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Address of Edwin D. Mead

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quite enough of sneering and ridicule because we have not heard more of the great Hague Conference in its results. There are occasions when "the less noise the better," and there are successes which are the greater because they are not heralded from hour to hour by the crickets or the grasshoppers of the day. And this is one of them! [Applause.] We find a parallel of this silence in the history of the Supreme Court of the United States, the great precedent to the Supreme Court of Nations. The Supreme Court of the United States was hardly mentioned in any history of America for the first three or four years of its existence. It had nine quarterly sessions—for two years and three months—before it decided any question whatever between two States of America. Was there no use in the Supreme Court for that time? It was adjusting questions all the time that were not brought before it—questions that were settled because there was a Supreme Court and men did not dare to bring them before it. And that is exactly the history of the Hague Court. In the quiet of the last two years case after case has been settled because the disputants did not dare to bring it before that high tribunal. Courts are much more valuable in what they do not do than in what they do.

I have in former years imagined the possible cases by which the practical efficiency of the Hague tribunal might begin. I confess I never imagined anything quite as humble as the issue in the particular case of which I am about to tell you. On the other hand, Mr. President, no case could have arisen more gratifying to me personally. The people who sit before me, the people of Boston and Massachusetts and the Northern States, had come to the relief of the Boer prisoners in the Bermudas. The Alva of the nineteenth century, Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, had chosen to send to the Bermudas thirty-five hundred prisoners of war,—some of whom are boys of eight years old, and some old gentlemen still active at eighty. [Laughter.] Well, great nations move slowly, and there were a good many things these people wanted. The New England people and the New York people were glad to take hold, and the Lend-a-Hand Society was able at once to send out what was asked for in the shape of clothing and some canned food and other things. When these things got to the Bermudas the custom house officials said, "You must pay the regular five per cent. duty on the clothing." So our consignees there paid the five per cent duty, amounting to some \$35, these things were sent round where they were wanted, and the Boer people sent us a most touching letter of thanks.

It was just then that somebody in Bermuda had the wit to observe that in the sixteenth article of the second Hague Convention it was provided that whenever clothing was sent to prisoners of war that clothing must be admitted free of duty, and the government that received it must send it free of charge to the prisoners themselves. Well, we had paid the duty, and our friends the Englishmen in Bermuda called the attention of the governor to the fact. The poor governor (I have felt sorry for him ever since) was extremely mortified. He said that the matter was new and that his officers had not been instructed in the second Hague Convention, but that he would call the Assembly's attention to the fact that this money was in their treasury which didn't

belong there. As soon as the Assembly met, the governor called the matter to their attention, and an Act was passed remitting to the Lend-a-Hand Society, which I have the honor to represent, the money which had been paid as duty. That it should be ordered that that particular money should come back to us as the first result of the Hague Conference was not only amusing, but of very great interest to us, who had for a year represented the Boston Committee on International Arbitration. I would not tell that story but for the much more important fact—which has not, I think, received the attention which it deserves—that within the last fortnight (I think through the influence of our friends one of whom has been speaking here to-night) the United States of America and the United States of Mexico have agreed to refer to the tribunal of The Hague a matter which has been in dispute between them for many years,—the celebrated "Pious Fund" case,—and it is to the honor of these countries that this will be the first case brought before that tribunal.

Our friend who has spoken in a way so interesting has pointed out the duty of every person in this room. He has pointed out the duty of a very much larger range of persons who are asking what their duty is in the great cause of Peace. It is our business to hold up to the attention of the public men of the country the details that have been brought before us here, and to see that these things are put through. It is the reward that we owe Mr. Buchanan that we all of us make it our business to see that the government carries out in their details such matters as have been brought before us to-night.

### Address of Edwin D. Mead.

#### The Folly of the Present Great Armaments— Views of the Late Jean de Bloch.

It was thought to be fitting, even imperative, that the Peace Society should not come together at this time and break up without some word being spoken in memory of the distinguished servant of peace whom we have been mourning in these last weeks—Jean de Bloch. It seems to me that no book ever written in the cause of the peace and order of the world, save Hugo Grotius's great work alone, has rendered such influential practical service as Bloch's "Future of War." I am glad that the privilege is given me of speaking this commemorative word and, on behalf of all of you, paying tribute to him whom we honor so much.

Dr. Hale has told us of the silence with which the Supreme Court, now recognized as such a unique and potent factor in our Constitution, came into operation. It has been with the same silence that the first case has come before the Hague tribunal—a case to which we are grateful that our country is a party. The United States and Mexico were the only American States which were represented at the Hague Conference; none of the Central or South American Republics had representatives there. Yet the United States never forgot that she was in a measure the custodian of the interests of the states of all America, and she was thinking constantly (Mr. White and her other representatives were thinking) of the interests of these sister Republics as the work of the Conference went on.

