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The triumph of Christian diplomacy

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THE TRIUMPH OF CHRISTIAN DIPLOMACY

BY

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LITERATURE.

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Jean de Bloch, The Future of War in its Technical Economic
and Political Relations.

Hugo Grotius, Law of War and Peace.

Review of Reviews, Nov.1899, Article by Mr.Holls:
Jan.1900, Editorial, p.4; Treaty pp 50-54.

North American Oct.1899, "In the Cl^othes of the Happy Powers"
Review, by Johnson; and "The Peace Conference and the
Moral Aspect of War" by Mahan.

Publications of the American Academy of Political and Social
Science No.45.

The Triumph of Christian Diplomacy.

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Jean de Bloch, a Russian banker of great influence, spent a number of years in a careful investigation of war methods and war budgets. The results of his labors were given to the world a few years ago in his now famous compendious treatise "The Future of War". This work in six large octavo volumes is looked upon as the most thorough discussion of the problem now extant. M. de Bloch has shown the effect of invention on the problem in the perfecting of the mechanisms of slaughter thus giving a greater destroying power both of life and property. He points out the difficulty, amounting almost to impossibility, of caring for the immense masses of men who must be mobilized for action in case of war between the great nations of Europe. And, lastly, he deals with the economic side of waging war on the mammoth scale made necessary by modern conditions. From these considerations he concludes that war has become such an extravagant mode of settling disputes that it is rendered well-nigh impossible. He traces the social convolutions of Europe to the armed peace, so-called, and urges wiser policies.

Soon after the work was published copies were sent to the Czar of Russia and other high officials. It might seem that such a course could accomplish nothing but Russia was passing through an intellectual awakening so that men could think soberly of the views set forth by M. de Bloch. Not many months elapsed before the Rescript of Nicholas II, calling the nations of the world to a great Peace Conference was issued. This call has been looked upon by some as an evidence of Russia's insincerity while others view it as a sign of the growing consciousness of responsibility felt by her young ruler. Whatever may have been the motive there can be no doubt that actual conditions called then and do now most imperatively call for some such action as was proposed.

Men learned long since that they could dwell together in civilized communities only as the individual was restrained from wreaking his vengeance on his enemies. The state therefore took upon itself the duty of punishing crime. Nations from the siege of Troy to our own day have been

waging war on each other with no restraining power such as exists for the individual. "Every change in condition or disposition", to quote de Bloch, "is affirmed only after the struggle of the elements. An analysis of the history of mankind shows that from the year 1496 B.C. to the year 1961 of our era, that is, in a cycle of 3857 years, there were but 227 years of peace and 3130 years of war, - in other words there were thirteen years of war for every year of peace. Considered thus the history of the lives of peoples presents a picture of uninterrupted struggle". The closing of the temple of Janus did not secure peace for the Romans, nor have the so-called Christian nations been able to eliminate wars to as great an extent as could have been hoped for.

All agree that war is terrible in its progress and in its after results. None but a blood-thirsty tyrant would fail to escape the evils attendant upon its prosecution, but how to avoid war has been a hard question. Nations learn slowly and that which is perfect has not yet come either for the individual or the state. Once it was considered quite the only thing for a gentleman whose "honor" had been impeached to meet his foe in personal combat that the insult might be avenged. The man of wealth once felt it his duty to dwell in a strong castle with soldiers and spies to guard him against his neighbors and secure for him the homage and respect due his station. The pistol and sword are no longer regarded as proper arbiters, while a man whose wealth gives him superior standing in the community can best secure his rights by a friendly attitude of helpfulness toward his fellow-men. Just as duelling has given way to a higher and better code of morals, just as feudal lordship has given place to industrial leadership, so it is felt a better means must eventually be found for adjusting the differences of nations.

