INTERNATIONAL CONCILIATION

TO THE AMERICAN STUDENT
AN OPEN LETTER

BY

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MARCH, 1914

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New York City

TO THE AMERICAN STUDENT.

What is the American student going to do with American civilization and what part does he intend that it shall play on the world's stage?

For, if American civilization is not to be in his hands, his education has little meaning. Civilization is a matter of ideas. The character of any society—whether that of a cannibal island or Catholic nunnery—is determined by the ideas of the units which compose it. The Indians who inhabited this country five hundred or five thousand years ago were, in point of physical strength, emotional vigour, bravery, readiness to fight certainly the equal of ourselves; they were dealing with the same soil and raw materials of nature. The factors which make our society somewhat different from theirs are intellectual and moral.

The work of the American student stands for the perpetuation and development of these intellectual and moral factors—if his work touches the heart of things at all. If you say that your education does *not* bear upon the things which account for the difference between ourselves and palaeolithic man, upon the perceptions which make that difference possible and are, let us hope, destined to widen it; if the kind of ideas now being absorbed in American universities is not the kind of ideas which have any influence upon American society and determine its character—then obviously your education is not bearing upon

the vital realities. It means either that its teachings are not concerned with the perceptions upon which civilization rests, (in the development of which of course the exact and physical sciences are as important an element as, or a more important one than, the moral and social sciences, philosophy and speculation properly speaking) or that it has not included the problem of keeping that structure upon its proper foundations—the problem of applying the result of your work to real ends in your society.

Now no American whose life, like that of the present writer, happens to have been passed in large part abroad, can fail to have some dim realization of the fact that the generation now upon us in America might play a dominant role in achieving for American society, and consequently for human society as a whole, one of those intellectual transformations which are at the base of all real social development. Such a transformation, for instance, was that conception of toleration which gave western mankind a certain measure of religious and political freedom; or, the establishment of that inductive reasoning as a method of testing truth which alone made possible our modern science and the conquest of nature which it accomplishes.

Not that it is necessarily America's mission to save the world. The first duty of every country is to her own people, and perhaps America has her work cut out in settling her own destiny, in liberating American civilization from the grosser evils which the older communities have bequeathed to her.

But in the accomplishment of this latter task, in the creation on the Western Hemisphere of a better human

society than has yet been evolved, she must in the nature of things also achieve the former. To the degree to which America succeeds for herself she must by virtue of her special position be the teacher of mankind as a whole.

So far, unhappily, America has taken over without fundamental correction those basic conceptions of the methods of human association which have shaped and colored and which explain the character of older European society; and so long as the intellectual foundations are the same, built upon the same mechanism, guided by the same principles, the structure is pretty certain to possess the same deep-seated defects; of more imposing appearance perhaps, with the paint a bit fresher, but with all the dangers none the less real and none the less failing to fulfil the needs and aspirations of its builders.

Now if at this point you hurry on to see what this open letter really is about and conclude that it deals with the problem of war and international peace, you will wonder why I have indulged in this portentous introduction which you may deem to have little relevance to that problem.

Well, as a matter of fact, this letter deals only incidentally with war, for that is only one of the effects which flow from a cause creating a far wider range of evils than those which we generally associate with it. You will probably agree readily enough that the diversion of national wealth, energy and attention which goes to war and its preparation among all the peoples of the world pushes into the background a whole series of deep and pressing political, social and industrial problems; and involves a treatment of them

which is much more summary, superficial and defective than it would be if the emphasis of national effort were given to them instead of elsewhere. That much is obvious. But it would probably strike you as fanciful and far-fetched—the sort of over-statement that we generally look for from "the one-idea Reformer"—to say that the misconceptions which create war and which we shall dispel most effectively by grappling efficiently with that one definite problem, are precisely the misconceptions which need correction before we can deal efficiently with most of the social and industrial problems that confront us. It will almost certainly strike you as just such an over-statement as I have described to say that the direction in which our governments develop, the nature of their working, the method of their administration, the treatment of such problems as political privilege, economic monopoly, Free Trade and Protection, trade unionism, Syndicalism and Socialism, rival methods of achieving needed social reforms, will all depend mainly on the extent to which we come to understand, or fail to understand, certain principles concerning the mechanism of human society; and that whether we achieve that understanding or not will depend mainly upon the question of whether we succeed in dealing with the problem of war.

And yet such a statement is the quite simple truth, in keeping incidentally with the method by which mankind achieves most of its advance. That method is generally this: in solving special problems general principles which solve larger general problems are thereby uncovered.