The Hague Conference did not come into existence without ancestry, without intellectual forces which made it imperative and certain. It was not simply that the Czar sent out his Rescript; it was that the Czar himself had been converted, that commanding intellectual forces had been in operation in Russia. I think there was none of these intellectual forces more potent than that exerted by Jean de Bloch. Bloch's book upon "The Future of War" was an epoch-making book. It startled the Czar and his ministers; it startled all serious thinkers in Europe; it was one of the forces that compelled the Conference at The Hague. At that Conference, in a private and unofficial capacity, Bloch himself was present throughout.

If ever a man is born under conditions which naturally compel him to think of the tragedies of war, of its horrors and burders, and of the evils of those race antagonisms which so often lead to war, I think it must be a Polish Jew. The very word Jew brings up the thought of the sufferings, the social and political ostracism, the injustices and wrongs of every sort, which have been the lot of the Jew through all these centuries. The name of Poland reminds us equally impressively of those scarce slumbering hatreds and antagonisms there still after a hundred years, a monument to the cruelty and wickedness of the wars which ended Poland's national life, as an end of one of the most mournful and shameful chapters in human history.

Jean de Bloch was a Polish Jew, a poor Polish Jew, who, finally getting through good fortune a sum of money, resolved that he would push out of the ignorance and narrowness into which he was born and found his way into the circle of the scholars of Berlin. There he studied for three years and then went back to Warsaw. He was a man of immense energy and a devoted student. He rapidly acquired a fortune as a banker and also obtained a high reputation as a sociologist and an economist. He wrote exhaustive works in many volumes upon Russian railways, Russian finance, and Russian local government. It was to him presently that the Russian commercial folk and the Russian government itself were turning to finance their operations. He became the leading banker of Poland — a sort of Polish Rothschild — and he became the president of important railway systems. He was led as a result of all this to understand what were the menaces to the economy of States of the war system obtaining in Europe. Seeing that war lay at the root of the trouble, he devoted himself for years to the preparation of his monumental work upon "The Future of War," which remains the most powerful arraignment of war and the most powerful argument for the peace of the world save, I repeat, the great work of Grotius alone.

With that work Bloch came to the Hague Conference. He came, he said, as a learner; but he came also as a teacher and a helper. He came to bring his book, to distribute it, to explain it, and to gather information and education. He sincerely believed that his book was the Bible of this cause. He was not a vain nor an opinionated man, but he had that confidence in his insight and in the things which he had learned. His argument was on the whole, and in the place where he laid the emphasis, a new one. The peace societies had in the main appealed to the moral side of this matter; Jean de Bloch

appealed to the business side. The appeals of the apostles of peace have been for the most part to the world's humanity and piety, although it would be a mistake and a wrong not to remember that from William Penn's time to ours they have not failed to urge again and again the economic argument and point out what would result if the world would apply to constructive ends what it wastes on war. Jean de Bloch said: "We must appeal to the purse, to common sense, and make men see that this war system is the most stupid thing in creation." That was where Bloch directed almost his whole argument. He said that if it came to a great European war, that war could only cease with the annihilation of one combatant and the financial ruin of the other. He said that, so far from this question of an international court being a Utopian thing, it was the men who were going on with their schemes for wars who were really dealing in chimeras; that the time has come when we should apply our resources not to the things which waste and devastate, but to the things that build up states and the industries and the social welfare of men. He appealed to the facts of war as they unrolled themselves before the eyes of Europe; he showed what the real results of the Franco-Prussian War were; he drew the lessons from the Russo-Turkish War.

Bloch, unlike most peace men, was one of the most critical students of military affairs; he met the military men upon their own ground. The only time I ever heard him lecture was last summer at Whitehall, when he lectured to the United Service Club in London, a body of military experts, with a major-general in the chair. He was the superior of those practical and learned military men upon every technical point, and worsted them in the debate.

In the last years of Bloch's life he was engaged chiefly in drawing from the South African War the warning lessons which the world needs to learn. He has shown that the Boers have been so successful not, as has been often said, because of the topography of the country or because they are particularly good marksmen, but because they have profited by the utterly changed conditions of war. Bloch shows that the fundamental change came in with the American Civil War. The American Civil War, he was never tired of telling the people of Europe, settled it that the alleged superiority of disciplined armies over volunteer troops amounts to nothing; that the ordinary military training is often a positive disadvantage in preparing for modern warfare.

Now that thing is of immense moment, for if it is true, — and it is, — it makes the whole effort to maintain great armaments a vain thing. Robert Peel said that instead of wasting the resources of a country to maintain great armies and navies, the sensible nation in the future will rely upon its own latent energies, perfectly sure that if it has inherent energy it can always improvise powers necessary for any defense at very short notice. There is no practical demand or excuse for costly armies and navies; all this great armament is waste. Bloch has shown that thing to the modern world, — that from the scientific point of view armies and navies are not a source of strength to any nation, but rather a source of weakness; that they do not defend, but rather weaken and endanger. He has not been

answered; I do not believe he can be answered. We are his debtors, the foolish and long-suffering world is his debtor, for the thoroughness and power with which he has taught this great lesson.

