

# A M E R I C A

A · CATHOLIC · REVIEW · OF · THE · WEEK

December 22, 1945

**Is the Bomb a Deterrent?** The ghastly prospects of an atomic war have been adduced as reasons why the atomic age has placed war out of the question. It is unbelievable, many say, that any nation in its right senses would provoke a war. This contention is subjected to examination in a recent study issued by the Institute of International Studies of Yale University. In this memorandum on "The Atomic Bomb and American Security," the author, Dr. Bernard Brodie, examines the possible use that an aggressor might make of the threat of atomic war. "Hitler made a good many bloodless gains," recalls the author, "by mere blackmail, in which he relied heavily on the too obvious horror of modern war." The result of a similar strategy in the atomic age may be a series of *faits accomplis* eventuating in the same final deterioration of international affairs in which war, however terrible, can no longer be avoided. Fear and anxiety, continues the memorandum, will be a powerful but wholly unpredictable factor in world affairs. It may create a neurosis culminating in the urge for a "preventive" war. War has long been "impossible," it is pointed out. But the possession of great and powerful weapons is a temptation to an aggressor by reason of the quick and cheap victory which it promises. This carefully reasoned statement of the implications of the atomic bomb for American security is a warning against assuming too readily that fear of the atomic bomb will of itself deter nations from war.