

SCIENCE

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 1916

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UPBUILDING NATIONAL VITALITY— THE NEED FOR A SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATION¹

IF American democracy is to survive, it must be made more efficient—socially, industrially, politically. If Americans are to work out their national destiny unvexed and unhampered by foreign interference or domination, they must no longer endure the hazard of ungarded peace.

These conclusions—right or wrong—have been firmly fixed in the minds and hearts of a vast number of Americans.

For many months they have observed the great Christian nations of Europe rending one another with the ferocity of wild beasts—a savage, brutalizing struggle to destroy life and property, to increase human pain and suffering. The awful horror of it, the appalling cost of it in men, money and misery has passed beyond the grasp of the imagination.

Civilization's guarantees against such a man-made calamity have been dishonored, treaties torn up, the laws of common humanity and of God designedly outraged, and the rule of the sword substituted.

On one flank America has this extraordinary recrudescence of the spirit of national outlawry and conquest. On the other it has a rapidly advancing military power supported by an aggressive, warlike people with colonizing policies.

The possibility that American democracy may eventually be squeezed or crushed between these two great forces of militarism can no longer be ignored.

¹ Address of the chairman and retiring vice-president of Section I, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Columbus, December 29, 1915.