

# THE INTERNATIONAL ARBITRATION ALLIANCE.<sup>1</sup>

AN ADDRESS READ BEFORE THE PEACE CONGRESS AT  
PARIS, 1900.

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THE armaments of nations, built up by many centuries, have attained their fullest development in an age when the popular conscience is in revolt against bloodshed, and when the supreme material interest of the great majority of mankind is peace.

Although such armaments are kept up theoretically on the pretext of necessary provision for self-defence—this being the only admissible justification of war—the fact that in some nations least liable to invasion they exceed in strength what would be necessary for defence, and in others are supported to the utmost though necessarily inadequate against the only invaders conceivable, proves that the increase of military and naval establishments is largely due to interests other than those of defence. They are the refuge and only resource of millions of unskilled men; they are the support of many industries; they supply realms in which personal ambition may most easily find promotion, title, rank, privilege, at a time when the old aristocratic régime has lost authority and is losing prestige.

<sup>1</sup>In an address before the Free Religious Association in Boston, May, 1898, Dr. Conway proposed a new plan for international arbitration, and printed it in more detail in the *South Place Magazine*, London, November, 1898. A recently published letter of Mr. Herbert Spencer alluding to it having revived interest in the plan, Dr. Conway was requested to prepare a full statement of the project for the Peace Congress which assembled in Paris, September 30, 1900. Having been recalled to America before that date, his address was read. The present article is printed from an advance copy of the address, and is published together with the scheme, the adoption of which was moved in the Congress by Mr. Hodgson Pratt, President of the International Peace Association. The editorial position of *The Open Court* with regard to the questions here touched upon, is pretty well indicated in the articles published in Vol. XII., pp. 436 and 691, and in Vol. XIII., p. 218, where considerations are adduced that diverge in certain respects from Mr. Conway's remarks and from Mr. Pratt's propositions, though without invalidating the general high and laudable tenor of their position.—*Ed.*

Above all, the armaments alone maintain national rank. Were all the Powers unarmed, there would be an equality between nations small and large, rich and poor, which the foremost nations will not admit. Governments, whatever the sentiments of individuals administering them, are creatures of an established system by which for each its might is the measure of right, and its will if successfully enforced is the divine will. The pride disguised as patriotism, and the egoism disguised as religion, which lead populations to worship their flag apart from any association with justice and moral greatness, render every flag to some extent a center and source of international hostility,—the comb of a cock flaming its defiance to all surrounding dunghills. And even though powerful governments show an increasing disinclination for literal war with nations of anything like equal strength, they generally endeavor to secure their will over others by menacing displays of military and naval superiority. We live under a sort of international reign of terror.

Thus while the supreme material interest of the peoples in our increasingly industrial and commercial age is the continuance of literal peace, this is consistent with wide-spread interests in war-like establishments and almost universal acceptance of a standard of national greatness and honor based on physical force. So universal, indeed, that in most wars the masses of the people have been induced against their sentiments and interests to consent to the bloodshed by a fostered fiction that their national honor was at stake.

It is self-evident that a point of honor between nations cannot be settled by proof that one is superior to the other in the means of slaughter. It is equally obvious that a nation is not the rightful judge of its own honor. It is an elementary principle that no judge shall sit in his own case. Yet in the absence of any method by which a human standard of honor may be upheld above national self-assertion the standard of brute force remains; and in the absence of any impartial tribunal to check national egoism, each government is left to sit in its own case, without appeal.

These anomalies have been recognised by the wisest and best of mankind for generations, but all plans of remedy have failed.

The most important effort ever made to substitute arbitration for war was that of the recent Peace Congress at the Hague. While it was a salient evidence of the increasing sentiment of humanity, and was much that Peace should receive even a complimentary decoration from nations armed to the teeth, the evil system proved

itself compulsory; even the monarch who proposed disarmament cannot himself disarm; and War, having united in the homage to Peace, steps forth to drive his chariot through all her Hague defences and fill the world anew with slaughter.

