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Facts In Connection With the Assembling of Delegates of Various Nations at the Suggestion of the Czar of Russia. Why the Convention Is Likely to Be Productive of Little Immediate Good.

In the land where nearly five centuries ago Jacob Van Artevelde made the first stand for liberty and freedom from medieval bondage, the peace conference of the White Czar will come together to discuss the possibility of national disarmament, or, if not that, a cessation in the present mad race for strong making.

Man was born a fighting animal. When our neolithic ancestor dwelt in caves and made war upon wild animals and cannily will fellow man, battle and bloodshed was a daily and necessary pastime in his domestic life.

The habit seems to have stuck to us, coming down through the ages, an evolutionary wart out of the twilight of barbarism. A touch of the old Berserker blood still rises in the veins of our most sanctified citizens home circle, and, as Hermann has pointed out, the most ordinary and stone skulldrived accountant is really a warrior at heart.

But that war is wrong has been the teaching of the wise men of all lands for over 2,000 years. Philosophers have deplored it, philanthropists have mourned over it, scholars have shuddered at it, and a Bertha has pointed out its absurdity. Peace statesmanship, speaking through the Roman poet, cried, "The best of things which it is given to men to know is peace." Isaiah's seer spoke evidently of the time "when nation shall not lift up sword against nation. "Take my word for it," said Wellington, "it you knew what I know day of war you would pray to Almighty God that you might never see such a thing again."

"War is hell!" said General W. T. Sherman.

"The sight of a battlefield after a great victory," said Napoleon, "is enough to inspire princes with a love of peace and a horror of war."

"On earth peace to men!" sang the angels over Bethlehem when that Babe it, upon which all that is best in our civilization is founded, first came into the world.

But nations still make war, and men still fight. Peace congresses come together, associations for international amity are organized, sermons are preached on the horrors of bloodshed and the barbarity of warfare, yet year by year the armies and navies of the world grow steadily larger and larger, and machinery for the destruction of life grows more and more appalling in its destructiveness.

When, therefore, almost one year ago the young czar of all the Russias announced the world with his unexpected cry for peace, it was felt that the first feeble step had been taken toward the temple over which beside the white winged angel of the olive branch, Nero or Sabine had the ruler of any great nation declared openly for disarmament. And, to tell the truth, Europe was really in a very bad way. Her annual expenditure for instruments of aggression and defense was rapidly on the brink of the $1,000,000,000 mark. In less than 30 years the amount spent on the purposes of warfare, together with the national debts incurred for similar purposes in times gone by, had more than doubled. There were 3,500,000 armed men on that continent ready to pounce on one another. Always, it seemed to, and each man of that great army might be said to have been called from the ways of industry and progress to live in idleness for the sole of killing carnage. England added a cruiser to her navy. France, noting this with jealous eye, added a cruiser and a torpedo boat to hers. Germany saw this move and went one better. Russia, of course, was not to be outdone, and to show that the bear was not napping, two Russian cruisers were launched at Sevastopol in Atlantic. All this naturally sent taxation up to a figure before unknown in the history of mankind. So when Nicholas put forth his disarmament proposal it would indeed have been strange if such a novel and yet timely suggestion had not caught the ear of the world.

Unfortunately, however, the circumstances of that unexpected royal declaration for peace were not of the most reassuring. In the first place, a proposal to be done with the tools was not likely to be taken seriously from the bear. There was a haunting sense of irony about it. In the second place, the war drum of the world never was sounding so quickly in their hearts as could have been wished. Spain and the United States were at it, England was busy in Egypt, China showed signs of unrest, there was trouble brewing in the Balkans, Crete had its wrongs, Norway and Sweden were at loggerheads, and England was having her usual little punitive expedition along the borders of Afghanistan, Russia herself was battling China and took time for back force into Manchuria.

It was called an unpolitical time to talk of disarmament and peace, and while the first gentle murmurings seemed to the White Czar's naval messages had died away a feeling of scoffing crept over the world.

