

PORTSMOUTH AND SAN FRANCISCO

A civilized world was kneeling at the shrine of peace when, on September 5, a treaty terminating the war between Russia and Japan was signed at Portsmouth, New Hampshire. The president of the United States, who had done so much to bring about the desirable result was complimented for his efforts by men of all nations and by men of all parties, while the representatives of the contending governments were congratulated upon the "give and take" disposition characterizing their deliberations. In counting room and in workshop, on farm and in the highways, men talked of peace with almost religious fervor until it seemed as though a benediction had suddenly rested upon the whole world. Many thoughtful men predicted that the signing of the treaty at Portsmouth was the beginning of the end of the rule of force and that the conflict in the far East would prove to have been the last war between great nations.

Five days after the signing of the Portsmouth treaty conspicuous place in the daily newspapers was given to the report of what is known as "one of the greatest prize fights in history." The newspapers gave that report first place because newspaper editors knew their readers demanded it. Would it not be well if the same public sentiment which had so much to do with forcing a settlement between Russia and Japan could be crystallized against brutality and force, whether engaged in by nations or by individuals?

Those who have believed that the prize fight was going out of favor were doubtless greatly discouraged by the report of the affair which took place at Colma, a suburb of San Francisco, on the evening of September 9. As some of the correspondents tell us, it was "a bloody battle." Every one of the eighteen rounds was characterized by the hardest kind of fighting, and the record of the eighteenth—and last—round shows "Nelson shot his left and right to Britt's jaw like a flash. Britt went down like a log, gasping for breath, and with blood coming from his mouth and nose. The fatal seconds were counted out by Timekeeper Harting. At the call of ten Britt made a feeble effort to rise, but immediately fell back, utterly defeated."

And then we are told:

Instantly the crowd, surging in great waves from all sides, broke the ropes and swept into the ring. There were no police at Colma, and the few scattered deputy sheriffs were powerless. Britt and his seconds were hauled in a dozen directions by crazy sympathizers. A few intelligent men tried to drive the crowd away and there were half a dozen free fights in the battle-maddened crowd.

A magnificent description, indeed, of a magnificent scene enacted among a people whose boast it is that they are leaders in the arts of peace! So great was the interest in this affair that the gate receipts amounted to \$70,000. All over the United States great crowds were collected around the bulletin boards in the large cities, and in many of the smaller towns, awaiting the news of the result of this brutal contest.

The discouraging thing about it is that in so-called "sporting circles" the opinion is freely expressed that this contest, "eminently successful" as it was, has revived new interest in the "manly art," and we may expect many similar entertainments in the near future.

It is true there are many intelligent and gentle men who frequently take advantage of the opportunity to witness one of these contests, and it is also true—as will be testified by any one who has been an observer on such occasions that a contest of this character would prove entertaining to the average man, whatever his occupation in life might be. There is in every one of us a bit of the animal. The apology given by the intelligent man who habitually attends prize fights and defends them is that the participants do not really suffer, that they go into it expecting to receive punishment and that they are mere brutes who engage in that sport largely for gain and are therefore entitled to no sympathy. The answer of the man who has witnessed prize fights and is opposed to them is that the worst feature is the effect such contests have upon the observers. It would stir the worst in the best of men to see these well trained brutes, with hardened muscles, give and take blows, dodging one here and withstanding one there. Even the sight of blood as it is drawn in every one of these con-

tests, does not disturb the observer once the brute within him has been thoroughly awakened and advances to meet the brute within the fighters in the ring.

This point may be well illustrated by an incident that occurred a few years ago in the city of Omaha. There had been in that city a number of prize fights under the guise of "boxing contests." When it was announced that a particularly interesting "boxing contest" would take place, the editor of an Omaha newspaper decided to make a test of the character of these affairs, and of their effect upon individuals who had never seen a prize fight and were utterly opposed to them. Seven gentlemen were invited to accompany this editor to that particular battle. Every one of these gentlemen was asked in advance whether he opposed prize fighting. They all condemned it vigorously, and said it should be prohibited. Not one of them had ever witnessed either a real prize fight or a boxing contest of the mildest order. Some were so opposed to prize fighting that they did not readily consent to go, but they were told that they would be given the privilege of publishing over their own signatures whatever they desired to say with respect to their experiences and as to their conclusions. With this understanding they consented to witness the affair. Two of these gentlemen were among Omaha's ablest lawyers; one was a successful druggist; two were physicians; another was a general merchant, and another was a clerk.

It happened that this contest was between a negro and a white man. The remarks of the members of this little party while on their way to the ringside were particularly interesting. Every one of them was confident he would be so thoroughly disgusted that he could not remain to the finish. Every one said he wanted the negro to win, because any white man who would engage in a fight with a negro ought to be whipped.

