

A PEACE ADDRESS

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BY CHARLES SOTHERAN.

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“Were half the power, that fills the world with terror,  
Were half the wealth, bestowed on camps and courts,  
Given to redeem the human mind from error,  
There were no need of arsenals and forts.”

*My Friends*:--Peace, with her olive wand, has been justly considered by all those philosophers who have evolved systems for the humanizing of their species as one of the primal dispensers of blessings, and the estimate is not over-rated.

Let us go out into the quiet night, away from the haunts of community, and in some silent spot stand and gaze around at the peaceful scene sleeping in solemn stillness, or look upward to the starry heaven, where glorious constellations of other worlds revolve according to law in their unfathomable depths. All around and above us is Peace, benign Peace, which maketh happy the condition of the peasant in the cottage, or the monarch in the palace.

Let us, on such an evening, regard some sylvan village nestling by the hill-side, and hear on all sides the prattle of the little ones playing beside the old fathers in the rustic porches rehearsing the narratives of by-gone days, and the good wives at their spinning wheels chatting the homely gossip, and the young men and maidens returning through the fields from their honorable toil and carolling their tuneful ditties, re-echoed now and again by the loiterers beside the hedge-rows whispering the oft-told tale of love. How peaceful the scene. Soon, mother nature, ever in harmony, is

at rest, save when broken by the beetle's noisy hum or the "moping owl's complaint." Universal Peace, how potent thy sway!

This is one picture—there is another.

The same sweet Auburn, but how different the ken. "Bella, horrida bella." Mars is in the ascendant, and the blood-hounds of war have been let loose. The Lord of Sabaoth—the God of armies has been invoked, and in his train follows the horrors attendant upon the most fearful phase of the martyrdom of the race. Around we hear the screams of frightened children and the deep sobs of women struggling in the foul arms of brutal debauchers—we see the simple villagers weltering in their gore, and their homes like funereal pyres lighting up the lurid landscape.

The trumpets' shrill alarms and clarion notes are dying out, and the roaring artillery belch out flame and death no more; moonlight steals over all, and the close crimson shroud overhanging, like cerement, the lives ebbing slowly out of those warriors who "in the cannon's mouth have sought the bubble reputation" of so-called honor gained by foul, frightful murder, or for the keeping of some tattered rag which only glorifies the grave.

The vulture is the master for whom the midnight sacrament of red-vine blood and

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human flesh has been prepared; for whom prayers for mercy have been uttered in vain amid the soldiers' revelling riot.

We need not look to theological tomes for heaven and hell with such pages as these open for our inspection—the bliss of Peace is heaven indeed, the curse of war, hell, verily.

We can almost realize the atheist disbelieving the existence of a beneficent God, or the devil-worshipper prostrating himself before the grotesque idol of his fiend.

From the infancy of humanity, in the pre-historic period to this hour, the sweet and kindly voices of nature have been drowned by the "Unholy song of war," awakened to-day as in the past by black ignorance, king-craft's or state-craft's lust of power and, shame above all, theology.

Truly has the poet said—

"War is the statesman's game, the priest's delight,  
The lawyer's jest, the hired assassin's trade."

With honorable ruffians in their train, potentates inflamed by the desires of accursed ambition or hateful revenge on a brother monarch, have blighted this unhappy planet with the terrors of long-con-

tinued devastation and bloodshed. Because some ambassador has turned his back on a miserable worm called king, cities have to be sacked and realms devastated amid the fury and carnage of battles; or, perchance, because a crack-brained historiographer has proved to some Emperor an ancient, or fancied right to a few thousand acres of land, the earth has to be baptized in blood drained from the deep sufferings of humanity.

History, which teaches so many valuable lessons, shows us how appeals have been made in the past from right to might. And how often, when from theological argument to artillery, religious wars of all the most destructive and disgraceful, have been the order of the day. Remember for one moment the Thirty Years' War and Alva's Netherlands Record, or, the other fearful hostilities between Catholic and Protestant. Above all those fearful crusades, when Christianity and Mohammedanism met in the tented field, and when scientific knowledge was dissipated temporarily, libraries destroyed, and European civilization hurled backward centuries by the maleficent "Bibles of the sword." Consider this dreadful struggle for the land in which Christ labored—teaching His followers the Gospel of humanity—and all Palestine deluged with the taint of Saracen and European

blood for the possession of a sepulchre. 6

Does society appear to gain much from these experiences, when we saw that not twenty years ago the Crimean war was brought about by the cry resuscitated from Mediævalism of "The Holy Sepulchre," and the last traditional resting place of the Nazarene was made again the pretence for the wild dreams of ambition. Shame upon Christian Europe! Shame upon our much belated nineteenth century progress.

