imply any general and indiscriminate condemnation. Their minds may have been set—in some cases they certainly were set—on what they thought a higher allegiance than that towards the country which fed, clothed and defended them at the cost of the lives of their fellow-citizens;—but towards that country they were certainly disaffected; and we all know what a burden they were to the Government and to the rest of our community in the struggle in which we were engaged. The Roman treatment of this kind of people, stern as it was, shows none of the persecutor’s temper; they were protected from any outburst of popular anger; they were fed, and clothed, and sent away to what was then a distant region—no postal service ran then between Rome and Sicily—in a place where they could be put to useful work but in no position of danger, nor of trust which they could betray. Now what was the effect on the minds of these men? In the light of our own experience one of the most interesting passages in the whole of Livy is the speech which he puts into the mouth of a deputation.

1 25. 6. 17.
from this body of men to the Proconsul Marcellus when he was in charge of Sicily in the year 213 B.C. a year later than the arrival of the shirkers from Rome.

"We, against whom nothing can be objected at all, unless it be this, that we were the cause, that at least some citizens of Rome might be said to remain alive of all those that were at the battle of Cannae: we, I say, are sent far enough off, not only from our homes and from Italy, but also from all enemies, while we wax old in exile, to the end that we should have no hope or opportunity to cancel our disgrace, to mitigate the anger of our fellow-citizens, and finally to die with honour. But it is neither end of shame nor reward of valour, that we now crave: only that we might be permitted to make proof of our courage. Pains and perils we seek for, and to be employed in dangerous adventures, like men and soldiers. Two years already there hath been sharp and hot war in Sicily. . . . The shouts of them that fight, the very clattering and ringing of their armour we can hear where we are; and we sit still and idly do nothing, as if we had neither hands nor weapons to fight with. Will you yourself, O Marcellus, make trial of us, and of our valour, by sea, by land, in pitched field, or in making assault on walled towns? Put us to it, and spare not . . ."

With these words they fell downe prostrate at Marcellus' feet. Marcellus answered them that he had neither power of himself, nor instructions otherwise, to satisfy their request. Howbeit, write he would to the Senate; and according as the Senate should give direction, so he would do.

You see they did not venture to ask for payment or recall, or for any privilege but that of being allowed to fight. Their grievance was that the war was going on almost within their hearing, but they were never trusted with swords in their hands. What did the Senate reply?

That as concerning those soldiers, who had forsaken their fellows fighting before Cannae, the Senate saw no reason why they should be put in trust any more with the affairs of the Common-wealth; but if M. Claudius Marcellus the Proconsul thought it good otherwise, he might do according to that which he judged convenient, and to stand with his own credit and the safety of the State. Provided always, that not one of them be dispensed with, nor freed from service, nor rewarded with any military gift in token of valour: nor yet returned home again into Italy, so long as the enemy made abode there.

It seems that, from this time, they were occasionally employed on real military duty; but they were still maintained as a totally separate corps not mixed with the other armies in Sicily; and four years later, after
they had been joined by the run-a-ways from Herdonea; we find a renewal of severity towards a certain class, viz. the wealthier of them who served in the cavalry. The rest, however, enjoyed a more or less legitimised position; they were still kept separate from other troops, but were assigned year by year by the Senate as part of the forces entrusted to the officer in command of Sicily. This continued until 204 B.C. when the whole situation was changed by the arrival of Scipio. We have just seen how he had secured, after a struggle, the command of Sicily with permission to cross to Africa if he chose. But beyond the forces in Sicily no army had been given him for the purpose, and like another brilliant Italian commander of a later day, Garibaldi, Scipio had to rely for his great enterprise largely on the help of volunteers. Naturally he was not inclined to despise any trained forces that he could secure; and having received a favourable report from his predecessors of the way in which these patient men of Cannae had behaved in small operations in the last six years, he proclaimed that he would make no difference between the men of this group and the rest in choosing men for the great invasion of Africa. After carefully weeding out the physically unfit, he embodied the rest in his army, and they shared in the final victory of Zama. The Romans conquered even Hannibal in the field because they had first achieved a victory over the spirit of disaffection in the hearts of their own citizens. How far can we be sure that we did the same?

1 27. 11. 4.