The members of that Congress, as official representatives of Powers jealously armed against each other, entered with hands tied. For each his own nation's power was necessarily the supreme interest, the interests of Peace subordinate. Peace was compelled to pay for her decoration by conceding the legitimacy of War as a civilised method. Arbitration not being obligatory, we are practically left where we were before: arbitration will continue where self-interest dictates it, war where self-interest dictates that.

Hopes were built on the agreement that the effort of any nation to induce another to accept arbitration or to bring about peace should not be deemed by either party a hostile interference. This provision is shown to be delusive. Each government has its own complications to deal with, its own schemes awaiting opportunity, and there is a governmental instinct against setting any precedent of intermeddling which may some day return on itself with interest. And, alas, few of the foremost nations are in a moral attitude entitling them to much influence over others. As any unwelcome offer of "good offices" can be met with a *tu quoque*, and would be so met by a nation confident of victory, no such influence can be counted on. We are more likely to see a development of the old fashion of courteously exploiting a neighbor's difficulties to get some advantage, to be paid for in moral support.

It is abundantly proved that the vicious system cannot reform itself. Also, that whatever the benevolence of individuals deriving power from the system, that power will inevitably support the system, and the more virtuous the official the more potent will be his compulsory service to the evil. His virtues will gild his chain and ours. A corollary of this is, that for the promoters of peace to try and carry their cause by aid of existing governments is not a mere waste of force but an importation of weakness. For every government proposing peace is liable to suspicion of seeking prey in sheep's clothing. Whatever may be their several values for internal purposes, the governments, as far as the cause of international peace is concerned, necessarily enforce on each other just that kind of solidarity—the solidarity of mutually respected selfishness—which it is the task of civilisation to break up, in order that the elements of impartiality represented in the separateness of nations may be free to coöperate for a solidarity of justice.

Assuming then that the armaments and the option of slaughter can be changed only by evolutionary forces, these forces must not be left to natural selection, the strong devouring the weak. It is human selection that must be introduced to check this international cannibalism; and as all appeals to the moral sentiments, to religion, to humanity, have only resulted in making War careful to be always unctuously moral, pious, and humanitarian, gaining thereby new leases, it seems absolutely necessary that a new method should be tried.

The only method that has not been tried is that of bringing the moral sense and the justice of all mankind, represented by competent men in all nations but unconnected with their governments, to deal with every particular dispute that threatens peace,—deal with it as it arises,—and by a reasoned judgment pronounce the adjustment required by the honor of each nation concerned.

The proposal thus made is to concentrate all the higher human forces, and them alone, to overpower the brute and inorganic forces. Although it may appear Utopian to confront the pride and passion of empires with judgments that cannot be enforced, precisely there lies the only resource that has not been drawn upon. Could we enforce a decree of peace, it would be at once sanctioning force and enabling her opponents to continue their easy victories over reason and right. But how can any nation combat the unarmed, the purely spiritual force, which says: "Yes, you have the power, you can do as you will; our power is limited to proving that you are in the wrong: justice is against you, law is against you, reason is against you; here are the facts, proven and weighed by the wisest men, the greatest jurists, not of unfriendly nations but of all nations: it is the consensus of the competent: you have the power to defy it, you can enter on a career of murder, but not without branding your nation with guilt and dishonor."

This appeal to simple truth and justice might not restrain ambitious rulers and militarists, but it could hardly fail to reinforce the party of peace in any country where the people are being excited to war by declarations that national honor is at stake,—usually the most effectual pretext. The peacemakers would be given a powerful argument if enabled to place before the misled masses a judgment representing the wisdom and justice of all nations pointing out the real victory of honor, and proving that it cannot be won by manslaughter.

