

Peace Conference at the Hague and Its Origin



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A Russian Book and Its Effect

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SCHOUVENINGEN, Holland, July 14.—An English translation of M. Henri de Bloch's great work on war has just been secured for publication in America.

Not the czar, but M. de Bloch, is the father of the peace conference at The Hague. It was my good fortune to see him when he was on the very ground and watching the tremendous result of his life's labor.

M. de Bloch is a man of 65. He is short. He is fat. He is gray-headed. His beard is trimmed closely to his chin. Great shaggy eyebrows overhang a pair of piercing eyes. M. de Bloch, when he becomes the least excited, is fierce in appearance and in manner. He is the last man who would at those times be taken for an advocate of peace. He is always excited when he is talking.

Early in his youth he became impressed by the awful horrors of war. He began to make a study of them. He considered the cost of war in misery and in money and he considered its results. He found the two incommensurate. He took up every phase of arguments of men who had planned means of preventing war. In those days most of these men were dreamers and their plans were wild and unpractical. But Bloch did not despair.

He was fortunate and the world was fortunate in that he was immensely rich and could afford to carry on his studies untrammelled by the limitations of poverty. He devoted his time to many important matters in his own country and became loved and honored throughout Poland and Russia. But never for a moment did he forget his one mission—that of alleviating the horrors of war. He studied, studied, studied. His work was unceasing. His arguments were unending. From every quarter of the earth he gathered material on the subject which always filled his mind. At last, eight years ago, he had absolutely mastered his great subject. He had not satisfied himself with knowing all about modern wars and their miseries; he had begun at the beginning. His information concerning the early Greek and Roman wars was scarcely less complete than the mass of material he had gathered concerning the Franco-Prussian and other great armed struggles of his own time.

Beginning Work.

"At last, eight years ago," he said to me, "I found myself in a position where I could really begin my work. Everything up to that time had been preliminary. I then sat down and wrote my little book."

M. de Bloch's English is somewhat difficult to understand at first. He speaks it in common with about ten other languages, of which French and Russian (his native language) is his favorite. His English accent is somewhat gruff, in keeping with the fierce expression of his face. But there was nothing gruff about the way he said:

"Let me bring you a copy of my little book."

He left the room and came back in about five minutes with his arms full of his "little book."

There are six volumes of that "little book," and they are large volumes. The edition which he gave me had been hurriedly prepared and was a French translation of the Russian original. The pictures had been lifted bodily from the Russian edition and their titles were printed in the puzzling characters of that difficult language. He explained them to me until I became confused by their vast number. There are 1,200 pictures in M. de Bloch's little book.

Its first five volumes are devoted to an exhaustive study of war in all its branches and in all its details. They amount practically to an encyclopedia of everything connected with battles and with fighting men. No other one man has ever accomplished so tremendous a work of research.

The first volume is a description of the mechanism of war. It deals with everything from the cross-bow of the ancients to the smokeless powder of today. It tells of fortifications, it deals of features of attack and defense; it omits nothing.

America Overlooked.

The second volume is headed "The War Upon the Continent." Unfortunately, and now greatly to his own regret, M. de Bloch

failed to consider America as a fighting possibility at the time this volume was written. He studies in detail the effectiveness of European armies, discusses their existing preparations for war, their plans of mobilization, the training of their officers, the training of their soldiers, their camps, their fortresses, the possibilities of night and day fighting, the general esprit du corps, the operations of all of them during the wars which have occurred in the last century; indeed, he omits no one thing which might by any possibility be useful to the student. This volume alone contains more than 800 pages.

The third volume is the briefest and the least important of his work. It deals with naval warfare and the subject is not competently treated.

In the fourth volume he treats of economical problems and their probable effect in the war of the future. It goes into the subject (of course intensely interesting to America) of the supply and maintenance of troops. It considers the cost of the military as compared with the revenues of all nations. It shows what tremendous advances in relative cost will mark the war of the future. It points out the inequality of the preparations for war made by different European countries, and it shows the influence different factors have on the spirit of armies and the character of their preparations for war.

