

deplorable the necessity for it, and endeavour to avert that necessity in the future. And after all, alas! the horrors and miseries of war receive but slender mitigation from the splendour of exceptional achievements, or from the high personal qualities of those who may prove, when it is over, to have been either its victims or its survivors.

CHAPTER XI.

The Alleged Necessity for War—Advantages and Disadvantages of Territorial Extension—Where the War Principle leads when fully carried out—The Democratic Element.

B. AS TO THE NECESSITY FOR WAR.—It now becomes our task to analyse the allegation so constantly made that international disputes cannot possibly be settled without the arbitrament of war; and that, therefore, wars are necessary and unavoidable. In order to examine into the truth of this allegation, it will be necessary to inquire into the nature of those international disputes which are thus said not to be susceptible of solution except through the ordeal of brute force. What are the causes from which have sprung the numerous European wars of the last two centuries? We omit insurrectionary and civil wars, which, as our inquiry is confined to international wars, do not, for obvious reasons, come within its scope. We shall find the rest all comprised under some one of the following heads:—1. Wars waged to displace or replace ruling dynasties. 2. Wars of aggrandisement, and for the acquisition of increased

territory, power, revenue, influence, &c. 3. Wars to maintain the balance of power, and to resist the craving for aggrandisement referred to in the preceding sentence. 4. Wars of redress for alleged injuries or insults. 5. Wars in fulfilment of old treaty guarantees. 6. Wars to arrest the contagion of democratic principles. 7. Wars to protect nationalities forming part of another state. We are not aware of any civilised war that is not referable to some one of the foregoing categories.

There is not among these a single case of war of peoples against peoples. They are all cases of rulers against rulers—governments against governments—and of statesmen against statesmen. It is the state-machine, as represented by the Napoleon, or the Bismarck, or the Beaconsfield, of the day, that makes war or peace. The people for whose welfare and behoof the state-machine was nominally and ostensibly constructed, have practically no voice in the matter of peace or war. The only wars to which the people constituting a state are direct parties are insurrectionary or civil wars, which are outside of our theme, and which rarely contribute to the enormous pecuniary sacrifices exacted by international war preparations or war actualities. It is the executive department of the state, usually concentrated into a few hands, frequently, indeed, wielded by one man, that threatens war, declares war, and maintains war. If the adult population of a country were polled before the nation were actually committed to a course, few wars would ever take place. Public opinion is generally consulted too late. The

diplomatic threat that has elicited official defiance—the *quasi ultimatum* that has been submitted and rejected—the compromising engagements entered into to secure allies—the impossible recall of rash utterances—the aggressive attitude sometimes assumed by over-zealous subordinates—all these and many other precipitate and irritating measures have become accomplished facts which the people have to accept and abide by, but which, had their wishes been consulted in good time, might most probably have remained unaccomplished intentions.

There are no apparent reasons why democracies should wage war against democracies. To them, the material prosperity of the mass of the people must be, as it should be of all governments, the ruling and paramount object of concern. The prosperity of the people is professedly the final end of political institutions. But of all the wars that have raged among European states, we do not know one of which the real, or even the pretended object, has been to promote the material prosperity of the mass of the people. The manifestos issued to justify declarations of war usually dwell on the very intense desire for a peaceful solution which animated the issuer, but was frustrated by, &c.—on the course of action which became necessary for the honour, glory, and dignity of the country—on the justice, expediency, and urgency of repressing the ambitious views and aggressive policy which, &c., &c.—and on a number of similar topics connected with the position and prospects of the state-machine from an external and diplomatic point of view.

But we do not remember a single declaration of war that ever announced its objects to be the alleviation of the people's burdens; the encouragement of their labour and industry; or the furtherance of their physical and moral welfare. It will be said that these are not the class of objects obtainable through war—that, in fact, war was antagonistic to and destructive of them. So much the worse for the war-system. If the good of the people—the first, the true, the final end of all government—be, not promoted but obstructed by war, what is the value to the people of those objects which war sometimes more or less succeeds, or oftener more or less fails in accomplishing? Let us see.