The object of the Egyptians in measuring land and

time was to define property and to observe festivals: that of the Chaldeans in studying the stars to find data for soothsaying, but the results went immeasureable beyond the object of the Egyptians and were quite destructive of the objects of the Chaldeans. These results established the foundations of an organized knowledge by which man brings the world into subjection to himself. They formed the beginnings not merely of the classified details of mathematical and astronomical science which furnished man with the chief instrument for the conquest of nature, but they also made possible that conception of ordered law in external Nature which alone enabled him to use effectively his instrument and to direct his fight with her. All real students know of course that any fundamental misconception touching any one large human issue involves misconception in all to lesser or greater degree. Yet all fundamental corrections, all new interpretations, have had to struggle against the view either that their recognition is practically unimportant, or that it may lead to the undermining of same large body of general doctrine, the retention of which is deemed of great practical importance. Probably all that the contemporaries of Galileo could see in his theory was that it tended to discredit an ancient and venerable faith for a perfectly futile thing, the demonstration that the position or the movements of the world on which we live were not what they had been thought to be. "As though our opinion concerning it could alter the thing one way or another" we can imagine the "practical" man of his time declaring. And nearly 500 years later, when Darwin gave another new interpretation of facts, the

real attitude both of the academic world and the practical man was very similar. It was felt that to leave undisturbed the ancient doctrines concerned so deeply with the daily life and conduct of men, and upon which mankind had learned to lean for guidance, was infinitely more important than the discussion of a merely zoological or even biological truth which had no direct bearing upon life and conduct.

Yet we now realize that in these cases, as in numberless similar ones that have come between, the popular assumptions I have indicated were wrong. The full recognition of the new truths did not involve the collapse of the general body of the old doctrine—it left all that was of real value therein undisturbed; and it did have very great, incalculable, practical value. Just imagine the general opinion of Galileo's times having been triumphant, the new heresy successfully extirpated, and the geocentric hypothesis imposed as a dogma not to be questioned, with all that told against it suppressed. It is certainly not too much to say that such success of the popular and orthodox view would have made impossible the modern world as we know it, reposing as it does upon a basis of organised knowledge, with huge populations dependent for their very daily food upon the use of such organised knowledge in the exploitation of the universe. So with Darwin's work. It would be a very ignorant person indeed to-day who would dismiss it with the gibe so common a generation since, about men and monkeys and our grandfathers' tails. We know that the hypothesis has profoundly affected our conceptions in an immense area of human knowledge, and by so doing has affected human society and conduct in very many fields.

Now, this attitude, which academic authority and popular opinion have almost invariably assumed towards the correction of error during such long periods in Europe, is precisely the attitude now adopted towards attempts to correct certain errors in prevailing political and economic ideas.

Because the discussion of those ideas has been associated in the past mainly with the effort to secure international peace, the "man of the day," as someone has called him (or the "man of yesterday," as I should prefer to call him), can only think of the discussion as concerned at best with an effort to avoid fighting. Or it means to him mainly the advocacy of an abstract ideal which disregards practical difficulties like those now confronting us in Mexico and which conceivably at least could only find solution through force, some form of war; and at worst he thinks of it as the promulgation of a doctrine based on a readiness to take risks in the matter of our country's safety and interest in order to avoid sacrifices, which, however sad because involving suffering to innocent parties, are made readily enough in the field of industry and commerce. This "man of the day" is apt to feel that a policy the prompting motive of which is the avoidance of suffering, and which, to attain that end, will throw discredit upon instincts of patriotism that are sacred and precious even above human life, cannot make any very deep appeal, especially when we remember that more lives are sacrificed to industry than to war. No one suggests that we should not bridge continents with railroads and seas with ships, because in so doing we sacrifice lives with a certainty as great as though we con-

demned, by our deliberate act, thousands of men to be crushed to death or drowned or burnt alive.

I think it is quite fair to say this: that to the "man of yesterday" "Peace" advocacy appears as made up in part by a recoil from the sacrifice of life, which, however, is infinitely less than that which he sees going on around him every day in the interests merely of material wealth—a sacrifice which in that case excites no protest; and in part by disparagement of such things as national safety and honour, or of the fulfillment by our country of a great role as a civilizer (in less orderly areas of this hemisphere for instance) which he regards as of infinitely greater worth than the industries and commerce which take a heavier toll of life than does war. And consequently, looking at what would be achieved by the change and what is jeopardized by it, he opposes to all ideas which seem even remotely to be concerned with schemes of international peace either a ferocious hostility which he feels ought to be excited by all doctrines that imply indifference to his country's safety and interests, or a tolerant contempt which he would mete out to all sentimental or academic futility, just as 500 years ago he dismissed the "theories" of Galileo with some reference to everybody standing on their heads, and fifty years ago the theories of Darwin by some reference to monkeys and their tails.