The fifth volume tells of the development of the idea that may lead toward peace. It goes into detail concerning the literature of perpetual peace among civilized peoples. It deals with socialism, with anarchy and with the propaganda of anti-militarism. It tells of the different ideas of various countries concerning causes for war. It discusses the influence of armies actually in existence upon the people of the different countries. It goes into the matter of wounds and sicknesses resulting from war most exhaustively—even to the point of calculating the penetration and general effect of every bullet now in use by a civilized nation. The marvelous detail of this volume cannot be described in a brief article. No possible point is omitted and every conceivable detail is given in full. The records of the United States government concerning the effects of wounds during the civil war have never been more completely summarized than are the studies of M. de Bloch in this volume.

Magnitude of the Work.

But it is in the sixth volume that M. de Bloch says those things which it has been his mission to say. Over thirty different head-

ings, each one elaborate in its detail, are covered in this one book. I am not writing a criticism of M. de Bloch's "War." I am merely trying to give an idea of the magnitude of the work. I doubt if there is a human being today who is competent to criticize M. Bloch's marvelous book. Certainly no one have in my possession some typewritten copies in French and English of his notes on this ever studied the subject as he has. I certain subheads on the one matter of the impossibility of aiding wounded on the field of battle. His revised and condensed notes amount to fifty closely typewritten pages. An extremely brief sketch of what he has to say about the penetration of modern rifle bullets covers forty-three pages.

It is in the sixth volume that he summarizes his arguments. Before it is half finished he leaves his descriptions of war and his data concerning battles and soldiers and begins to speculate on the possible ways of preventing international conflicts. In order to justify the statement which I make near the beginning of this article, that M. de Bloch and not the czar is the father of the peace conference, I must again call the reader's attention to the fact that this book alone occupied in the mere writing eight full years, and that before he could begin writing it he had to spend almost an entire lifetime in the gathering of information. Thus his idea long antedated the czar's. His plan of international arbitration as suggested in this final volume of his book is almost identical with the plan laid down by the czar in the call for a peace conference, which he issued to the nations of the earth.

After M. de Bloch had brought in his "little book" to me he spoke very freely concerning the international European situation. He discussed the terrific burden of armament which the nations of Europe are obliged to carry and talked of the awful hardships which compulsory military service works upon the citizens of the countries where it is practiced.

Of himself he would say nothing.

At the Mountain House

Puck: "Isn't it magnificent?" exclaimed the enthusiastic boarder. "I've always wanted to see a storm in the mountains. You remember Byron's lines, of course?"
"From peak to peak, the rattling crags among,
Leaps the live thunder."
"It sort of worries me," replied the other party.

"Why? Are you afraid of lightning?"
"Rather. I am afraid the landlord may charge for this storm in his bill."

A Famous Feud

Senator Chandler of New Hampshire, who has just had a warm controversy with his colleague, Senator Gallinger, over civil service reform, was the central figure in a famous controversy in the senate in 1879, of which ex-Senator Ingalls writes in the Saturday Evening Post of Philadelphia. The pending question was a bill pensioning Mexican soldiers. As this would include all southerners who fought in that war, the bill provoked a sectional debate. Senator Hoar offered an amendment excluding Jefferson Davis from the operation of the act. This precipitated a crisis. Senator Garland eulogized the president of the confederacy and Senator Hoar retorted, "Two of the bravest officers of our revolutionary war were Aaron Burr and Benedict Arnold."

Senator Lamar jumped into the breach with an impassioned speech, concluding with these words: "When Prometheus was bound to the rock, it was not an eagle, it was a vulture that buried his beak in the tortured vitals of the victim!"

During this eulogy and exculpation of Jefferson Davis the northern senators sat in silence; the boldness of the performance was paralyzing, such an emergency had not been anticipated. No one was ready. The passionate and excited spectators in the galleries wondered why no champion of the north took up the glove.

Toward the close of the debate a note fluttered over the balustrade of the northeast gallery, and, wavering in the hot air, was caught in its descent by a page, who carried it to Senator Chandler of Michigan, to whom it was addressed. It was written on a leaf torn from a memorandum book, without signature, and begging him in God's name to say something for the union soldiers and for the north.

