

EXPANSION AND PEACE

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9

IT was the gentlest of our poets who wrote:

“Be bolde! Be bolde! and everywhere, Be bolde”;
Be not too bold! Yet better the excess
Than the defect; better the more than less.

Longfellow's love of peace was profound; but he was a man, and a wise man, and he knew that cowardice does not promote peace, and that even the great evil of war may be a less evil than cringing to iniquity.

Captain Mahan, than whom there is not in the country a man whom we can more appropriately designate by the fine and high phrase, “a Christian gentleman,” and who is incapable of advocating wrong-doing of any kind, national or individual, gives utterance to the feeling of the great majority of manly and thoughtful men when he denounces the great danger of indiscriminate advocacy of peace at any price, because “it may lead men to tamper with iniquity, to compromise with unrighteousness, soothing their conscience with the belief that war is so

entirely wrong that beside it no other tolerated evil is wrong. Witness Armenia and witness Crete. War has been avoided; but what of the national consciences that beheld such iniquity and withheld the hand?"

Peace is a great good; and doubly harmful, therefore, is the attitude of those who advocate it in terms that would make it synonymous with selfish and cowardly shrinking from warring against the existence of evil. The wisest and most far-seeing champions of peace will ever remember that, in the first place, to be good it must be righteous, for unrighteous and cowardly peace may be worse than any war; and, in the second place, that it can often be obtained only at the cost of war. Let me take two illustrations:

The great blot upon European international morality in the closing decade of this century has been not a war, but the infamous peace kept by the joint action of the great powers, while Turkey inflicted the last horrors of butchery, torture, and outrage upon the men, women, and children of despairing Armenia. War was avoided; peace was kept; but what a peace! Infinitely greater human misery was inflicted during this peace than in the late wars of Germany with France, of Russia with Turkey; and this misery fell, not on armed men, but upon de-

fenseless women and children, upon the gray-beard and the stripling no less than upon the head of the family; and it came, not in the mere form of death or imprisonment, but of tortures upon men, and, above all, upon women, too horrible to relate—tortures of which it is too terrible even to think. Moreover, no good resulted from the bloodshed and misery. Often this is the case in a war, but often it is not the case. The result of the last Turko-Russian war was an immense and permanent increase of happiness for Bulgaria, Servia, Bosnia, and Herzegovina. These provinces became independent or passed under the dominion of Austria, and the advantage that accrued to them because of this expansion of the domain of civilization at the expense of barbarism has been simply incalculable. This expansion produced peace, and put a stop to the ceaseless, grinding, bloody tyranny that had desolated the Balkans for so many centuries. There are many excellent people who have praised Tolstoi's fantastic religious doctrines, his fantastic advocacy of peace. The same quality that makes the debauchee and the devotee alternate in certain decadent families, the hysterical development which leads to violent emotional reaction in a morbid nature from vice to virtue, also leads to the creation of Tolstoi's "Kreutzer Sonata" on the one hand, and of his unhealthy peace-

mysticism on the other. A sane and healthy mind would be as incapable of the moral degradation of the novel as of the decadent morality of the philosophy. If Tolstoi's countrymen had acted according to his moral theories they would now be extinct, and savages would have taken their place. Unjust war is a terrible sin. It does not nowadays in the aggregate cause anything like the misery that is caused in the aggregate by unjust dealing toward one's neighbors in the commercial and social world; and to condemn all war is just as logical as to condemn all business and all social relations, as to condemn love and marriage because of the frightful misery caused by brutal and unregulated passion. If Russia had acted upon Tolstoi's philosophy, all its people would long ago have disappeared from the face of the earth, and the country would now be occupied by wandering tribes of Tartar barbarians. The Armenian massacres are simply illustrations on a small scale of what would take place on the very largest scale if Tolstoi's principles became universal among civilized people. It is not necessary to point out that the teaching which would produce such a condition of things is fundamentally immoral.

Again, peace may come only through war. There are men in our country who seem-

ingly forget that at the outbreak of the Civil War the great cry raised by the opponents of the war was the cry for peace. One of the most amusing and most biting satires written by the friends of union and liberty during the Civil War was called the "New Gospel of Peace," in derision of this attitude. The men in our own country who, in the name of peace, have been encouraging Aguinaldo and his people to shoot down our soldiers in the Philippines might profit not a little if they would look back to the days of the bloody draft riots, which were deliberately incited in the name of peace and free speech, when the mob killed men and women in the streets and burned orphan children in the asylums as a protest against the war. Four years of bloody struggle with an armed foe, who was helped at every turn by the self-styled advocates of peace, were needed in order to restore the Union; but the result has been that the peace of this continent has been effectually assured. Had the short-sighted advocates of peace for the moment had their way, and secession become an actual fact, nothing could have prevented a repetition in North America of the devastating anarchic warfare that obtained for three quarters of a century in South America after the yoke of Spain was thrown off. We escaped generations of an-

archy and bloodshed, because our fathers who upheld Lincoln and followed Grant were men in every sense of the term, with too much common sense to be misled by those who preached that war was always wrong, and with a fund of stern virtue deep in their souls which enabled them to do deeds from which men of over-soft natures would have shrunk appalled.