### Will England Adopt Conscription?

The following article from the pen of Samuel James Capper appeared in last month's number of the *Anglo-Russia* (21 Pater Noster Square, London):

"With the exception of the British Empire, every state in Europe recognizes the duty of all adult male citizens, at some period of their lives, to contribute to the defense of the fatherland by personal service. This system, commonly known as the conscription, was introduced during the first French Revolution, and, as stated, has now become universal in Europe except in our own country.

"Few will be disposed to dispute that every community has need of some force to protect life and property and to repress violence and disorder. But the mere knowledge that such a force exists is practically sufficient to effect its object; it is hardly ever called into active exercise. As a concrete example, let us take London, greater London with its six millions of inhabitants, many of whom are in dire want, and under sore temptation to lay violent hands upon the almost fabulous wealth, constantly in their view, which is the property of a very small minority, yet how very small is the police force upon whom ultimately the protection of the metropolis depends!

"If the maintenance of order and the protection of life and property were the only object in view, so far from universal military service being necessary, it would at once be recognized as the monstrous and criminal absurdity it really is,—monstrous because altogether disproportioned to the object intended, and criminal, because it converts industrious producers into unprofitable consumers, and reduces the joys of life and the possibility of happiness to the greater number of mankind. Because a small, a very small, police force is necessary to maintain order is no reason for arming every adult man with a bludgeon, and causing him to march about in a blue uniform; yet this is practically what Europe is doing, only substituting the rifle for the bludgeon. And why? Because of the want of wisdom by which the world is governed—because of the practice of war for the settlement of international disputes.

"At the time of the Peace Congress at Buda Pesth, in 1896, there was almost an epidemic of dueling in the duel-cursed country of Hungary, and I was asked to address a meeting upon the subject. It was a crowded and an enthusiastic meeting, for every one in Buda Pesth realizes that dueling is a very real and an ever present curse. I ventured to say what few in England would contest, that dueling is criminal and absurd. If, however, it be compared with the practice of war, it will be found to be the less ignoble institution of the two. Because I feel myself offended or injured, I insist upon my antagonist exposing himself to be killed by me, and I expose my life to be taken by him—this is the duel. Because statesmen cannot agree over a green table, they either cajole boys by voluntary enlistment or compel

them by the conscription to murder one another—this is war. Surely war is more base than the duel.

"Without, however, dealing with what would be ideally desirable, we must take Christendom as it is, one vast armed camp, and ask what England should do in the actual circumstances of the case.

"Seven years ago I was guest in the historic Château of Froeschweiler, in Alsace, a château which a quarter of a century before was the key of the position in the bloody battle of Wörth. On the occasion of my visit there was a great gathering of the notables of the country-side, and among others was General von Blume, the commander of the Sixth German Army Corps, having its headquarters at Strasburg. With him I had frequent conversations upon the subject of the conscription for England, conversations which he always concluded in one way. 'Mr. Capper, you have got to come to it. The only question is whether you are to adopt it before the catastrophe or after the catastrophe.'

"As the result of a long life's experience, and having seen the conscription and how it works in France, Germany and Italy, I believe it would be a great misfortune and a well-nigh intolerable burden in England, once so free; but to my mind, although for the moment the trend of public opinion at the war office and in the country seems to be against compulsory service, the conscription in some form is certain, unless we change the character of our foreign policy and alter our manner of treating foreign nations.

"If, regardless of the immense tracts of the earth's surface subject to our rule, we are led by an insensate earth-hunger to try and grab more and more, and if we entrust our national affairs to statesmen who ostentatiously shake their fists in the face of the world and insolently threaten them with correction if they do not mend their manners, we shall soon have the conscription in addition to all our other burdens, and, I believe, not even the conscription nor the swollen budget for our national armaments will be able to save us from eventual disaster and ruin. But if, for the policy of unreasoning and constant expansion, we substitute one of consolidation and improvement, if we reduce expenditure, strive to make our subjects all over the world happy, and to unloose the heavy burdens which, as in India, are crushing into poverty and starvation hundreds of millions of our fellow subjects, and if we habitually treat the neighboring nations in a spirit of conciliation and moderation, it will be possible to do without the conscription, and England may yet for many generations fulfil a great mission, in promoting the well being and the virtue of the world.

"I cannot now go into the relative merits of a great professional army such as we have at present and such a system as that of Switzerland. In Switzerland there is practically an armed nation powerless for offense, but omnipotent for the defense of the country. With our vast empire one-half of our army must always be on foreign service, and it is universally admitted that it is impossible to enforce the conscription for service abroad. As long, then, as our empire continues what it is, no form of conscription could take the place of our present professional army. If universal compulsory military service were introduced, it would probably take the form of rendering it obligatory upon every young