We of course set on one side purely defensive wars. Such are sacred, and the crime is the aggressor's. As to other wars, however, it will be seen by a reference to the seven heads under which we have, at p. 134, classified the various causes of modern wars, that none of these bear any reference to either the benefits to be conferred on, or the evils to be averted from, the individual members of the belligerent community. They deal with statesmen's grievances, not with popular requirements. They mostly converge into one focus. Dynastic wars, compensation for injury wars, and treaty wars, are not of frequent occurrence, and when they do occur are often found to be aggrandisement wars in disguise, or they lapse from the one into the other. Hence by far the most prolific sources of war are to be found in the avidity of some states for more territory, or more privileges, or more political influ-

ence, &c. ; and in the determination of other states that this avidity shall not be gratified. The chief aim of statesmen seems hitherto to have been to enlarge the boundaries of their own country, and to prevent other countries from enlarging theirs. All this is done for the honour and glory of the nation as a political factor among other nations, not with any view to the substantial benefit of the people in the way of food, clothing, lodging, education, or other improvement. For instance, England has had the honour and glory (such as they are) of conquering Afghanistan, but the only influence over the destinies of individual Englishmen, of that achievement has been to increase their taxation. France has had the honour and glory (such as they are) of annexing Tunis, but the only difference which that achievement has made to individual Frenchmen is that each of them has to pay something towards the acquisition and the retention of it.

But in order to keep the topics which we have to discuss separate and distinct from each other, let us classify them. We have to consider—1. The advantages, or disadvantages, of territorial extension. 2. What it is that the principle of war leads to when fully carried out. 3. The effect of the prevailing tendency towards democratic institutions. 4. The principle of arbitration. 5. The possible federation of European states for the exclusive purpose of settling international disputes. And 6. Hero-worship and pseudo-patriotism.

1. As to the advantages or disadvantages of territorial extension. Both past history and

present statistics show that the cost, trouble, and anxiety connected with the acquisition and the maintenance of additional territory far exceed the advantages derivable from it. If the acquired territory is conterminous, then it must have been wrenched by force of arms from some neighbouring state. In that case, it will form a sharp and ever-festering cause of jealousy and dissension, which sooner or later will suppurate into war. How can such an acquisition prove of advantage to the conquering nation in the face of the following disadvantages? To wit, a deadly and never-sleeping feud with the dismembered country, a restless dread of hostile alliances, a constant necessity for effective and costly war preparations, &c. And what are the counterbalancing advantages accruing to the people of the triumphant country? Simply the privilege of being heavily taxed to enable the state-machine to keep a tight hold of the appropriated territory, and the "honour and glory" of having appropriated it.

Let us, however, take the more common case of possessions in various parts of the world that have been originally wrested from savage or semi-barbarous nations. We are not talking, be it observed, of self-supporting colonies which are peopling the waste places of the globe. They are self-governing and growing nations that have nothing in common with the "possessions" and "dependencies" of which we speak. Of the latter there is hardly one that defrays its own expenses, and which does not cost the ruling country a large sum of money annually, and her people an increase of taxation.

They are possessions of which the possessors would be richer, stronger, and happier, were they without them. Besides the normal drain of money which they annually absorb, there crops up every now and then a "little war" with savages, which is in due time suppressed at the cost of a few millions to the mother-country, and of a corresponding increase of her people's taxes. May the world be saved from any more of such possessions! Their loss would be a gain, just as the loss of her Italian possessions was a gain to Austria. That empire thereby lost a source of weakness and expense, and gained in compactness, power, and wealth.

A man who keeps up several expensive establishments may fancy that they redound to his "honour and glory," but he is certainly the poorer for them. A notion prevails that the extent and population of a country give the measure of its power, and that its greatness is in proportion to its largeness. Nothing can be less true, but even if it were true, it would lead to a lame conclusion. The final end of civilised society is not the greatness or the power of a nation, but the prosperity and well-being of the people of whom it is composed. The former is a consideration quite subordinate to the latter. If the people be poor, ignorant, and miserable, of what avail is it that the state should externally be powerful and "great"? The greater the contrast between the outward display and the inward wretchedness, the greater the shame and the pity. If territorial extension conduces to the glitter and adds to the poverty, what good is there in it?