May I say that, if the case for Pacifism were what I have just indicated, if really its object were merely the avoidance of suffering, to be obtained at the price of national jeopardy, his attitude would be entirely justified; and I hope you will not think me callous if I say that, did Pacifism offer nothing more than the mere

avoidance of that physical suffering which war involves, I should not be troubling you now. Because the word "peace" generally connotes this narrow objective, and leaves aside altogether what is really implied in our attempt to correct what we believe to be very deep-seated errors in human relationship, I almost wish that that word could never be used. Just as Galileo knew that the real justification of his attempt to correct prevailing error was not a trivial point as to the exact place or shape of the planet on which we live, but the right understanding of the physical universe, its laws and nature, so do we know that our case is bound up with the destruction of misconceptions which distort and falsify the fundamental principles on which human society is based and incidentally render insoluable those problems on behalf of the solution of which force is generally most readily invoked.

What I have to urge upon your attention, therefore, is not the desirability of "Peace" in the sense of the cessation of conflict, still less of a cosmopolitanism which asks that you shall, in obedience to some abstract ideal of instinctive or intuitive origin, sacrifice national preferences and characteristics, or, even prejudice; or surrender any useful task which your nation might perform in the world. Indeed I am not urging any cut-and-dried political doctrine or dogma at all. What I want to urge is the open-minded consideration of certain facts and forces, the significance or which is for the most part ignored, although they must profoundly affect principles of action between men that cover the whole field of human society, affect to some extent the form and character of all our social structure; which have a very practical bearing upon prevailing concep-

tions in morals, legislation, jurisprudence, political science generally, economics, law, and the interpretation of history.

II.

Now I think you will admit that in the domain of social adjustment, of human relationship, we sadly need such enlightening principle.

For this certainly will have occurred to you: that while we have successfully established general laws in the field of mechanics which have given us to a marvellous degree the material conquest of nature, while the laws of the physical world are being revealed to us in increasing measure, there is no corresponding development of understanding in the field of human relationship, in our conception of human right and obligation, the laws of the social world, the nature of the social organism, the mechanism of human society. In all that we are hardly more advanced than the Greeks and the Romans, or for that matter the Egyptians and the Chaldeans. We have covered the earth with a marvellous mechanism which will carry our thought and understanding to the uttermost corners; with the invisible waves of wireless telegraphy, with post-offices, railroads, hotels de luxe, and cinematograph shows, but we cannot cover it with a system of law. We can analyze all human food and we know most of the mysteries of its growth and composition but we cannot so distribute human food as to give every child a cup of milk. We can blow a town to pieces with a handful of dust but we cannot destroy the monstrous pile of misery

which every great city connotes. Wherever, leaving material things it touches human relations, the things of the mind, our management fails.

Our advance during the last century in the material conquest of nature has been blinding in its rapidity, but can any man say that in the understanding of the laws of human relationship we are much beyond the Romans from whom we still take our jurisprudence or the Greeks from whom we still take our philosophy? In the mechanical reproduction of the written word, for instance, in the mechanism of our modern newspaper, we have material instruments that would have seemed to Socrates and to Aristotle achievements of the gods themselves. But the mind revealed in these papers of such mechanical marvellousness, by the ideas which find expression in them,—well, it would be rather cruel to push the comparison. But make for yourselves, with some detachment, the comparison of the public discussions of Paris, Berlin, London, or New York with the general public discussions of the Greek capital 2,000 years ago. Would it be very unjust to say that the understanding of the essential of human intercourse revealed by the men capable of these modern mechanical wonders (which would have seemed miraculous to the ancient world) is not very much better than that of the desert tribesmen who gave us our proverbs and our psalms, and whose mechanical conquest of nature was hardly more advanced than that of the men to whom the manufacture of a stone axe represented the highest achievement of human engineering?

Now, what you would deem, I do not doubt, my somewhat tiresome insistence upon this comparison is

prompted by this fact. All our advance on the material side threatens to be of no avail in the really vital and fundamental things that touch mankind because our understanding of the nature of human association has not kept pace with our understanding of matter and its control. Of what avail is our immense increase in wealth production if we do not know how to distribute it in the order of our most vital needs—if the total net result of our discovery and achievements is to give still more to those who have already too much and to render the under world still more dependent, their lives still more precarious? What should we say, asks Shaw, of the starving man who on being given a dollar forthwith spends it all on a bottle of scent for his handkerchief? Yet that is what the modern world does, and it is, we are told, incapable of doing anything else, so intellectually bankrupt are we to assume it. So immense is the failure on this side that responsible students of the comparative condition of men seriously question whether the mass in our society are in essentials either morally or materially better off than those of the thirteenth century.

Evidence enough remains, as one good historian points out, to show that there was in ancient Rome as in London or New York today, a preponderating mass of those who loved their children and their homes, who were good neighbors and faithful friends, who conscientiously discharged their civil duties. Even the Eastern Roman Empire, that not many years ago was usually dismissed with sharp contempt, is now recovered to history, and many centuries in its fluctuating phases are shown to have been epochs of an established state, with well devised laws well ad-

ministered, with commerce prosperously managed and social order conveniently worked and maintained.