Wars between civilized communities are very dreadful, and as nations grow more and more civilized we have every reason, not merely to hope, but to believe that they will grow rarer and rarer. Even with civilized peoples, as was shown by our own experience in 1861, it may be necessary at last to draw the sword rather than to submit to wrong-doing. But a very marked feature in the world-history of the present century has been the growing infrequency of wars between great civilized nations. The Peace Conference at The Hague is but one of the signs of this growth. I am among those who believe that much was accomplished at that conference, and I am proud of the leading position taken in the conference by our delegates. Incidentally I may mention that the testimony is unanimous that they were able to take this leading position chiefly because we had just emerged victorious from our most righteous war with Spain. Scant attention is

paid to the weakling or the coward who babbles of peace; but due heed is given to the strong man with sword girt on thigh who preaches peace, not from ignoble motives, not from fear or distrust of his own powers, but from a deep sense of moral obligation.

The growth of peacefulness between nations, however, has been confined strictly to those that are civilized. It can only come when both parties to a possible quarrel feel the same spirit. With a barbarous nation peace is the exceptional condition. On the border between civilization and barbarism war is generally normal because it must be under the conditions of barbarism. Whether the barbarian be the Red Indian on the frontier of the United States, the Afghnan on the border of British India, or the Turkoman who confronts the Siberian Cossack, the result is the same. In the long run civilized man finds he can keep the peace only by subduing his barbarian neighbor; for the barbarian will yield only to force, save in instances so exceptional that they may be disregarded. Back of the force must come fair dealing, if the peace is to be permanent. But without force fair dealing usually amounts to nothing. In our history we have had more trouble from the Indian tribes whom we pampered and petted than from those we

wronged ; and this has been true in Siberia, Hindustan, and Africa.

Every expansion of civilization makes for peace. In other words, every expansion of a great civilized power means a victory for law, order, and righteousness. This has been the case in every instance of expansion during the present century, whether the expanding power were France or England, Russia or America. In every instance the expansion has been of benefit, not so much to the power nominally benefited, as to the whole world. In every instance the result proved that the expanding power was doing a duty to civilization far greater and more important than could have been done by any stationary power. Take the case of France and Algiers. During the early decades of the present century piracy of the most dreadful description was rife on the Mediterranean, and thousands of civilized men were yearly dragged into slavery by the Moorish pirates. A degrading peace was purchased by the civilized powers by the payment of tribute. Our own country was one among the tributary nations which thus paid blood-money to the Moslem bandits of the sea. We fought occasional battles with them ; and so, on a larger scale, did the English. But peace did not follow, because the country was not occupied. Our last pay-

ment was made in 1830, and the reason it was the last was because in that year the French conquest of Algiers began. Foolish sentimentalists, like those who wrote little poems in favor of the Mahdists against the English, and who now write little essays in favor of Aguinaldo against the Americans, celebrated the Algerian freebooters as heroes who were striving for liberty against the invading French. But the French continued to do their work; France expanded over Algiers, and the result was that piracy on the Mediterranean came to an end, and Algiers has thriven as never before in its history. On an even larger scale the same thing is true of England and the Sudan. The expansion of England throughout the Nile valley has been an incalculable gain for civilization. Any one who reads the writings of the Austrian priests and laymen who were prisoners in the Sudan under the Mahdi will realize that when England crushed him and conquered the Sudan she conferred a priceless boon upon humanity and made the civilized world her debtor. Again, the same thing is true of the Russian advance in Asia. As in the Sudan the English conquest is followed by peace, and the endless massacres of the Mahdi are stopped forever, so the Russian conquest of the khanates of central Asia meant the cessation of

the barbarous warfare under which Asian civilization had steadily withered away since the days of Jenghiz Khan, and the substitution in its place of the reign of peace and order. All civilization has been the gainer by the Russian advance, as it was the gainer by the advance of France in North Africa; as it has been the gainer by the advance of England in both Asia and Africa, both Canada and Australia. Above all, there has been the greatest possible gain in peace. The rule of law and of order has succeeded to the rule of barbarous and bloody violence. Until the great civilized nations stepped in there was no chance for anything but such bloody violence.