He read the anonymous note brought from the gallery. The black fury of his eyes blazed from the pallor of his face. At the first opportunity he obtained the floor and delivered a tremendous philippic against Jefferson Davis. It was evidently wholly unpremeditated, and therefore the more effective.

He said: "Mr. President, twenty-two years ago tomorrow, in the old hall of the senate now occupied by the supreme court of the United States, I, in company with Mr. Jefferson Davis, stood up and swore before Almighty God that I would support the constitution of the United States. Mr. Jefferson Davis came from the cabinet of Franklin Pierce into the senate of the United States and took the oath with me to be faithful to this government. During

four years I sat in this body with Mr. Jefferson Davis and saw the preparations going on from day to day for the overthrow of this government. With treason in his heart and perjury upon his lips he took the oath to sustain the government that he meant to overthrow.

"Sir, there was method in that madness. He, in co-operation with other men from his section and in the cabinet of Mr. Buchanan, made careful preparation for the event that was to follow. Your armies were scattered all over this broad land, where they could not be used in an emergency; your fleets were scattered wherever the winds blew and water was found to float them, where they could not be used to put down rebellion; your treasury was depleted until your bonds, bearing 6 per cent, principal and interest payable in coin, were offered for 88 cents on the dollar for current expenses, and no buyers. Preparations were carefully made. Your arms were sold under an apparently innocent clause in an army bill providing that the secretary of war might, at his discretion, sell such arms as he deemed it for the interest of the government to sell.

"Sir, eighteen years ago last month I sat in these halls and listened to Jefferson Davis delivering his farewell address, informing us what our constitutional duties to this government were, and then he left and entered into the rebellion to overthrow the government that he had sworn to support! I remained here, sir, during the whole of that terrible rebellion. I saw our brave soldiers by thousands and hundreds of thousands, aye, I might say millions, pass through to the theater of war, and I saw their shattered ranks return. I saw steamboat after steamboat and railroad train after railroad train arrive with the maimed and the wounded; I was with my friend from Rhode Island (General Burnside) when he commanded the Army of the Potomac and saw piles of legs and arms that made humanity shudder; I saw the widow and orphan in their homes and heard the weeping and wailing of those who had lost their dearest and their best. Mr. President, I little thought at that time that I should live to hear in the senate of the United States eulogies upon Jefferson Davis living—a living rebel eulogized on the floor of the senate of the United States! Sir, I am amazed to hear it and I can tell the gentlemen on the other side that they little know the spirit of the north when they come here at this day and with bravado on their lips utter eulogies upon a man whom every man, woman and child in the north believes to be a double-dyed traitor to his government."

Typewritten Records

The permanency of typewritten records is a subject of no little importance, says the Albany Law Journal, and it is worthy of note that a series of experiments is being conducted in Boston with a view of establishing the relative value of the leading brands of typewriter ribbons. Robert T. Swan, the state commissioner of public records for the state of Massachusetts, is doing some good work in this direction. He finds that of the different colors used for typewriter ribbons, the red, green, blue and purple are not permanent, black being the only one that will stand the tests to which he subjects the writing.

The legislature of Massachusetts, which recently adjourned, passed an act permitting typewritten records to be accepted as official when approved by the commissioner of public records, New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey having previously taken similar action. In other words, no such records will be accepted unless the materials used are up to the standard, and the commissioner is expressly authorized by the statute referred to to withdraw his approval at any time when he shall find that the articles used fall below such standard. This is a very important matter which should be acted upon in every state, for the fading of public records so as to become illegible is something that ought to be carefully provided against, otherwise it were much better to keep in force the provision that legal records shall be written only with pen and ink.

It is possible, we think, to produce typewritten records that are quite as permanent as any produced by writing with a pen, and in view of the greater legibility of the former, as well as their economy of production, it is desirable that this should be done. While the states generally have no official corresponding to the commissioner of public records in Massachusetts, it ought to be made somebody's business to superintend a matter of permanency of public records. I'll



WEST END OF THE LAGOON, GREATER AMERICA EXPOSITION.