

THE PEACE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Fifth of a Series of Articles on What America Should Learn from the War

by

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Come, Peace! not like a mourner bowed
For honor lost and dear ones wasted,
But proud, to meet a people proud,
With eyes that tell of triumph tated!
Come, with han' gripping on the hilt,
An' step that proves ye Victory's
daughter!

Longin' for you, our spirits will
Like shipwrecked men's on raf's for
water.

Come, while our country feels the lift
Of a great instinct shouting "Forwards!"
An' knows that freedom ain't a gift.

Thet tarries long in han's of cowards!
Come, sech ez mothers prayed for, when
They kissed their cross with lips that
quivered.

An' bring fair wages for brave men.

A nation saved, a race delivered!

THESE are the noble lines of a noble poet, written in the sternest days of the great civil war, when the writer, Lowell, was one among the millions of men who mourned the death in battle of kinsfolk dear to him.

No man ever lived who hated an unjust war more than Lowell or who loved with more passionate fervor the peace of righteousness. Yet, like the other great poets of his day and country, like Holmes, who sent his own son to the war, like gentle Longfellow and the Quaker Whittier, he abhorred unrighteousness and ignoble peace more than war.

These men had lofty souls. They possessed the fighting edge, without which no man is really great; for in the really great man there must be both the heart of gold and the temper of steel.

In 1864 there were in the North some hundreds of thousands of men who praised Peace as the supreme end, as a good more important than all other goods, and who denounced war as the worst of all evils. These men one and all assailed and denounced Abraham Lincoln, and all voted against him for President.

Lincoln's Stand Against Mediation

MOREOVER, at that time there were many individuals in England and France who said it was the duty of those two nations to mediate between the North and the South so as to stop the terrible loss of life and destruction of property which attended our civil war; and they asserted that any Americans who in such event refused to accept their mediation and to stop the war would thereby show themselves the enemies of Peace.

Nevertheless, Abraham Lincoln and the men back of him by their attitude prevented all such effort at mediation, declaring that they would regard it as an unfriendly act to the United States.

Looking back from a distance of fifty years, we can now see clearly that Abraham Lincoln and his supporters were right. Such mediation would have been a hostile act, not only to the United States, but to humanity. The men who clamored for unrighteous peace fifty years ago this Fall were the enemies of mankind.

These facts should be pondered by the well-meaning men who always clamor for peace without regard to whether peace brings justice or injustice.

Very many of the men and

women who are at times misled into demanding peace as if it were itself an end instead of being a means of righteousness, are men of good intelligence and sound heart who only need seriously to consider the facts, and who can then be trusted to think aright and act aright.

There is, however, an element of a certain numerical importance among our people, including the members of the ultra-pacifist group, who by their teachings do some real, although limited, mischief. They are a feeble folk, these ultra-pacifists, morally and physically; but in a country where voice and vote are alike free, they may, if their teachings are not disregarded, create a condition of things where the crop they have sowed in folly and weakness will be reaped with blood and bitter tears by the brave men and high-hearted women of the nation.

Facts of History Must Be Told

THE folly preached by some of these individuals is somewhat startling, and if it were translated from words into deeds it would constitute a crime against the nation.

One professed teacher of morality makes the plea in so many words that we ought to follow the example of China and deprive ourselves of all power to repel foreign attack. Surely this writer must possess the exceedingly small amount of information necessary in order to know that nearly half of China is at present under foreign dominion, and that at this moment the Germans and Japanese are battling on Chinese territory and domineering as conquerors over the Chinese in that territory. Think of the abject soul of a man capable of holding up to the admiration of free-born American citizens such a condition of serfage under alien rule!

Nor is the folly confined only to the male sex. A number of women teachers in Chicago are credited with having proposed, in view of the war, hereafter to prohibit in the teaching of history any reference to war and battles.

Intellectually, of course, such persons show themselves unfit to be retained as teachers a single day, and, indeed, unfit to be pupils in any school more advanced than a kindergarten.

But it is not their intellectual, it is also their moral shortcomings which are striking. The suppression of the truth is, of course, as grave an offense against morals as is the suggestion of the false or even the lie direct; and these teachers actually propose to teach untruths to their pupils.

True teachers of history must tell the facts of history; and if they do not tell the facts both about the wars that are righteous and the wars that are unrighteous, and about the causes that led to these wars and to success or defeat in them, they show themselves morally unfit to train the minds of boys and girls.

If in addition to telling the

facts they draw the lessons that should be drawn from the facts, they will give their pupils a horror of all wars that are entered into wantonly or with levity or in a spirit of mere brutal aggression or save under dire necessity. But they will also teach that among the noblest deeds of mankind are those that have been done in great wars for liberty, in wars of self-defense, in wars for the relief of oppressed peoples, in wars for putting an end to wrongdoing in the dark places of the globe.