It is well known and I need hardly advert to the fact that at the present moment there are in Europe no less than five million soldier drones, under what is termed a *PEACE* footing. If we analyze this position from a politico-economical stand-point, we can judge of the immense draught taken from the ranks of labor and art,—which must inevitably aid the eventual ravages of plague and famine, and which all recognize are greatly aided by the anarchy in countries during a time of war. If five millions of the sinews of the population of Europe represent a *Peace* footing, I would ask—what, in the name of goodness, would denote a *WAR* one? Yet, every telegram from the trans-atlantic continent hints at the possibility of some complicated difficulty, and that the various governments

are still drafting the war levies in the shape of conscript and recruit food-power.

In the last century, long before the French wars, and what we have lately seen, the means for the realization of Prussian aggrandizement schemes, Edmund Burke computed, that thirty-six million beings had lost their lives in battle, about one in seventy of the human race, and he points out that this did not represent the deaths of multitudes and the loss of millions of wealth caused indirectly by the same.

A war has been concluded and the belligerents agree to terms,—that part of the human family interested seem but to be actuated with one set of ideas,—the mural crowns for the victorious commanders and the decrees of triumphs, of festive boards, of Swords of Honor, of Presidentships and so forth. All the world wonders in admiration at the brilliant genius of the victor-chief, the valor of the troops, the apparent magnanimity, the soldierly fortitude, the records of fool-hardy daring, and perhaps the reckless conduct of forlorn-hope leaders. Not a word is heard about the unhappy wounded, the mangled dead, and worse than all, the untold heart-misery in the thousands of homes in which death's arrow has been cast before the time. The chamber of horrors is closed with wreaths of

laurels. The honorable peace and territorial gains are the constant theme. Fallacious superficiality! The only real gains are those acquired by cenotaph makers, paymasters, contractors, and carrion camp-followers. Nothing is said about the losses consequent on the enormous tax on the resources of the country to continue the war when in progress, and pay the future interest on loans which bear down so fearfully on the national, and therefore, individual industry. § The expense required to keep a staff of civilians employed in the collection of such taxes, and the waste of time which should be utilized in the manufacture of absolutely necessary commodities at rates so as to only call for such short hours of work, in order to give greater opportunity for that period really due to the moral and intellectual improvement of the race. It is honestly believed by many that if these national debts (war debts, mark you) did not exist, three or four hours a day would be a sufficient length of time for operative labor, instead of the eight or nine, which our struggling masses have to occupy. Under such conditions we would hear very little about the chronic bad times.

Society is crushed, real property is deter-

iorated and labor crippled beneath the burdens imposed, in order to pay the blood money to the Barings and Rothschilds.

When a Peace has been concluded, the country teems with men demoralized, and very often incapable of honest work—who find their way to every part of the land, and their evil habits and idleness are contagious.

War rarely decides the right—it has no relationship to a moral issue, or the actual settlement of international disputes.

By ancient thinkers, war and Peace were considered co-existing necessities—identical in another form with the contending, yet harmonizing, other dual principles—light and darkness, life and death, decay and resurrection, Ormuzd and Ahriman, Spirituality and materiality, good and evil,—a co-relative was always found to simultaneously exist.

Many modern thinkers accepting what are thus believed to be philosophical truisms and also predestinated by Supreme Intelligence opiate their understandings with sophistry, and frequently urge further—that war has, if anything, been an accelerative to the civilization of barbaric communities, or keeps the proper numerical balance of cultured populations. Such arguments are simply a denial of the fact,

that humanity is now in a transitory stage of evolution towards its nearer approach to future normal perfectibility—those who plead in extenuation of war, only augment the numerous soporifics already in vogue.

Percy Bysshe Shelley, one of the most misunderstood, yet noblest philosophers and reformers who ever drew human breath, pointed out in a remarkable essay against capital punishment, and equally applicable to our subject, that:

“Governments which derive their institutions from the existence of circumstances of barbarism and violence, with some rare exceptions, perhaps, are bloody in proportion as they are despotic, and form the manners of their subjects to a sympathy with their own spirit.”