It must not be inferred from what is here said that all wars have been baneful. Quite the opposite is true, - some of the most beneficent rights of man have been gained only by the arbitrament of arms. Some wars have been waged against the barbarities of uncivilized peoples and find their justification in the demands of the higher civilization. But "war for passion's sake is only animal ferocity. War for ambition's sake is the sum of all crimes". When there is need for the blow in Freedom's name, no lover of his race will hesitate to strike, but can it be hoped that high ideals

and pure love for humanity can do away the horrors of the battle-field in other wars? Is not the plan of peace only when the general good is at stake Utopian and will not selfishness and greed still dominate the wars of the future as they have done in the past?

With these and kindred questions filling their thought a hundred representations of the world's best civic thought assembled at the peaceful capital of Holland in the Spring of 1899. Committees were appointed to suggest methods and the Conference began its deliberations. The plan suggested by the Czar was that a general reduction of armaments throughout the world be effected. It soon became apparent that with such a purpose before it, the Conference could do practically nothing. No nation was willing to bind itself to such a policy and a latent feeling of distrust began to manifest itself. All realized the need of some plan that would give relief from the burden yet none knew how it was to be brought to pass. At this juncture a proposal was made that an international Tribunal be established to which all cases of misunderstanding might be referred. Thus it was hoped that a policy of mutual concession would be inaugurated whereby equity and justice could be secured.

The plan was carefully considered in all its bearings and as far as possible all conflicting interests harmonized. On the 29th of July 1899 the Treaty of the Hague received the sanction of the chosen representatives of twenty-five nations. The Treaty is very simple being devoid of the high-sounding phraseology of diplomacy, yet so full is it of promise that one writer declares it to be "the Magna Charta of the civilized world". There are many advantages to be derived from arbitration as here proposed, three of which at least must prove of incalculable benefit.

First of all the new method will result in a changed attitude towards preparation for war. In times of peace the nations need not maintain immense war establishments, as it seems now imperative that they should do. Disarmament is a chimera and will not soon be a reality. Instead there will be a reduction of European land and naval forces to a normal basis and a larger dependence put on the volunteer and citizen soldier as is now the case in the United States. The value of this class of soldier has been repeatedly shown in our history and must prove effectual in the old world as well. Multitudes now withdrawn from the ranks of productive wage-

earners and useful artisans, will lay aside the weapons of war to take up the implements of peace. As a result there will follow an era of great commercial enterprise giving prosperity to all and especially benefitting the common people. The peasantry of Europe is in a deplorable condition due in large measure to the enormous waste entailed by expenditures of national resources. These sums will flow in the peaceful channels of commerce and will gladden the hearts of the needy and oppressed.

A second result of such a course as that proposed will be an improved national morality. When a proper estimate will be placed on justice in their dealings with each other nations will not be compelled to keep its soldiers huddled into inadequate quarters; and the military camps, which are too frequently moral pest-houses, will no longer be a menace to society. Then, too, the new diplomacy will abolish pillage and slaughter and thus result favorably to morality. Plundering will be looked upon as a remnant of a by-gone age, an age of savagery when the idea of worth either in property or life was imperfectly developed. The treatment of prisoners of war and the care of the dead and wounded will be such as to make human life more sacred. Already the Red Cross work has done much to produce a revolution along that line and the coming measures will intensify the results.

A third of the benefits to be derived from international arbitration on the scale proposed will be the larger scope given friendly relations. As now observed the laws of warfare demand absolute neutrality. Now since wars are not to be done away entirely but only reduced to a basis of absolute necessity, it will be possible for a friendly power to offer its good offices in cases of national misunderstandings without being charged with meddling. Since arbitration is designed to alleviate the horrors of war, it will be to the interests of the nations engaged in strife to accept these good offices and find peace on an honorable basis. Thus the sword, drawn in anger, wielded in hasty madness, all gory with fraternal slaughter will be sheathed; while the pen of the ruler by confirming the peaceful award of the arbiter will prove the mightier weapon of the two.

