

The SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE SECTION

A Magazine for your Reading Table

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS' PAGE

L

UCRETIVUS thought it pleasant to stand upon the shore and watch others battling for life in

the waves. For so pagan a landsman there would doubtless be an added pleasure in the knowledge that the drowning man was a very distinguished admiral.

Admiral Mahan, in his recent editorial, *The Folly of the Hague*, in the *Semi-Monthly Magazine*, makes implications that cannot possibly be dealt with on a merely naval basis; all kinds of religious, moral, humanitarian, legal and commercial implications, by the side of which the problems of all the navies in the world are utterly insignificant. And—this is the terrible part of the matter—from first to last, Admiral Mahan shows that he is utterly unaware of the vastness of his own subject-matter.

In all seriousness, I say that the welter of fallacies in his advocacy of armament took my breath away. Such reasoning, such opposition to the universal peace movement arises often from a mistaken form of patriotism; but the noble spirit of true patriotism is not dead, not even stationary amid our developing world. The day of serfdom is over. The little day of everlasting fire is over. Duelling has become a laughing-stock between individuals, and it will soon seem as great a folly between nations. But the spirit of patriotism, like the spirit of religion, has moved onward, developing, passing beyond the old boundaries of nationality as once it passed beyond the boundaries of the family and the tribe.

AND what is the argument of the so-called Pacifists? It is simply this: that the law of our progress has been an unbroken one from the earliest times to the present day, and that we must continue in the same direction, not rest on our present achievement. The shuttles of commerce are weaving us into one body as surely as religion tells us that we are all members of one another. The lightnings that have brought Berlin and London and New York nearer to one another today than were London and Bristol fifty years ago have made civilization more like one vast cosmopolitan intellect, in which the individuals answer one another as thought answers thought, rather than a collection of independent units.

And against this view of a great world-movement which is slowly and surely taking place under our very eyes, what arguments do the militarists advance, what arguments does Admiral Mahan advance? He says that the statesmen of the great civilized Powers can only be prevented from international crime by fear. He says that force creates fear and that fear insures peace. He follows this up by



WAR RUMORS AND CHRISTMAS REFLECTIONS

A Reply to Admiral Mahan

By Alfred Noyes, English Poet and Peace Advocate

these senatorial criminals as the administrators of justice!

Next, he protests against all attempts to organize any system of law between nations, and gives, as a final reason, the fact that it does not already exist.

It would be a crime against civilization for the great Powers to abandon their power to bring about such an organization. It is, however, their duty to bring it about.

saying that the hideous carnage in the Balkans would have been prevented if it had not been for the fear that the great Powers had of each other. And then he laments

the fact that they did not on the spur of the moment organize themselves into just such a judicial body as he says it is impossible to create in times of comparative security, just such a judicial body as the Pacifists are in sober earnest endeavoring to create. He compares the statesmen, the senators of Europe, with the lowest criminals of the city slums, criminals whom it is hopeless to think of keeping in check, he says, except by the police and the organization of law. And, then, straightway, he speaks of

These two ideas are not incompatible, as Admiral Mahan seems to think. They are simply complementary to one another. Nor does this movement towards unity destroy the "profession for our sons" which is so furiously maintained by certain unimaginative classes in Europe. In that international force, who knows but that Admiral Mahan himself, representing the greatest Republic that the world has ever known, might find a more glorious work ready to his hand. He would not then be forced to justify the justifiable, while the fields of Europe sicken the sun with the dead and defiled bodies of women and little children.

AT the present moment there is a private international organization which is an insult to humanity. Perhaps Admiral Mahan will tell us what relation to justice the international ramifications of Messrs. Krupp may bear. Perhaps they oil its machinery with the best butter, as the Dormouse of Alice in Wonderland argued. But I am quite sure that Admiral Mahan, scholar, seaman and patriot, has only to give that side of the case a moment's consideration, to repudiate as sternly as any Pacifist, those evil influences which are, in Europe at any rate, the chief obstacle to the realization of our hope and faith in the future.

That hope and that faith are destined to be realized as soon as a few very simple facts have become part of the common consciousness. The world is not yet thoroughly awake, but the dawn, grey and immense, is already upon us.

Alfred Noyes.

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