Any teachers, in school or college, who occupied the position that these foolish, foolish teachers have sought to take, would be forever estopped from mentioning the names of Washington and Lincoln; because their names are forever associated with great wars for righteousness. These teachers would be forever estopped from so much as mentioning the shining names of Marathon and Salamis. They would seek to blind their pupils' eyes to the glory held in the deeds and deaths of Joan of Arc, of Andreas Hofer, of Arnold von Winkelried, of Kosciusko, and Rakotski. They would be obliged to warn their pupils against ever reading Schiller's "Wilhelm Tell" or the poetry of Koerner. Such men are deaf to the lament running, "Oh, why, Patrick Sarsfield, did we let your ships sail, Across the dark waters from green Innisfail?" To them Holmes's ballad of Bunker Hill and Whittier's "Laus Deo," MacMaster's ode to the Old Continentals, and O'Hara's "Bivouac of the Dead" are meaningless. On them lessons of careers like those of Timoleon and John Hampden are lost; in their eyes the lofty self-abnegation of Robert Lee and Stonewall Jackson was folly; their dull senses do not thrill to the deathless deaths of the men who died at Thermopylae and the Alamo—the fight of those grim Texans of which it was truthfully said that Thermopylae had its messengers of death but the Alamo had none.

Like Taking Club from Policeman

IT has actually been proposed by some of these shivering apostles of the gospel of national abjectness that, in view of the destruction that has fallen on certain peaceful powers of Europe, we should abandon all efforts at self-defense, should stop building up battle-ships and cease to take any measures to defend ourselves if attacked.

It is difficult seriously to consider such a proposition. It is precisely and exactly as if the inhabitants of a village in whose neighborhood highway robberies had occurred should propose to meet the crisis by depriving the local policeman of his revolver and club.

There are, however, many high-minded people who do not

agree with these extremists, but who nevertheless need to be enlightened as to the actual facts. These good people, who are busy people and not able to devote much time to thoughts about international affairs, are often confused by men whose business it is to know better.

Peace Treaties Will Be Valueless

FOR example, a few weeks ago these good people were stirred to a moment's belief that something had been accomplished by the enactment at Washington of a score or two of all-inclusive arbitration treaties; being not unnaturally misled by the fact that those responsible for the passage of the treaties indulged in some not wholly harmless bleating as to the good effects they would produce. As a matter of fact, they probably will not produce the smallest effect of any kind or sort. Yet it is possible they may have a mischievous effect, inasmuch as under certain circumstances to fulfill them would cause frightful disaster to the United States, while to break them, even although under compulsion and because it was absolutely necessary, would be fruitful of keen humiliation to every right-thinking man who was jealous of our international good name.

If, for example, whatever the outcome of the present war, a great triumphant military despotism declared that it would not recognize the Monroe Doctrine or seized Magdalena Bay, or one of the Dutch West Indies, or the Island of St. Thomas, and fortified it; or if—as would be quite possible—it announced that we had no right to fortify the Isthmus of Panama, and itself landed on adjacent territory to erect similar fortifications; then, under these absurd treaties, we would be obliged, if we happened to have made one of them with one of the countries involved, to go into an interminable discussion of the subject before a joint commission, while the hostile nation proceeded to make its position impregnable.

It seems incredible that the United States Government could have made such treaties; but it has just done so, with the warm approval of the professional pacifists.

These treaties were entered into when the Administration had before its eyes at that very moment the examples of Belgium and Luxemburg, which showed beyond possibility of doubt, especially when taken in connection with other similar incidents that have occurred during the last couple of decades, that there are various great military empires in the old world who will pay not one moment's heed to the most solemn and binding treaty if it is to their interest to break it.

If any one of these empires, as the result of the present contest, obtains something ap-

proaching to a position of complete predominance in the Old World, it is absolutely certain that it would pay no heed whatever to these treaties, if it desired to better its position in the New World by taking possession of the Dutch or Danish West Indies or of the territory of some weak American State on the mainland of the continent. In such event we would be obliged either instantly ourselves to repudiate the scandalous treaties by which the Government at Washington has just sought to tie our hands—and thereby expose ourselves in our turn to the charge of bad faith—or else we should have to abdicate our position as a great power and submit to abject humiliation.

Since these articles of mine were written and published, I am glad to see that James Bryce, a lifelong advocate of peace and the staunchest possible friend of the United States, has taken precisely the position I have taken. Bryce dwells, as I have dwelt, upon the absolute need of protecting small States that behave themselves from absorption in great military empires. He insists, as I have insisted, upon the need of the reduction of armaments, the quenching of the baleful spirit of militarism, and the admission of the peoples everywhere to a fuller share in the control of foreign policy—all to be accomplished by some kind of International League of Peace. He adds, however, as the culminating and most important portion of his article:

But no scheme for preventing future wars will have any chance of success unless it rests upon the assurance that the States which enter it will loyally and steadfastly abide by it and that each and all of them will join in coercing by their overwhelming united strength any State which may disregard the obligations it has undertaken.

This is almost exactly what I have said. Indeed, it is almost word for word what I have said—an agreement which is all the more striking because when he wrote it Lord Bryce could not have known what I had written.