So it has been in the history of our own country. Of course our whole national history has been one of expansion. Under Washington and Adams we expanded westward to the Mississippi; under Jefferson we expanded across the continent to the mouth of the Columbia; under Monroe we expanded into Florida; and then into Texas and California; and finally, largely through the instrumentality of Seward, into Alaska; while under every administration the process of expansion in the great plains and the Rockies has continued with growing rapidity. While we had a frontier the chief feature of frontier life was the endless war between the

settlers and the red men. Sometimes the immediate occasion for the war was to be found in the conduct of the whites and sometimes in that of the reds, but the ultimate cause was simply that we were in contact with a country held by savages or half-savages. Where we abut on Canada there is no danger of war, nor is there any danger where we abut on the well-settled regions of Mexico. But elsewhere war had to continue until we expanded over the country. Then it was succeeded at once by a peace which has remained unbroken to the present day. In North America, as elsewhere throughout the entire world, the expansion of a civilized nation has invariably meant the growth of the area in which peace is normal throughout the world.

The same will be true of the Philippines. If the men who have counseled national degradation, national dishonor, by urging us to leave the Philippines and put the Aguinaldo oligarchy in control of those islands, could have their way, we should merely turn them over to rapine and bloodshed until some stronger, manlier power stepped in to do the task we had shown ourselves fearful of performing. But, as it is, this country will keep the islands and will establish therein a stable and orderly government, so that one more fair spot of the world's surface shall

have been snatched from the forces of darkness. Fundamentally the cause of expansion is the cause of peace.

With civilized powers there is but little danger of our getting into war. In the Pacific, for instance, the great progressive, colonizing nations are England and Germany. With England we have recently begun to feel ties of kindness as well as of kinship, and with her our relations are better than ever before; and so they ought to be with Germany. Recently affairs in Samoa have been straightened out, although there we suffered from the worst of all types of government, one in which three powers had a joint responsibility (the type, by the way, which some of the anti-imperialists actually advocated our introducing in the Philippines, under the pretense of rendering them neutral). This was accomplished very largely because the three nations set good-humoredly to work to come to an agreement which would do justice to all. In the preliminary negotiations the agents of America and Germany were Mr. Tripp and Baron Sternburg. No difficulty can ever arise between Germany and the United States which will not be settled with satisfaction to both, if the negotiations are conducted by such representatives of the two powers as these two men. What is necessary is to approach the

subject, not with a desire to get ahead of one another, but to do even and exact justice, and to put into operation a scheme which will work, while scrupulously conserving the honor and interest of all concerned.

Nations that expand and nations that do not expand may both ultimately go down, but the one leaves heirs and a glorious memory, and the other leaves neither. The Roman expanded, and he has left a memory which has profoundly influenced the history of mankind, and he has further left as the heirs of his body, and, above all, of his tongue and culture, the so-called Latin peoples of Europe and America. Similarly to-day it is the great expanding peoples which bequeath to future ages the great memories and material results of their achievements, and the nations which shall have sprung from their loins, England standing as the archetype and best exemplar of all such mighty nations. But the peoples that do not expand leave, and can leave, nothing behind them.

It is only the warlike power of a civilized people that can give peace to the world. The Arab wrecked the civilization of the Mediterranean coasts, the Turk wrecked the civilization of southeastern Europe, and the Tatar desolated from China to Russia and to Persia, setting back the progress of the world for centuries, solely because the civi-

lized nations opposed to them had lost the great fighting qualities, and, in becoming overpeaceful, had lost the power of keeping peace with a strong hand. Their passing away marked the beginning of a period of chaotic barbarian warfare. Those whose memories are not so short as to have forgotten the defeat of the Greeks by the Turks, of the Italians by the Abyssinians, and the feeble campaigns waged by Spain against feeble Morocco, must realize that at the present moment the Mediterranean coasts would be overrun either by the Turks or by the Sudan Mahdists if these warlike barbarians had only to fear those southern European powers which have lost the fighting edge. Such a barbarian conquest would mean endless war; and the fact that nowadays the reverse takes place, and that the barbarians recede or are conquered, with the attendant fact that peace follows their retrogression or conquest, is due solely to the power of the mighty civilized races which have not lost the fighting instinct, and which by their expansion are gradually bringing peace into the red wastes where the barbarian peoples of the world hold sway.

**THE
STRENUOUS LIFE**

**ESSAYS AND
ADDRESSES**

**BY
THEODORE ROOSEVELT**



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