There are but few, if any instances, in which

holding sway at a heavy expense over a distant dependency can benefit the people of the mother-country who have to bear that expense. Even supposing that this dependency was at any time worth acquiring, is it expedient to maintain costly military and naval establishments in order to prevent it from becoming independent, or from falling into other hands? Happy those nations which have not a number of similar white elephants to feed and maintain! And yet it is chiefly the gratification of an unreasoning greediness for territory that the war-system has for its object. It is paying an absurdly exorbitant price to acquire something which is not only worthless but a source of expense and positive loss. In the present day, however, the ideal value of such territory is beginning to be canvassed, and the real loss which it occasions to be understood. The "honour and glory" when weighed in impartial scales against the "blood and treasure," are found to be as empty words against stern realities. As the people become politically educated, they will cease to be beguiled by the "empty words," and will assign their proper value to the "stern realities."

2. What it is that the principle of war involves when fully carried out, let us now inquire. Like all other false principles, the principle of war when carried out to its full logical outcome, leads to results absurd and untenable. For instance, let us take life-destroying machinery. The art of war implies and requires the invention and perfection of the most effective possible life-de-

stroying engines. The more successful the perverse ingenuity of scientific inventors shall prove in slaughtering the greatest number of human beings in a given time and over a given space, the nearer to perfection does the military art attain. All improvements in gunnery, in submarine projectiles, in explosive compounds (such as dynamite, &c.), are fresh means, contributed with cruel impartiality by science, of immolating human lives in the most wholesale and summary manner. Where are these improvements to stop? Why should they stop at all? Why should they not advance, and will they not most likely advance, until science has invented some certain mode by which each army shall totally destroy the other? Science has accomplished greater feats than this. Perhaps the sooner the "blood and iron" system culminates into this extreme the better, for then the *reductio ad absurdum* will be complete, and war, having become simply an easy massacre on both sides, would probably fall into disuse.

Next let us glance at the war-loan system insatiably devouring wealth as long as victims are to be found. The debts contracted by "glory and aggrandisement" states will of necessity be, sooner or later, heaped up one over the other, till the pile becomes so unwieldy as to topple down altogether. The borrowing system carried out to its full extent means its being carried out until no more lenders are to be found—the necessary goal which all those nations must eventually reach who borrow faster than they pay back. It will then come to pass that the loan system, which is the main-spring of

the war-system, having been subjected to too severe a strain, will snap, and both will succumb together. A consummation devoutly to be wished, and the sooner reached the better. As long as loans are easily raised, the process is delightful to the borrowers, since it is posterity which has to repay them. They are to fighting governments even more than what accommodation bills are to a spendthrift; for they afford the means of immediate enjoyment to themselves at the price of future suffering to others. But this cannot go on for ever. The day of reckoning, whether for individuals or for nations, must come, and it involves, when it does come, both ruin and dishonour. A deplorable climax, yet a desirable one, since it puts an end to a pernicious and immoral practice.

Then again, as to the extreme right conferred by extreme might, where is its limit? What should prevent the victors from exterminating or enslaving the vanquished? The very prize contended for in these physical force struggles is the power of inflicting penalties to an indefinite extent on the defeated. Each combatant took his chance as to whether he should impose or bear the yoke. Complete and permanent subjection—the suppression of all possible means of recovering liberty—forcible measures for denationalising the subdued—and the confiscation of the fruits of their toil—all these are conditions which victorious brute force might exact if it carried out the principle of war to its full logical deductions. Anything short of those hard terms is a voluntary concession, having nothing to do with the question whether

there are any limits to the right of might, but arising out of quite a different order of considerations. It may be owing to the fear of driving the foe to desperation—or to exhaustion—or to views of future policy—or to deference to the feelings and opinions of the world, which the *summum jus*, the plenary exercise of crushing power, might shock and scandalise. But it is not owing to the tender mercies of the war principle.