In other portions of his works, Shelley repudiates the notion that community if left free to choose, would wantonly heap ruin, vice or slavery, or curse the race with the withering blight of war. In one of his finest poems he shows us how—

“Kings, priests and statesmen blast the human  
flower,  
Even in its tender bud ; their influence darts  
Like subtle poison through the bloodless veins  
Of desolate society. The child,

Ere he can lisp his mother's sacred name,  
Swells with the unnatural pride of crime, and  
lifts

His baby sword even in a hero's mood.—  
This infant arm becomes the bloodiest scourge  
Of devastated earth: whilst specious names,  
Learnt in soft childhood's unsuspecting hour,  
Serve as the sophisms with which manhood  
dims

Bright reason's ray, and sanctifies the sword  
Upraised to shed a brother's innocent blood."

From childhood to manhood, education, at first glance, is apparently intended to foment warlike feelings instead of inculcating a spirit of Peace—our public school class-readers are filled with compositions which can only foster ideas more fit for savage than civilized beings. I contend that it is a crime to teach such incitives to bloodshed to the young, almost, so to say, with the mother's milk; they should be expurgated from the early class-books, and if to be taught at all only at a later period, when the poison can be met with antidotes, prepared in the early stages of training.

How often in the home life we see the mother looking with pride on her strong soldier son, while the peaceful, studious youth is sent uncomplainingly with his books to the garret—the warlike and super-

ficial drawing-room dand is the glittering cynsure of all eyes. So has it been with humanity—the peaceful mission of Jesus has been banished for eighteen long centuries.

It is frequently stated the Old Testament sanctions slavery, polygamy and war—therefore, some urge these evils are of divine ordinance. In the face of Christ's solemn words of reprobation in the New Testament how can such an argument stand as that of an all good God for one second extenuating such curses, or delighting in human gore.

Yet views of this character are advanced. In the unhappy war with the Confederate States both sides prayed for victory—success for the son nursed by the same mother was defeat for the off-spring of the same father. Whether success or defeat, desolation was meted out to both North and South.

How nauseating were the blasphemous telegrams sent during the great Franco-Prussian war by the German autocrat to his wife. This question is not one which can be treated lightly; but what could exceed the contempt expressed in the words of ridicule passed from one to another during that fearful time—

"By divine will, my dear Augusta,  
We've had another awful buster—  
10,000 Frenchmen sent below,  
Praise God, from whom all blessings flow."

How can we without sorrow hear utterances which prove the callousness of the human heart and indifference of the masses to the most dreadful emanation from ignorance—War?

Were the French leaders better than the Prussians in this respect? No. What of the glib words sent in joy by the Emperor to the Tuilleries—"Louis has received his baptism of fire"?

Herbert Spencer has done well to attract attention to this aspect of thought in the following words:

"No invader ever raised standard but persuaded himself that he had a just cause. Sacrifices and prayers have preceded every military expedition, from one of Cæsar's campaigns down to a border foray. God on our side is the universal cry. Each of two conflicting nations consecrates its flags; whichever conquers sings a Te Deum. Attila conceived himself to have a "Divine claim to the dominion of the earth"; the Spaniards subdued the Indians under plea of converting them to Christianity, hanging thirteen refractory ones in honor of Jesus Christ and his apostles; and we English

justify our colonial aggressions by saying that the Creator intended the Anglo-Saxon race to people the world! An insatiate lust of conquest transmutes manslaying into a virtue; and amongst more races than one implacable revenge has made assassination a duty."

The wonderful applications of science, such as steam, are being utilized by military commanders, and, if persisted in, can but exhibit a more frightful slaughter and more additional horrors than the annals of history have ever yet recorded.

Sixteen different messages can be now transmitted by notation on the same telegraphic wire at the same time—and an inventor explained to me a few days ago a method by which written communications can be sent along the ordinary wires in facsimile—he contended that as, by this means, a cipher of twenty pages could be transmitted four hundred miles in ten minutes he had no doubt that therefore being of the utmost utility for military purposes the invention would be speedily taken hold of by the government.

As scientists urge, the community is now leaving the metaphysical age behind, all should consider the probable effects of what a really scientific war would be.

From the epoch when popes Eugene the Fourth and Alexander Borgia, trampling on the inalienable rights of humanity, divided the whole heathen world between Spaniard and Portuguese, the Americas have never recovered from the bloody legacy then bestowed.