To the objection that this Utopian dream can never be realized let a few facts be submitted. The progress of thought is necessarily slow and often seems to forbid the final triumph of ideals. Yet when a proper perspective is

gained the rate at which the highest ends of life are being realized can be seen. The United States has been foremost in its advocacy of high national honor. When, at the close of the Civil War it seemed inevitable that war with England must follow the depredations of English built vessels, our government wisely took the alternative and proposed to England that they should submit the Alabama Claims to arbitration. As a consequence the United States was able to secure redress for the wrongs of her sister nation and bloodshed was averted. Again was this appeal to the forum of reason rather than to the arena of force of great value when a decade ago a dispute arose as to the boundry of Venezuela. Both Venezuela and England accepted the offer of our government to bring the matters under discussion before a court of arbitration. This was done and despite the disparity of the opposing nations the decision brought about a more peaceable adjustment than many had looked for. More recently over the troubles of the Venezuelan debts, by a firm insistence on arbitration the United States has secured more prestige as a peace former. In many other cases where war has seemed inevitable, the resort to peaceful and deliberate consideration has been effectual.

"The great danger," says Capt. Mahan, one of the American delegates to the Hague Conference, "of indiscriminating advocacy of Arbitration, which threatens even the cause it seeks to maintain, is that it may lead men to tamper with equity, to compromise with unreighteousness, soothing their consciences with the belief that war is so entirely wrong that beside it no other tolerated evil is wrong. Witness Armenia! and witness Crete! War has been avoided but what of the national conscience that beheld such iniquity and withheld the hand?" So it is that while placing herself unqualifiedly on the side of peace the United States could not stand by and witness the atrocities of Spain in Cuba. Nothing but the crushing defeat of Spain, nothing save the humiliation in the eyes of the whole world, could atone for the sins of that nation which had persistently shown its inefficiency in colonization and government of foreign territory. Spain, a medieval nation vaunting itself in an age of enlightenment clad in garment still stained with blood of innocent men and women during the days of the Inquisition, has been justly deprived of its part in shaping the destiny of subject peoples.

It remains to be seen whether with our newly-acquired laurels and the new responsibilities thrust upon us by the Spanish-American war, we as a nation will remain true to the noblest ideals and go forward in the march of the world's newest thought. The proposal or establishment of a court of last appeal, the holding of Peace Conferences every year and all other formal attempts at harmony will not bring in the Millennium. As Seth Low puts the case, "the Conference has provided a motor the force of which is public opinion, and this force may safely be trusted both to start and keep in motion the machinery provided by the Conference, not perhaps without an occasional break-down, but in the end smoothly and efficiently".

If it be objected that such a court could exercise no jurisdiction it may be answered that a parallel is to be found in our own Supreme Court. Its mandates go unchallenged from the Penobscot to the Bay of Manila; from the tropical shores of Porto Rico to the glacial coasts of Alaska; controlling men of all nationalities and creeds. Only at rare intervals when popular frenzy robs the people of good sense, as at Chicago during the rail-road riots of a few years ago, is resistance offered. Even then a nominal force of soldiers clad in the insignia of the General Government is able to set in motion the wheels of commerce and restore order and tranquility. In all other cases the mere publication of the decision of the court by the executive power is all-sufficient to insure obedience. What is true of people as diverse as those of New York and Texas, those of Ohio and South Carolina will equally prove true of the Anglo-Saxon and the Slav, when they shall be brought to see in such a court as proposed, a certain deliverance from the crime of wholesale homicide under color of wiping out an insult to "national honor". Even Germans and Frenchmen will no longer offer on the altar of strategy their best blood, for a strip of land no larger than Alsace-Lorraine when by arbitration the rights of both peoples can be secured and all alleged grievances settled with honor and dignity unimpaired.

The beam of light is not yet such as marks the noon-day of universal peace and brotherhood. Rather it is rainbow of promise of that coming time when nations shall no longer teach their young men to war and their maidens be

caused thereby to weep; when no longer the thunders of war shall reverberate amid the crowded hospital and desolate homes; and when the empty sleeve, the vacant chair and the heart cries of widows and orphans shall no more testify of "man's inhumanity to man". Then the words of the Man of Nazareth will be the guiding principle of the nations; and the whole earth shall resound with the chorus which angels sang o'er the star-lit fields where shepherds watched their flock by night.