3. The effect of the prevailing tendency towards democratic institutions. In proportion as the governments of the world shall more faithfully represent, and therefore be themselves more swayed by, public opinion, in that proportion will the probability of future wars be lessened. Democratic states, such as England (which is substantially a republic with hereditary presidents), the United States of America, republican France, Switzerland, Belgium, &c., are becoming more and more averse to any disturbance, through war, of finance, of commerce, of political improvements, and of the arts of peace; and were their material interests more closely interwoven with each other by means of free commercial intercourse, they would still more ardently seek to avoid the evils of war. What is the direction which political changes are taking? Despotism and semi-despotism are in a transitional state towards constitutionalism; while, in constitutional states, in which the people's representatives possess a share, larger or smaller, of political power, the tendency is to a still increasing infusion of the popular or democratic element. The movement is both hastened and regularised by

the quickening yet restraining influence of a free press. Quickening, because inquiry and discussion are prompted—restraining, because extreme anti-social theories are rendered harmless by full and open examination and analysis. Their worth or worthlessness stands revealed under the fierce light of free public scrutiny. It is in despotic countries that they are repressed and compressed into secret conspiracies.

As the democratic element shall more strongly prevail in the larger and more powerful states of Europe, so will the personal ambition, the personal interests, and the personal caprices of princes and rulers (those most fertile sources of political provocations and strife) lose their influence, and gradually sink into powerless insignificance. The masses of one country have no quarrel with, or enmity towards, the masses of other countries. It is governments, and chiefly irresponsible governments, which hate, fear, envy, taunt, intermeddle, become embroiled with, and finally declare and wage war against, other governments. Indeed, hostile manifestos are constantly proclaiming that the war which is waged is not against the people, but against their rulers.

As long as the power of making war or peace is vested in a person or in a few persons, to whom the assent of the people beforehand is unnecessary, and to whom their censure, after the event, is a matter of indifference, so long is a nation exposed to be dragged into war, without wishing it, without expecting it, and almost without knowing it. The last provocation of diplomacy that precedes the

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first act of war is delivered in secret, and is only made known to the public, if ever it is at all, when too late. The fatal blow is struck, and all that remains to the people is to grumble and fight. But all this will be changed when, as political knowledge becomes more widely spread, the executive as well as the legislative branches shall, in all or most countries, be thoroughly leavened with the democratic spirit. This infusion of the democratic element by no means implies organic changes in such constitutions as ours; but it does imply the ready continuance of that flexible adaptation of old institutions to new requirements that has been acted upon in England for nearly two centuries.

It is to such continuous progress that we hopefully look to avert the possibility that a few men may "with a light heart" plunge a helpless nation into the horrors of a needless war. It is true that even in democracies there will always be a few thoughtless, excitable, and, perhaps, interested persons, who will shout loudly about "honour and glory;" but it is not they, the noisy hundreds, it is the silent millions who constitute the nation. And when the time comes that it shall be the suffrage of these silent millions by which the question of peace or war will be decided, we confidently hope that international wars among civilised countries will become rarer and rarer as matters of fact, until they gradually dwindle into matters of history.

But let us now inquire whether there may not be some shorter and speedier way to put an end to the baneful war-system.

CHAPTER XII.

The Principle of Arbitration—Possible Federation of European States for Settlement of International Disputes—Suggested Council of the United States of Europe—Hero-worship—Pseudo-Patriotism.

4. THE principle of arbitration. There are three ways in which men in private life settle their disputes:—(1) by compulsory arbitration through legal tribunals; (2) by voluntary arbitration; and (3) by personal combat or duelling. Of these three ways the last is the most illogical, absurd, and idiotic, and has almost fallen into disuse. No one will surely, in the present day, argue that the most proper mode of settling a dispute between two persons as to their respective rights to a piece of land, or to a sum of money, is that they should fight, and that the matter in dispute should be adjudged to the conqueror. And yet of the three ways named, the last, being by far the most preposterous, is the only one that is used in the settlement of international disputes. It is not that any one professes to admire it. It is universally condemned as irrational, clumsy, cruel, barbarous, and productive of infinite misery to mankind; but still it is the only mode resorted to. Any other, it is said, would be preferable, but unfortunately there is no other! What an opprobrium to man's heart and brain should this be true! He has pressed the mystic forces of nature into his service, and yet he is impotent to improve on the barbaric internationalism of the Goths and Vandals! Truly, a marvellous incongruity!