The present attempts of politicians and office-seekers to bring about hostilities between Spain on the Cuban difficulty, and with Mexico because of the Rio Grande troubles, are so transparent that the promoters unblushingly expose their nefarious designs.

Our brethren must be shown that: "War, even in the best state of an army, with all the alleviations of courtesy and honor, with all the correctives of morality and religion, is nevertheless so great an evil, that to engage in it (with or) without a dire necessity is a crime of the blackest dye."—

They must learn that the most triumphant victory over another branch of the human family, surely bequeaths to their adversaries as well as themselves, a succession of poverty and greater degradation than before the gauge of war was thrown down. Neither money payment nor territorial acquisition can indemnify the ferocity of war, the ravages of pestilence, the curse

of famine, the prejudice to labor and the loss of life

It has been truly said, and this aphorism must be brought home to Americans in the present crisis.

“The triumphs of truth are the most glorious, chiefly because they are the most bloodless of all victories, deriving their highest lustre from the number of the *saved*, not of the *slain*.”—

As children of progress we have all studied the innumerable woes of community—and should refuse to acknowledge that fate will either bring about miserable conditions, or preserve them.

All recognize the noble labors of the Gurneys, the Peases, the Hankeys, the Brights and other just members of the old Peace party, who, imitating the straightforward dealings of William Penn with the aborigines, and the policy of “Peace on earth, good-will to men,” taught by ancient philosophers—*have*, whenever they saw the necessity, come forward from the ranks of private life and shown to potentates the wisdom of negotiation, deliberation and delay before the commencement of the active prosecution of war. To their labors this republic and the mother country owe the great success of that course happily inau-

gured in the Alabama Claims' Arbitration. "The pen is verily mightier than the sword."

Old faiths are being integralized with new, and ancient ideas are receding before the march of modern thought. The extraordinary activity which permeates every branch of the community, has aroused men and women equally from their long continued apathy, and seems bearing solid fruit, and the advance guard is now marching on to the peaceful solution of questions of *national*, and therefore, of international importance. The settlement of one difficulty must aid that of another, and particularly that of the greatest of all—War.

Feudal aristocracy no longer holds a place in the economy of government—there is now an aristocracy of working men and working women who endeavor to strengthen legislation for their best interests.

We are getting into the age of steel, which in the future, humanity will no longer need for war purposes, but for the fabrication of commercial products; for steam-engines instead of cannon; for reapers in lieu of guns; for plow-shares in place of bayonets.

We must all reckon upon and strive for the period close at hand, which Arago prophesied: "A time will come when the

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science of destruction shall bend before the arts of peace; when the genius which multiplies our powers—which creates new products—which diffuses comfort and happiness among the great mass of the people—shall occupy in the general estimation of mankind that rank which reason and common sense now assigns to it.”

One of the great factors in this important problem will be the America of the future—bearing aloft as of yore, the blue stars of hope commingled with the red stripes of past affliction. The new American will be evolved, conserving in his veins the blood of the Mongolian Asiatic, of the African, of the aboriginal Indian, of the European—and in him will be centralized the knowledge and hope of all the nations, and then

“No more shall nation against nation rise,  
Nor ardent warriors meet with hateful eyes.”

A true harmonious philosophy of intellectual religion and pure reason shall bring about that victorious termination of our struggles, when humanity—

“Will no longer be insulted by seeing  
bad pens mended by good swords, and weak  
heads exalted by strong hands.”

When war will be known to the youngest child to be against morality, against religion, against liberty.

When Universal Peace hitherto considered the dream of the poet, the reverie of the sage and aspiration of the philosopher, shall be no longer a fanciful utopia, but a veritable arcadia of harmony and love, proving the realization of true liberty, true equality, true fraternity.

Go on noble workers in the sacred cause!  
Rouse the nations from their long sleep!  
Shame the rulers into compliance with your just demands! Force humanity to bend the knee before the sovereign rule of Universal Peace!

Go on each brave soul in thy victorious work till death closes the triumphs and struggles of thy mortal body—and, then as thronging with the hosts of bright invisibles in communion with the apostles of Peace in the bosom of the Supreme—the sight of thy fellow-beings in the terrestrial elysium, succored by thy earthly endeavors transforms into blissful beatitude—

“The remembrance  
With which thy happy spirit contemplates  
Its well-spent pilgrimage on earth.

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