Righteousness Before All Else

WE must insist on righteousness first and foremost. We must strive for peace always; but we must never hesitate to put righteousness above peace. In order to do this, we must put force back of righteousness, for, as the world now is, national righteousness without force back of it speedily becomes a matter of derision. To the doctrine that Might makes Right, it is utterly useless to oppose the doctrine of Right unbacked by Might.

It is not even true that what the pacifists desire is Right. The leaders of the pacifists of this country who for three months now have been crying "Peace, Peace," have been too timid even to say that they

want the Peace to be a righteous one. We needlessly dignify such outcries when we speak of them as well-meaning. The weaklings who raise their shrill piping for a peace that shall consecrate successful wrong occupy a position quite as immoral as and infinitely more contemptible than the position of the wrongdoers themselves.

The ruthless strength of the great absolutist leaders—Elizabeth of England, Catherine of Russia, Peter the Great, Frederick the Great, Napoleon, Bismarck—is certainly infinitely better for their own nations and is probably better for mankind at large than the loquacious impotence, ultimately trouble-breeding, which has recently marked our own international policy. Strength at least commands respect; whereas the prattling feebleness that dares not rebuke any concrete wrong, and whose proposals for right are marked by sheer fatuity, is fit only to excite weeping among angels, and among men the bitter laughter of scorn.

At this moment any peace which leaves unredressed the wrongs of Belgium, and which does not effectively guarantee Belgium and all other small nations that behave themselves against the repetition of such wrongs, would be a well-nigh unmixed evil.

As far as we personally are concerned, such a peace would inevitably mean that we would at once and in haste have to begin to arm ourselves or be exposed in our turn to the most frightful risk of disaster.

The Lesson of Belgium

LET our people take thought for the future. Belgium was absolutely innocent of offense. Her cities have been laid waste, or held to ransom for gigantic sums of money; her fruitful fields have been trampled into mire; her sons have died on the field of battle; her daughters are brokenhearted fugitives; a million of her people have fled to foreign lands.

Entirely disregarding all accusations as to outrages on individuals, it yet remains true that disaster terrible beyond belief has befallen this peaceful nation of six million people, who themselves had been guilty of not even the smallest wrongdoing. Brussels has been held to enormous ransom, although it did not even strive to defend itself. Antwerp did strive to defend itself. Because soldiers in the forts attempted to repulse the enemy, hundreds of houses in the undefended city were wrecked with bombs from airships and throngs of peaceful men, women, and children were driven from their homes by the sharp terror of death. Be it remembered always that not one man in Brussels, not one man in Antwerp, had even the smallest responsibility for the disaster inflicted upon them. Innocence has proved not even the smallest safeguard against such woe and suffering as we in this land can at present hardly imagine.

What befell Antwerp and Brussels will surely some day befall New York or San Francisco and may happen to many an inland city also if we do not shake off our supine folly, if we trust for safety to peace treaties unbacked by force.

At the beginning of last month, by the appointment of the President, peace services were held in the churches of this land. As far as these services consisted of sermons and

prayers of good and wise people who wished peace only if it represented righteousness, who did not desire that peace should come unless it came to consecrate justice and not wrongdoing, good and not evil, the movement represented good.

In so far, however, as the movement was understood to be one for immediate peace without any regard to righteousness or justice, without any regard for righting the wrongs of those who have been crushed by unmerited disaster, then the movement represented mischief, precisely as fifty years ago in 1864 in our own country a similar movement for peace, to be obtained by acknowledgment of disunion and by the perpetuation of slavery, would have represented mischief.

In the present case, however, the mischief was confined purely to those taking part in the movement in an unworthy spirit; for (like the peace parades and newspaper peace petitions) it was a purely subjective phenomenon; it had not the slightest effect of any kind, sort, or description upon any of the combatants abroad and could not possibly have any effect upon them.

It is well for our own sakes that we should pray sincerely and humbly for the peace of righteousness; but we must guard ourselves from any illusion as to the news of our having thus prayed producing the least effect upon those engaged in the war.

There is just one way in which to meet the upholders of the doctrine that Might makes Right. To do so we must prove that Right will make Might, by backing right with might.

In his second inaugural address Andrew Jackson laid down the rule by which every National American Administration must guide itself, saying:

The foreign policy adopted by our Government is to do justice to all, and to submit to wrong by none.

The statement of the dauntless old fighter of New Orleans is as true now as when he wrote it. We must stand absolutely for righteousness. But to do so is utterly without avail unless we possess the strength and the loftiness of spirit which will back righteousness with deeds and not with words.

We must clear the rubbish from off our souls and admit that everything that has been done in passing peace treaties, arbitration treaties, neutrality treaties, Hague treaties, and the like, with no sanction of force behind them, amounts to literally and absolutely nothing, in any time of serious crisis.

International Agreement Needed

WE must recognize that to enter into foolish treaties which cannot be kept is as wicked as to break treaties which can and ought to be kept.

We must labor for an international agreement among the great civilized nations which shall put the full force of all of them back of any one of them, and of any well-behaved weak nation which is wronged by any other power.

Until we have completed this purpose, we must keep ourselves ready, high of heart and undaunted of soul, to back our rights with our strength.

Theodore Roosevelt
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