To the editor who acted the host on this occasion the best part of the show was in the faces and the general conduct of his guests. In the very beginning the black man landed a savage blow upon the white man's nose, drawing blood. One of the lawyers, who had been particularly insistent that he was anxious for the black man to win, jumped to his feet the moment this blow was given, and at the top of his voiced shrieked: "Go at him, white man! Give it to him hard!" It required a few more blows between the fighters for the other members of the party to become aroused, but every one of them was aroused and when the battle was thoroughly in progress they were all screaming at the top of their voices. Some of them were mounted on chairs giving words of encouragement to the white fighter and yelling with delight whenever he landed a blow upon his black antagonist. Their enthusiasm was not lessened when blood began to flow freely. Gentle men and gentlemen, every one of them, they were witnesses to a struggle of force between human beings. Their race prejudices had been aroused, and their sympathies had been enlisted on the side of the member of their own race; but even beyond all that their interest was thoroughly centered upon a struggle for supremacy between two strong men. The more blows that landed, the better were they suited. The more blood that flowed, the better were they pleased. The brute within them—as with all men, sleeping but never dead,—had been aroused. Blows and blood were the order of the day. Love had abdicated its throne in their hearts and Force reigned thereon as supreme as it did within the center of that bloody ring.

These men were not, however, conspicuous because of their conduct. The whole mass of men gathered at that ringside were engaged in the same manifestations of delight whenever a favorite fighter won a point or drew blood; they were all engaged in giving encouragement to the bloody bruisers each to do his worst to the other, and when finally the white man won by a mere scratch, knocking his opponent senseless upon the hard pavement of the ring, among all the men cheering and screaming with delight none seemed more earnest or enthusiastic than those men who had for the first time witnessed a prize fight and who, in their normal mood were opposed to the system.

When the lights went out and "the captains and the kings departed," these men returned to the newspaper office and wrote of their experiences. The normal man within them resumed control and they wrote frankly. Every one of these men declared that he was more than ever

opposed to prize fighting. They had learned through personal experience the terrible effects which one of these contests has upon the observers, and they had come to know—what theretofore they had only believed—that the sport that has so long sought to pass for "manly art" belongs to the bloody ages rather than to the civilized years. They had learned—what they had theretofore only suspected—that these brutal contests cause men to lose ground which they must recover, and stir within the breasts of the witnesses the very elements which Christ came to suppress.

We have been treated to many absurdities in connection with these affairs. Not long ago one of these valiant brutes, who had whipped to a finish his opponent, ran across the ring and throwing his arms affectionately around his opponent's neck, planted several kisses upon his cheek. And the newspaper dispatches were filled with praise because of this display of "affection for a fallen foe!" God save the mark! And one of the most abominable of the many disgusting things that have associated themselves in newspaper dispatches with the affairs of these bruisers was when it was printed all over the world that the father of a fighter who had just won the battle which entitled him to the championship was a clergyman. It was said that when this father received the news of the victory he declared that he knew that his boy would win, because he had prayed that victory might come to him! In the history of the world many efforts have been made to put the God of Battles to an unholy use, but that was about the worst of all the abominable efforts in that line that have, so far, been made.

If men are to be restrained, children must be trained. If the world is to be educated, the process must not begin upon the brink of the grave; it must begin with the cradle—and, indeed, so far as future generations are concerned, it must begin long prior to the cradle. Children must be taught that men must not strike one another—either in the individual or the national capacity—except the blow be unavoidable. Those who would encourage nations to keep peace, must restrain individuals from force. Particularly in our own land, when we set ourselves up as leaders of the world's thought, as foremost in the labors of love and in the establishment of peace, we must see to it that our national pretenses are not inconsistent with our individual life. We must make it known that while our statesmen are prompted to aid in the discouragement of war among all nations tempted to engage in it, our policemen are required to preserve order among all who would destroy it.

When the children of today are taught to abhor force in all its forms, the men of tomorrow will not gather at the ringside to give encouragement to lawlessness. When the children are taught that love must rule in the hearts of men, love will rule in the councils of nations. The agreement between Russia and Japan was written upon parchment, and it is effective so far as concerns that particular contest; but the greatest of all peace treaties—the peace treaty that will be effective for all people and for all times—is to be written in letters of love upon the hearts of the rising generation. The signs of the times are that parents are giving more consideration to thoughts of this character than ever before in the history of the world. Kindness to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field, consideration for one's fellows, love and sympathy for all men—these are the things to be cultivated in the building of a perpetual peace for all the world. When these things are taught in the nursery, and talked of in the counting room and in the workshop "the sweet birds from the south will build their nests in the cannon's mouth; and the only sounds from its rusty throat will be the wren's or the blue-bird's note."

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TOO GREAT A BURDEN

By a vote representing 1,253,000 members against 26,000 the laboring men of England have disapproved Chamberlain's protective tariff program. They say that a tariff "would be detrimental to the interests of the working classes, upon whom the burden of protection would press most heavily." The English working men show that they have studied the tariff question to advantage.

An employe of the government printing office had an interest in the company that sold typesetting machines to the government. Public officials often take too great an interest in some things connected with their departments.