And you know, of course, the sad doubt of Mill:

"It is questionable if all the mechanical inventions yet made have lightened the day's toil of any human being. They have enabled a greater population to live the same life of drudgery and imprisonment, and an increased number to make fortunes. But they have not yet begun to effect those great changes in human destiny which it is in their nature and in their futurity to accomplish."

So that unless we can make some equivalent advance in the understanding of the laws and principles of human association, in the management of society, all our advance on the material side, the management of matter, may go for nothing, or conceivably even, worse than nothing.

It is conceivable, for instance, as an ingenious novelist has suggested, that our researches in radioactivity might give us the secret of atomic disintegration so as to make a cent's worth of rock equivalent in value as a source of energy to a train load of coal—to multiply the wealth of the world a thousand times and the result of it to be merely more poverty of the many, and luxury and dangerous power on the part of the few.

The great need, therefore, is an understanding of the nature and mechanism of human association, a realization of its more fundamental laws, for I hope that you do not take the ground that the present defects of society are the result of a "plot" on the part of a powerful few and that if their rule be broken a new earth would come into being next Tuesday morning. It has doubtless sometimes occurred to you to ask "What

would happen if the reins of government were seized by a group of very radical and advanced Socialists or Syndicalists, or other social reformers?" Well, nothing at all would happen; things would go on very much as usual. It has occurred more than once in Europe that wild revolutionaries have achieved power —and they generally end by accomplishing less than their more conservative colleagues—and becoming more reactionary.

They are obliged to realize that society, because it is an organism, cannot stop breathing while experiments are made with its internal mechanism. The mere possession of power does not give you control either over a complex machine or a complex organism. If the mechanism of your motor car works imperfectly it serves no purpose that you have a crow-bar which will smash the whole thing to pieces. You must "know how" or you are helpless since the power of destruction serves no purpose at all.

And the revolutionaries who have from time to time "arrived" have not "known how." For the social organism is even more complex than a motor car, and its general control is in the hands not of experts but of all of us.

Can we ever hope that "the general mind" will rise to effective knowledge fitting men for the control of their own social destiny? In these complex matters where the experts differ what hope is there that the mass will ever achieve sufficient capacity to enable social progress to equal the advances made in those material sciences which are in the hands of experts?

Many would answer that question in the negative although a negative answer involves a paralysing pessi-

mism which one is glad to think is no part of the American genius.

And I do not think that a negative answer need be given.

In the sixteenth century Montaigne, who did not believe in witchcraft and saw the evil that it brought, wrote to this effect: "The day will never come when the common ruck of men will cease to believe in witchcraft." If lawyers and judges, men trained to sift evidence and learned in science, can be so far deceived as to send thousands of victims to their deaths for impossible crimes, how can we ever hope that the common man will avoid these errors?"

Yet, ask a ten-year-old boy of our time whether he thinks it likely that an old woman would or could change herself into a cow or a goat, and he will almost always promptly reply: "Certainly not." (I have put this many times to the test of experiment). What enables the unlearned boy to decide right where the learned judge decided wrong? You say it is the "instinct" of the boy. But the instinct of the seventeenth century boy (like the learning of the seventeenth century judge) taught him the exact reverse. Something has happened, what is it?

We know, of course, that it is the unconscious application on the part of the boy, of the inductive method of reasoning (of which he has never heard, and could not define), and the general attitude of mind towards phenomena which comes of that habit. He forms by reasoning correctly (on the prompting of parents, nurses and teachers) about a few simple facts—which impress him by their visibility and tangibility—a working hypothesis of how things happen in the world,

which, while not infallibly applied—while, indeed, often landing the boy into mistakes—is far more trustworthy as a rule than that formed by the learned judge reasoning incorrectly from an immense number of facts.

Such is the simple basis of this very amazing miracle —the great fact which is at the bottom of the main difference between the modern and mediaeval world, between the Western and Eastern civilizations.

It has two outstanding lessons for us: it shows the incalculable service that the correction of a fundamental misconception or wrong principle may achieve; and it shows that such correction of general principle may be the unintended but inevitable by-product of the correction of error in some special case.

For the revival of the inductive method and all that it has involved was in large part the unintended result of the religious reformation. And it has had these immense results because, like the views which I am now urging, it was a readjustment of ideas concerning the place of force in certain activities of life.

III.

Elsewhere * I happen to have made the following parallel:

> The world of religious wars and of the Inquisition was a world which had a quite definite conception of the relation of authority to religious belief and to truth—as that authority was the source of truth; that truth could be, and should be, protected by force; that Catholics who did not resent an insult offered to their faith (like the failure of a Huguenot to salute a passing religious procession) were renegade.

* "Arms and Industry." Putnam's, New York.