The plan may not, of course, succeed in all cases. There may be found obstructions that cannot be surmounted or tunnelled by

our engine of peace, especially in its primitive condition. We can but do our best. We can but set our ablest engineers to the work of preparing a highway for peace throughout all the world. If our plan should be the means of preventing even one war—only one—it would more than compensate all the labors given to its inauguration. But if it could prevent one war it may prevent another, and another; and we can hope that ultimately the people in all countries, having found the more excellent way, may come to regard their vast and costly armaments as exhausted and fruitless trees, and ask why they should longer cumber the ground.

#### CONSTITUTION.

It is proposed to form an International Alliance based on the following principles:

1. In no case whatever can a point of honor between nations be honorably settled, nor a question of justice be justly settled, by a trial of physical strength.
2. It is inadmissible for a nation to be the sole judge of its own honor, or of the justice of its own case, in any dispute with another nation.
3. The interests of all nations, both material and moral, being affected by every disturbance of peace between two of their number, Humanity itself is necessarily a party to every dispute that endangers peace, and should be represented in each such case by a tribunal competent to investigate the same, to discover the right and the wrong, and to affirm the adjustment required by justice and honor.

I. It shall be the duty of this Alliance to watch vigilantly all sources of difference or of irritation between nations, to study all facts and collect information, such as might be useful to a tribunal of arbitration should the issue become serious.

II. Members of Associations now existing for the promotion of peace, and of such as may be formed, shall be admitted as members of the Alliance and shall unitedly elect in their own country a Council of five.

III. Members of a Council need not belong to any other organisation. They shall be persons holding no office—administrative, political, military, diplomatic—under their own or any other government, such as might render them liable to act under governmental pressure.

IV. Members of Council shall receive no payment. When summoned together and while sitting in Council their personal expenses and pecuniary losses shall be reimbursed by their electors.

V. There shall be no president in any Council. Should a chairman be found desirable during any consultation, he shall be chosen by lot at the opening of each *séance*.

VI. The consultations of the Council shall be in secret, and its opinion unsigned, but every opinion shall set forth fully the facts, authentications, and arguments on which it is based.

VII. Members unable to attend their Council may send written opinions and arguments, but there shall be no voting by proxy.

VIII. Any Society of the Alliance that may believe peace imperilled should

at once communicate with the Societies in other countries, and if two Societies agree that the occasion requires action all the Councils shall assemble.

The Councils shall assemble on the demand of a Council in any nation immediately involved by the dispute requiring adjustment.

Any Council may assemble *proprio motu* to consider the necessity of action in a particular case, and may correspond with Councillors elsewhere, and an agreement of two Councils shall cause all to be summoned.

IX. The Council of any country that is a party to the menacing dispute, shall assemble at an early stage of the quarrel and collect all the facts relating to it, and state its views, and copies of such facts and statement shall be forwarded to each of the other Councils, to be used as documents in reaching their conclusions. But the action of Councils belonging to the disputing nations shall be limited to this.

X. If the tribunal constituted by the Hague conventions fails in any instance to bring about arbitration, or shall so delay it as to endanger peace, a General Council shall assemble to adjudicate the dispute. The General Council shall not decline this obligation even though one or both of the disputants should not be signatories to the Hague conventions.

XI. The Councils in their several countries shall in such case confide their respective conclusions and statements, each to two of its members: these shall meet with similar representatives from the other Councils (from nations not parties to the dispute) in some impartial place, and shall together constitute the General Council, or Tribunal of Arbitration.

XII. The General Council shall not meet as mere delegates, fettered by the letter of the conclusions of their Councils. They are to compare these several statements, to consider freely any modifications that may be suggested, and to weigh any new fact that may have come to light since the statements were prepared. Their digest of all the statements and opinions shall be embodied in a full and final statement and judgment which shall at once be published.

XIII. Whenever two Councils belonging respectively to the disputing countries, or three Councils of other countries, or three societies of the Alliance, shall agree that action is too urgent for the normal procedure, as many members of the various Councils as can gather in one place shall constitute the General Council and pass final judgment as such.