On the 18th of May this much talked of peace conference takes place at The Hague. It will be the first meeting of the kind in which one great power has taken an active and official part, and at this meeting will be representatives of all the great nations of the world. When the international delegates grow tired of their conferences in the twilight on the beautiful royal palace of Hais-ten-Bosch, with its lakes and trees and parterres, or a little jaunter of less than 10 miles, they need only take to a train for where Napoleon, some fourteen years ago, stood and said, "You must break the ranks before you can have the conquer." Then the peace delegate can look over the slopes of La Haye dunes and Waterloo and walk down the hill to see idealistic philanthropist as he was thought to be a few months ago, before the Czar had its warning. Russia was fondly understood. The revolutionary spirit of him is that he is a dreamy, practical, forward, human politician, utterly devoid of any enjoyment and anxious only for the advancement and advancement, by hook or by crook, of that vast empire over which destiny has placed him as monarch.

The fermentation of Finland is still too fresh in the minds of men to have allowed feeling for Finns or Russian. Further than this, it has been the unremitting policy of every modern czar of Russia to sacrifice even a temporary advantage for his fatherland, ultimate gain. The czar's dream is that of an empire that shall some day dominate the world as did Alexander and Cesar. Long has he waited for this, and long is he still willing to wait. "Give us two centuries," says the Slav, "and we will attend to your Anglo-Saxon." But what is the longest time that must not have. That seems the hurried when she was tricked into the Crimean campaign, which ended even more disastrously for her than did the unnatural Russo-Turkish war of 1877.

Of all the organs of this earth, the country of the czars most needs international peace. Her people are overtaxed. Her enormous stretches of rich territory remain roads. Her people want and must have education, but indeed are strong for emancipation and development. Today she stands a great empty fortress preparing for the siege which shall come some time in the distant future. She is the shape for that ultimate struggle she must wants neither time nor men on her outworks. So, like Kipling's Atten-Zhi, she calls for a temporary peace. Like Atten-Zhi, the trouble bear that wake she a soon and holds its paws up as if in prayer with the mingled and desired mien as well within her church, Russia is calling for peace until she can get her house in order to strike that final blow which has been the dream of the czar since he came to wear the throne. Yet, while she is calling for peace, her soldiers are swarming over the Urals, and Asia is breeding with her ever advancing legions. The Russian is stealthy, but he does, does into Afghanistan, she has contracted to every ship she can find believes to put together or money can buy.

Every one, too, who knows anything about international affairs has seen that the Russians are unrivaled masters of diplomacy. The country of Muravieff, de Giers and Lobanoff knows how to carry on its insidious warfare with a moral heartlessness that outWatterloos Waterloo. The most brilliant diplomats of Europe invariably have been outwitted by Russian diplomacy, and by this gentle art [illegible] sought to further her ends. "We have only one thing to do to get Constantinople," said Alexander II. "That thing is to wait."

This waiting policy has made conspicuous a certain diplomatic curiosity. Russia's passionate advocacy of diplomacy should not only a modicum of [illegible] to be sure that there some weaknesses were not noticed up by Slavic powers and friendly to herself. She has seen to it that Turkey, Persia and Greece should be kept weak, disorganized and under influences to herself rather than to England, Germany or France. The issues of Afghanistan, for this one obstacle on the way to a long coveted Persian sea outlet, she has carefully and shrewdly this time out of sight. Russia's ambitions in China she has done the same. With Alexandria she is at present diplomatically quiescent, and it will be a surprise to the world if by all her gentle arts of moral suasion she does not succeed in keeping Russia and Kitchener are not kept directly opposite. From St. Petersburg comes the news that Russia will not take a Russian officer who does not openly announce his country's intention some day to possess India. It will take some [illegible] to make the shape for that ultimate struggle she must wants neither time nor men on her outworks. So, like Kipling's Atten-Zhi, she calls for a temporary peace. Like Atten-Zhi, the trouble bear that wake she a soon and holds its paws up as if in prayer with the mingled and desired mien as well within her church, Russia is calling for peace until she can get her house in order to strike that final blow which has been the dream of the czar since he came to wear the throne. Yet, while she is calling for peace, her soldiers are swarming over the Urals, and Asia is breeding with her ever advancing legions. The Slav is stealthy, but he does, does into Afghanistan, she has contracted to every ship she can find believes to put together or money can buy.

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