

Pacifism

J. O'Hanley, '36

Transcending all the-isms of the present day world is Pacifism. It stands alone; Communism, Socialism, Nationalism, raise their Hydra heads here and there to shake the world with the thunderous snap of their mighty jaws. But they, though of mighty concern to some nations, touch others not at all. Pacifism, a question mark in the careers of all great countries since the world began, now dominates the international horizon. In every Chamber of Government, amongst all powerful nations, by all mighty statesmen, is this discussed. At the breakfast table, pseudo—politicians vaunt their favourite editor's opinion on it; soap-box orators thunderate on it; men pray for it. By many is it discussed; by few is it upheld. At least, its widespread popularity as a debatable subject testifies that this shallow world has at last awakened to realize that Justice and Charity must prevail, and is trying to further the noble sentiment expressed at Christ's birth, "Peace on Earth, Good Will to Men."

But what of Pacifism? What is it? Truly different tongues lend various meanings. Hardly is there under the sun a nation whose popular opinion of peace coincides with that of its neighbor. Their ideas have strings attached to them: strings that can be drawn taut about their enemy's neck and so favor themselves. The idealist sees peace as the Universal Good, from which all individuals will benefit through the mutual amity reflected in their enterprises. The realist desires peace as a means to an end; that end being profit. He perceives in a peaceful world the reality of an economic dream. He seeks peace not for itself but for what it will bring to him. I would combine the two and describe peace as a state in which men would live in collective amateness, individual prosperity, and universal goodliness. This would be the fulfillment of God's great commandment, "Love one another."

Will peace always remain an ideal? There are many who would deny Pacifism any existence; many who admit its temporary possibilities, but deny its continuity; and a few who think its reality could for all time be established. The ablest opponent of peace is economic strife. Remove this and War would lose one of its fundamental causes.

Ever since the seventeenth century, when Mercantalism pervaded and polluted the atmosphere of economy, nations have been striving to maintain the Balance of Trade favorable to themselves and disadvantageous to their competitors. Competition increases friction, and among nations engenders hate, the father of War. Up to that time the lust for land grasped nations and plunged them into the abyss of war, whence after many toilsome years, they emerged into the doubtful glory of the victor, or the crushed state of the vanquished. Wealth is power, power is might, might is right: there is the foul deception under which nations have labored since the world began, and, in their blindness, will still labor until some catastrophic stroke tears the growth from their eyes, and enables them to see their pitiful state.

What a contrast between Peace and War! how magnificent! how pitiful! Magnificent to think that such a state as peace could exist; pitiful to see its usurper. The cloak of blindness still hovers over men's eyes, though partly rent by the awfulness, the filthiness, the dread finality of the mechanical war of two decades ago. Yet, sad as it may seem, that rent is being fastly sewn with the threads of Nationalism and Republicism. From his towering throne of cards, the Voice of Germany urges the assembled population back into the harness of national policy, which ended so disastrously for themselves not so long ago. In Italy the Dictator views, with pleased eye, the rank and file of his Juggernaut, ready to trample under foot the nations of Europe and reclaim the lost glory that was Rome. The Japanese Mikado commands a huge navy on the water and immense armies on the land—the challenge from the Orient. "The watchdogs of the world," Britain and America are apprehensive but nevertheless dormant.

War is inevitable. But why? Because it has been instilled into men's hearts that strife is the inherent beauty of life, that Justice among nations cannot exist, that war is necessary to right an internal wrong. Because armaments, national antagonism, and internal disputes exist. And because men seek the world, not God. The League of Nations, that noble offspring of the Great War, is the foundation on which might be built the Peace of Nations. Arbitration is the life of peace, and the League is the first system of international arbitration on a widespread scale ever devised. It developed from the organized thought

of people, whose warlike minds were illumined by the light of peace. Are its efforts doomed to failure? Yes, unless the nations come to realize that in order to produce stability, they must co-operate, that to co-operate they must endure, and that to endure they must abolish war. Such a war, as the next one will be, would tear the core from civilization and plunge men into a primitive state, in which unity would be impossible, government improbable, and existence abhorrent.

Is Peace, universal and continuous, attainable? Men of great learning and much repute will say that it is impossible of achievement. Despite this, the peaceful maintain that it can be accomplished. But how? Abolish armaments, munitions, munition factories and the like, thereby reducing Mar's most powerful cohort. Establish with the League of Nations as a beginning, a new Court of the nations, internationally recognized, with the greatest power of arbitration, which, diplomatically utilized, can ward off any disaster. Things far exceeding the bounds of past imaginations have been accomplished by the physical sciences, and why should the social sciences not produce such a state tending so much to produce harmony and happiness on earth. This may easily be conceived, but not so easily realized. Men as a whole have lost faith in each other's integrity, co-operative honesty has gone by the board, to be replaced by the underhand policies of cut-throat competition. Man's God is Mammon, the god of gold, and until it is torn from its pedestal and flung to the earth whence it came, man will continue to be avaricious, grasping, desirous of power and wealth at any cost. He will continue to love his neighbor not for himself, but for his money.

St. John, the beloved disciple of Christ, repeated tirelessly to his followers the admonition—"My little children, love one another." Oh, that war, with all its schemes to bring heart-rending torture on its participants, might die the death! Our generation, I fear, will not see its downfall, nay, rather its victory. Still we cannot but hope that they, who see war scattering the foundations of the universe, and sounding the knell of civilization, may perceive its futility, its awfulness, its coarseness. We only desire that future generations shall abhor the touch of its clammy hand, that defiles man's reason in the muck of patriotism and propaganda. Let men learn the joy of peace, the love of peace, the prosperity of peace;

let peace, not war, be dinned into the ears of governments by statesmen with courage to support their opinions; let the religion of peace, Christ's religion, be preached throughout the world and save civilization from itself.

At any time, one mis-step may sink the nations into dread conflict. Is it bound to happen? Yes, if we leave all our convictions to the other fellow's courage. Peace can be achieved—world peace: but not unless people learn to think for themselves; not unless individuals support the movement; not unless anti-peace rulers are dethroned; not unless national antagonisms are severed at their roots. Ban war, by taking up the arms of peace. Bring happiness into universal reality, the happiness of security. Then shall the world thrive and prosper; then shall science triumph over all its obstacles; then shall man be godly and being godly, be happy—the fulfillment of his end on earth.



"If a little knowledge is dangerous, where is the man who has so much as to be out of danger."—*Huxley*.

"Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rain'd
A ghastly dew
From the nation's airy navies grappling in the
Central blue."

—*Tennyson*

"Man never falls so low that he can see nothing
higher than himself."—*Parker*.

"That low man seeks a little thing to do
Sees it and does it:
This high man, with a great thing to pursue,
Dies ere he knows it."

—*Browning*