Now what broke down this conception was a growing realization that authority, force, was irrelevant to the issues of truth (a party of heretics triumphed by virtue of some physical accident, as that they occupied a mountain region); that it was ineffective, and that the essence of truth was something outside the scope of physical conflict. As the realization of this grew, the conflicts declined.

So with those conflicts between the political groups which we call war. They arise from a corresponding conception of the relation of military authority to political ends—those ends for which governments are founded—the protection of life and property, the promoting of well-being. When it is mutually realized by the parties concerned that security of life and property, like the security of truth, is not derived from military force; that military force is as ineffective, as irrelevant, to the end of promoting prosperity as of promoting truth, then political wars will cease, as religious wars have ceased, for the same reason and in the same way.

Now I want you to note this: What the pioneers of the religious reformation really hoped to accomplish was to impose some definite detail of dogma as against some other detail of dogma and to use power in every form for that purpose. The last thing which any party to the Reformation desired was general toleration and free examination of all dogma; but that was the result of their work—the recognition that power and authority is irrelevant to the issues of truth, which survives best where power and authority are not invoked.

Now, the discussions of the Reformation gave as their result a new conception of the relation of force to truth, utterly destroying the old conception of that relation. That accomplished two things: First, it put a practical end to the wars of religion and to religious persecution,—one of the few real developments of human relationship which it is possible to mark as a definite advance and one of the really great

changes in history. Second, by virtue of a truer perception of the relation of authority to truth, it led to what was in reality a new method of dealing with facts and phenomena in all fields; it set up a new mode of reasoning, the inductive method, which gave European thought a new guide or compass so that it was able to find its way in a jungle of facts which had heretofore baffled it. And it is from the general revival of the induction method that dates those conquests of science which gave us the modern world as we know it.

Now just as that new conception of the relation of force to truth which underlay the cessation of wars for religious ends had this important secondary result in facilitating our comprehension of the facts of external nature, so we may hope that that better perception of the relation of military force in nations to the ends of wellbeing and prosperity, which is destined to bring international war to an end, may have an equally important secondary result in revealing certain basic truths of all human relationship and furnish for social action some general principle or guide that may be as fruitful in the domain of social adjustments as the inductive method of reasoning has proved to be in the domain of intellectual adjustments.

IV.

What is the problem of War? Why do the nations give their first care to the preparations for it? To defend themselves! But that means that some one believes in attack; otherwise, if no one believed in the advantage and effectiveness of successful attack, none

of us would be threatened and the whole problem would be solved.

At the bottom of the problem of war, of the need for preparing for it, of defence, is the belief in the effectiveness of force as a means of achieving the ends, moral and material, for which men strive; the belief that in certain cases it is the only means or the best means of achieving them. If we are really threatened by Japan or have been in the past by England or Germany, it is because those countries belive or believed that by war upon us they could satisfy certain material or moral needs, or promote certain national interests, or vindicate certain rights. If we desire to intervene in the Mexican embroglio, it is because we believe that the interest of civilization could most

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* The following, which is from an article in the current "National Review" (London) is indicative of accepted thought on these problems:

Germany *must* expand. Every year an extra million babies are crying out for more room, and as the expansion of Germany by peaceful means seems impossible Germany can only provide for those babies at the cost of potential foes, and France is one of them.

A vanquished France might give Germany all she wants. The immense colonial possessions of France present a tantalizing and provoking temptation to German cupidity, which, it cannot be too often repeated, is not mere envious greed but stern necessity. The same struggle for life and space which more than a thousand years ago drove one Teutonic wave after another across the Rhine and the Alps is now once more a great compelling force. Colonies fit to receive the German surplus population are the greatest need of Germany. This aspect of the case may be all very sad and wicked, but it is true. * * * Herein lies the temptation and the danger. Herein, too, lies the ceaseless and ruinous struggle of armaments, and herein for France lies the dire necessity of linking her foreign policy with that of powerful allies.

promptly and effectively be promoted by the employment of our force.

And of course if we admit that force is effective to promote vital needs, as well as the right, even arbitration does not solve the question since no court can ask one litigant to commit suicide in favour of the other. If the accepted view of the necessary economic and industrial rivalry of nations is just, we are faced by a condition in which one nation must either see its children of the future starve or suffer; or must obtain from other nations concessions to grant which they regard as equally disastrous to *their* children of the future. We are faced that is by what the Greek author 2000 years since declared to be the great tragedy of human life—the conflict of two rights.

So I say we can lay down as a premise upon which we are all agreed that the problem of war is the problem of the effectiveness of force to promote the ends which we desire and which we believe we are entitled to promote, ends which are right.

But the question of the effectiveness of force, of the place of force in human relations, is obviously one of the fundamental questions at the base of all problems connected with the organization of human society. Law is simply a question of determining in what conditions the force of the state shall be exercised, conditions which we define by our Magna Charta, *habeas corpus* and the rest of it. The development of popular government from what the political schoolmen call "status to contract" is but the story of the modification of the conditions in which force is used, as is indeed all those problems which grow out of the relation of the citizen to the government, that is to society.

The same problem of the place of force is the problem of private property, a question of the conditions in which the force of the community shall be invoked by the individual for determining the respective position of the two parties. Allied with that is the problem of State Socialism, the use of the force of the state for determining the conditions of the distribution of wealth. Protectionism is the use of the force of the state for controlling the current of trade. It is, of course, more obvious that such questions as revolutionary syndicalism, "direct action," dynamitard Trade Unionism are just problems of the effectiveness of force and the right to use it in social and industrial adjustments. Problems of jurisprudence and criminology, like the effect of penal laws, are equally questions of the effectiveness of force in a somewhat different sphere.

Indeed, as we have seen, the question of the place of force, of authority, was at the bottom of one of the greatest of all the acts in our human drama, that correction of perception, that development of what Lecky calls human realizations, which is neither the Rennaissance nor the Reformation, but is nevertheless a quite definite dividing line. On one side of that line you have the Europe of religious wars and the Inquisition and the massacres of St. Bartholomew, and on the other side a certain measure of security in our spiritual and intellectual possessions, and the liberations which give us the modern world. That movement or change was in reality nothing but a readjustment of our conception of the place of force in one group of affairs—the religious affairs.

I have attempted to show just how and why current

conceptions as to the relation of military force in nations to the promotion of their well being are in large part fundamentally false (1) and in what manner a readjustment of those conceptions may lead to clearer vision as to social processes in all fields (2). It is not mainly the more visible evils of war and armaments which give the greatest value to the study of the accepted theories of international polity, but the fact that the fundamental misunderstanding of any large human issue involves the misunderstanding in some degree of all human relations. The continued justification of the military form of international society has involved perpetuating a political philosophy which misrepresents the basic principles of human association and co-operation, a distortion which has widespread moral results as affecting not merely the form of our social structures within the nation, but our relative valuation of the qualities of human character; and large material results in diminishing the effectiveness of that exploitation of the earth by which we live.

If what I am urging with reference to international politics is broadly true, then in much of our general political action, not merely with reference to one group in its relation to another group, but also to a large extent with reference to the relations of men individually to other men, we have misunderstood some of the fundamental principles which must govern their life in communities in order to insure the best conditions for them: misunderstanding the mechanism of human

(1) "The Great Illusion," Putnam's, N. Y.

(2) "Arms and Industry," Putnam's, N. Y.

society, misreading the means by which we wring our substance from the earth, failing to seize the arrangement most advantageous for the purpose of carrying on our war with nature.

It is not a question for the moment where the conclusions upon which the study I have in mind may point—though I want you to believe that no political, religious, national, or sentimental prepossessions of any kind have weighed in my own case, and that I would as readily have drawn, if the facts had pointed thereto, exactly contrary conclusions, and by no means have been frightened therefrom by the rattle of the sabre—but, if you are concerned at all with the large issues I have indicated, I do not think you can afford to ignore the bearing of the forces in question.

Nor should you conclude from the illustrations that I have just employed, and the emphasis I have laid on the importance of the indirect effects of the principles I want you to investigate, that their direct effect is insignificant. However much we may be divided in other aspects of the problem of war and national defense, we are all accustomed to say, whether we believe it or not, that those problems are both morally and materially the most important of our generation. And yet we find that in this problem we are not facing facts; that we proceed habitually upon assumptions which analysis does not support, that we are ignoring changes which have taken place, and basing our action daily upon conceptions which have become obsolete, upon unrealities, sometimes upon shams.

And will you note this: that though you may not draw the conclusions which I draw, though you regard

war an inevitable element in human affairs, the fact upon which I base them concern any policy, any principle of international action, which you may favor, concern indeed all social organization, national as much as international.

An English writer, a very able advocate of the militarist school—the school whose assumptions I am challenging—lays down this rule.

A prudent statesman, before letting himself be drawn into a quarrel with another State, will take pains to reach a true estimate of the importance of the point in dispute, both to his own State and to the antagonist; for in proportion as a community finds its being and its well-being bound up with a particular purpose, the more intense and persistent will be its exertions for the assertion of that purpose. If, then, I commit my people to a war for something that turns out to be a mere whim, they will sooner or later grow tired of the struggle; and if the conditions on which I propose to insist involve the ruin of the State opposed to me, the people of that State will only grow more determined and more desperate as the struggle proceeds. This disparity of motive for exertion may go far to compensate for almost any degree of inequality between the real strength of the two opponents.

The beginning of war, then, is the purpose in view. From a purpose which is plain you may get a well-conducted war; from a purpose about which you are not clear you never can. Unless you know what you want, you cannot possibly tell whether war is the appropriate way of getting it; therefore, in that case, the decision to go to war is foolish. Moreover, unless you know what you want you can hardly manage your war properly—that is, so as to get what you want. The starting-point of a good war is, therefore, a purpose necessary to your State and clearly understood by your statesmen. Thus, the foundation of success in war is sound policy, without which the greatest generals and the finest armies come to ruin."[1]

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[1] "War and Policy," by Prof. Spencer Wilkinson, page 394 (Constable, London).

Whatever final conclusion therefore we may draw, the facts are worth more study than, for the most part, they get. To deprecate such study is to argue that, in the most difficult problems of our civilization, ignorance and projudice are better guides than knowledge and wisdom.

It is for these reasons that I urge upon you the third of those problems of the place of force in that group of affairs which we have designated "International Polity."

Appendix A.

The general position with reference to current conceptions in international politics referred to in the preceding letter may be indicated by the following synopsis of a work in which I have attempted to deal with the main lines of the problem:

WHAT are the fundamental motives that explain the present rivalry of armaments? Each nation pleads the need for defence; but this implies that someone is likely to attack, and has therefore a presumed interest in so doing. What are the motives which each State thus fears its neighbours may obey?

They are based on the universal assumption that a nation, in order to find outlets for expanding population and increasing industry, or simply to ensure the best conditions possible for its people, is necessarily pushed to territorial expansion and the exercise of political force against others (German naval competition is assumed to be the expression of the growing need of an expanding population for a larger place in the world, a need which will find a realization in the conquest of English colonies or trade, unless these were defended; it is assumed, therefore, that a nation's relative prosperity is broadly determined by its political power; that nations being competing units, advantage, in the last resort, goes to the possessor of preponderant military force, the weaker going to the wall, as in the other forms of the struggle for life.

The author challenges this whole doctrine. He attempts to show that it belongs to a stage of development out of which we have passed; that the commerce and industry of a people no longer depends upon the expansion of its political frontiers; that a nation's political and economic frontiers do not now necessarily coincide; that military power is socially and economically futile, and can have no relation to the prosperity of the people exercising it; that it is impossible for one nation to seize by force the wealth or trade of another—to enrich itself by subjugating, or imposing its will by force on, another; that, in short, war, even when victorious, can no longer achieve those aims for which people strive.

He establishes this apparent paradox, in so far as the economic problem is concerned, by showing that wealth in the economically civilized world is founded upon credit and commercial contract (these being the outgrowth of an economic interdependence due to the increasing division of labour and greatly developed communication). If credit and commercial contract are tampered with in an attempt of confiscation, the credit-dependent wealth is undermined, and its collapse involves that of the conqueror; so that if conquest is not to be self-injurious it must respect the enemy's property, in which case it becomes economically futile. Thus the wealth of conquered territory remains in the hands of the population of such territory. When Germany annexed Alsatia, no individual German secured a single Mark's worth of Alsatian property as the spoils of war. Conquest in the modern word is a process of multiplying by x, and then obtaining the original result by dividing by x. For a modern nation to add to its territory no more adds to the wealth of the people of such nation than it would add to the wealth of Londoners if the City of London were to annex the county of Hertford.

The author also shows that international finance has become so interdependent and so interwoven with trade and industry that the intangibility of an enemy's property extends to his trade. It results that political and military power can in reality do nothing for trade; the individual merchants and manufacturers of small nations, exercising no such power, compete successfully with those of the great. Swiss and Belgian merchants drive English from the British Colonial market; Norway has, relatively to population, a greater mercantile marine than Great Britain; the public credit (as a rough-and-ready indication, among others, of security and wealth) of small States possessing no political power often stands higher than that of the Great Powers of Europe, Belgian Three per Cents. standing at 96, and German at 82; Norwegian Three and a Half per Cents. at 102, Russian Three and a Half per Cents. at 81.

The forces which have brought about the economic futility of military power have also rendered it futile as a means of enforcing a nation's moral ideals or imposing its social institutions upon a conquered people. Germany could not turn Canada or Australia into a German colony—*i. e.*, stamp out their language, law, literature, traditions, etc.—by "capturing" them. The necessary security in their material possessions enjoyed by the inhabitants of such con-

quered provinces, quick intercommunication by a cheap press, widely-read literature, enable even small communities to become articulate and effectively defend their special social or moral possessions, even when military conquest has been complete. The fight for ideals can no longer take the form of fight between nations, because the lines of division on moral questions are within the nations themselves and intersect the political frontiers. There is no modern State which is completely Catholic or Protestant, or liberal or autocratic, or aristocratic or democratic, or socialist or individualist: the moral and spiritual struggles of the modern world go on as between citizens of the same State in unconscious intellectual co-operation with corresponding groups in other States, not as between the public powers of rival States.

This classification by strata involves necessarily a redirection of human pugnacity, based rather on the rivalry of classes and interests than on State divisions. War has no longer the justification that it makes for the survival of the fittest; it involves the survival of the less fit. The idea that the struggle between nations is a part of the evolutionary law of man's advance involves a profound misreading of the biological analogy.

The warlike nations do not inherit the earth; they represent the decaying human element. The diminishing role of physical force in all spheres of human activity carries with it profound psychological modifications.

These tendencies, mainly the outcome of purely modern conditions (rapidity of communication), have rendered the problems of modern international politics profoundly and essentially different from the ancient; yet our ideas are still dominated by the principles and axioms and terminology of the old.

The author urges that these little-recognized facts may be utilized for the solution of the armament difficulty on at present untried lines—by such modification or opinion in Europe that much of the present motive to aggression will cease to be operative, and by thus diminishing the risk of attack, diminish by that much the need for defence. He shows how such a political reformation is within the scope of practical politics, and the methods which might bring it about.

Appendix B.

The general attitude indicated in this letter has in England become the basis of a fairly definite "movement" represented by some fifty societies and clubs including many university ones, the most important of which is "The Cambridge University War and Peace Society." The movement, which is largely one of the younger generation in England has recently acquired a monthly organ, the first number of which contained the following "declaration of policy":

With no desire to disparage previous Pacifist effort, it is obvious that only a real difference can justify the separate expression which this journal hopes to embody.

That difference does not reside in the fact that we value the economic as opposed to the moral plea. All human values are moral or they are not human. The value of wealth, as of food, is derivable from the fact that it supports human life; of literature, that it embellishes it; of religion, that it sanctifies it—though the first may connote a glutton, the second a bore, and the last a bigot. Peace, the mere avoidance or cessation of conflict as an end in itself, is not the motive that has prompted the efforts of those who have founded this review. Our test is not a subjective ideal expressed in terms of instinct and intuition, but the ultimate realities of life, which, though they include the intangible, include also the tangible. If war promoted them, we should favour war. We believe in peace in the sense of the substitution of union for disunion, of partnership for rivalry, of comradeship for quarrel, only in part because it is a means to the end whereby men can more efficiently carry on their war with Nature; much more because it is a means to the end of making human intercourse of greater worth and finer quality, more purged of cowardly suspicions, of hatreds and misconceptions masquerading as virtues, of cruelties and stupidities that darken life. And it is so a means because the emergence of the finer things depends upon a form of human intercourse which can

only rest upon a basis of justice, and that in its turn upon understanding; both of which are in jeopardy so long as they are subject to the mechanical hazard of physical force.

The difference which we hope will justify this separate expression reside in the fact that we place the emphasis of effort upon the intellectual means; that we base our hope upon an improvement of understanding rather than of intention.

That failure of understanding which we call war is not a mere perverse brutality in one special field of human intercourse, to be cured by an improvement of intentions and a finer sensitiveness, but is a natural and necessary outcome of certain beliefs and misconceptions which can only be corrected by those intellectual processes that have marked all advance in understanding—contact and dission. The Europe of the Religious Wars and the Inquisition was not a more cruel or a worse intentioned world than the tolerant Rome which made man-killing a vicarious sport. The world of the Crusades and Heretic-burning, of asceticism and serfdom, of chivalry and *jus primae noctis*, the honor of the duel and the justice of the ordeal, the evidence of torture and the religion of physical compulsion was not a badly-meaning but a badly-thinking world, and the men who destroyed it—the Bacons, the Montaignes, the Luthers, the Voltaires and the Rousseaux—were perhaps in intention inferior to those who made it. We emerged from it by correcting a defect in understanding; we shall emerge from the world of political warfare or armed peace in the same way. We believe that at bottom the misconception which explained so many of the outstanding phases of mediæval Europe is related intimately to the misconception which explains the war system of our day.

It is necessary to reduce the thing to a system easily understandable, to furnish a simple social and economic philosophy of trade and the ordinary activities of life, to give the common man a pretty clear and well-defined working hypothesis of a warless civilization. For this is certain: merely to disentangle detached facts, merely to express a general aspiration towards better things, is no good when we are opposed by a system as well defined and understandable in its motives and methods as in the war system of Europe. To a system like that, reposing upon a quite definite philosophy, upon a process which is intelligible to the ordinary man, you must oppose, if you hope to replace it, another system, another working hypothesis which you must demonstrate to be more in accordance with facts.

We must bring before the mind of the European public the significance of a few simple, ascertainable, tangible facts in such fashion that they will frame unconsciously a working hypothesis of international society, which will lead to deductions sufficiently correct and sufficiently widespread to do for the political groups what has already been done for the religious groups.

To impress the significance of just those facts which are the most relevant and essential in this problen, to do what we can to keep them before public attention and to encourage their discussion, is our work.