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# THE ADVOCATE OF PEACE.

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## The Close of the Century.

It matters not the least whether the century closed last year or ends this. That is merely a question of the manner of reckoning. But the character of the close is of the highest concern. Judging from what one sees and hears, there is among all classes of thoughtful people everywhere a sense of deep disappointment at the heavy shadows which have suddenly obscured the glory with which the century seemed about to go out. Lord Salisbury's tone of depression at the London Lord Mayor's banquet voiced the general feeling, though the point of view is different.

Three years, even two years ago, nobody would have believed that in so brief a time the United States would have an army of seventy thousand men fighting on the other side of the globe, that the British empire would be in the last dismal act of crushing, with an army of over two hundred thousand men, two small nationalities out of existence, and that all the great powers would be involved in a dire, perplexing struggle with China. All this has come suddenly, as a thief in the night. It is an immense disappointment. All was talk of liberty, of peace, of arbitration, of disarmament, of the abolition of war, of lightened burdens, of international fellowship and coöperation. Hope rose very high when the Czar spoke his great word and the Hague Conference met. Men looked forward to the opening of the new century with the largest expectations.

But suddenly all has changed. The talk is now of war, of the slaughter of enemies, of vengeance, of the "glory" of combat, of massacres and counter massacres, of pillage and rapine, of civilizing by the sword and shell, of the Christian virtue of violence and bloodshed. Desire for army and navy extension has suddenly gone into a raging fever. Money is poured out in oceans for the preparation of the arts of death. Gain,—territorial and commercial,—forced at the point of the sword, is declared to be godliness. The rules of so-called civilized warfare have snapped

like sand ropes under the strain of reviving barbarism, and the armies of the most advanced nations outpagan the pagans themselves in cold-blooded butchery, in heartless pillage and burning, in the doing to death of non-combatants, in a beastliness of lust before which women by dozens hang themselves to escape dishonor. Crime, lynching, violence, robbery, debauch, in the wake of the armies and elsewhere, prevail, as the most of us have never heard of them. An epidemic of brutality seems to be upon the civilized world. Might is exalted as the supreme factor in civilization. It is a crushing disappointment.

It would be some relief if one could feel that it is fate, stern and irresistible, or even diabolical possession, which has produced the change. But even this consolation is denied us. It is men — our fellowmen — who have kindled the conflagration, men who have mixed the poison, turned out the winds, unchained the brute,— whatever figure one may please to use. In many cases, one can lay one's hand on the heads of the very men who have brought about the woeful transformation,—men at the top, political leaders, social oracles, men of wealth, scholarly men, eminent preachers, editors in big chairs. And the world has cried "Hurrah!" and gone after them. The brutal instincts, surviving in the masses, have been aroused to uncontrollable passion by these glossed appeals from above. This is the plain account of what has happened. It is only a new form of Napoleonism — coöperative Napoleonism — which is blackening the end of the century as the old Napoleonism blackened its beginning.

But the situation will have its compensations. It has been learned anew that policies of injustice and iniquity produce their fatal results however long delayed, that the effort to turn darkness into light is a frightfully dangerous business. Once more has it been proved, this time on a gigantic scale and in the sight of all the world, that war is barbarous and unchristian and can never be made anything else, that the so-called civilizing of war is a monstrous absurdity. The action of the allied armies of "Christianity" in China, of the United States forces in the Philippines, and of the British in South Africa ought to put this question forever beyond debate. It has been shown again that war, instead of being an in-

strument of civilization, is the certain means of national pollution and decadence. All this will have its effect. The human in man still lives as well as the brute. The human will grow sick of the brutal and cast it out. People cannot forever be fooled or fool themselves. The lesson of these years is becoming increasingly clear, and when fully learned it will be a long time before another such is allowed. The tide of opposition to brute force in human affairs will go higher than ever before.

This century, in spite of its great convulsions and wars, has been called "the wonderful century," in respect of the discoveries and inventions made during its progress. It has in this regard equaled all the preceding centuries combined. But it has been no less wonderful in the progress of civil and religious liberty, in the transformation of political institutions, in the enlargement and organization of religious work, in the growth and expansion of commerce, in the development of education. It has created and probably more than half solved the temperance problem. It has almost emancipated woman and put her far along in the way of securing every right belonging to her. It has given a new and higher meaning to common law. It has begun the reform and codification of international law. It has abolished the "unknown regions," leaving nothing more to discover. It has created a "universal fraternity of things," binding the world together all round, and begun the formation of a world-society. It has asked the deepest and broadest industrial and social questions, and already heroically begun their solution. It has organized and sustained a movement for universal peace, learned the art of settling disputes rationally, and laid the foundations of a great seat of justice for all humanity.

In whatever direction one looks, despite the darkness and horror here and there, one sees the century teeming with light and promise. Shall all this cease now and go for nothing? To believe so is to assert that humanity has gone irrecoverably insane, that God has departed, and that the devil has assumed trusteeship of the world. The very clouds now surrounding these mountain tops of attainment serve only to render their greatness and durability the more manifest. War, with its havoc of death and corruption, is a passing phenomenon. It is making what will probably prove to be its last "rush." All efforts to reinstate it will fail; all fair arguments to prove it Christian will go down under the logic of the on-coming Kingdom of God,— the kingdom of righteousness, justice, love, goodwill and peace. The Christmas time, which we shall be so soon celebrating, is the divine pledge, every year renewed, that the mission of the Master, undertaken in the spirit of uttermost love and self-sacrifice, shall not fail, that the kingdoms of this world shall become His, that "eternal

peace" shall reign over all the earth, through the individual and coöperative services of men of goodwill.

### Attitude of the Country on Imperialism.

It is difficult to determine from the result of the election the attitude of the people of the United States on the subject of imperialism. It would be very rash to conclude from the return of the Administration to power for another term, that the people believe in and have purposely adopted the new policy. Large numbers of citizens who are entirely opposed to subjugating the Filipinos, or any other people, and who have no sympathy with the principle, "You must stand by the flag, no matter what it is doing," voted for McKinley because they believed worse dangers would befall the country from the election of Mr. Bryan. This is true of the Eastern states, where, nevertheless, numbers of voters did refuse to support the Republican ticket. If all who disbelieve in the new policy had so refused, Mr. McKinley would have lost every Eastern state. In the Central West similar sentiments ruled to considerable extent, though the Administration vote there indicates the greater prevalence of imperialistic sentiment. In the extreme West it is well known that a majority of the people have been carried away by the "expansion," "world power," commercial cries.

Taking the country as a whole, it is impossible to believe that a people brought up as this great people has been, has deliberately, or even thoughtlessly, adopted the new policy, with all that it means in the way of injustice, foreign entanglements, war, army and navy increase, burdens of taxation, degradation of the national ideals and character, and serious temporary blight to the cause of liberty and right everywhere. We are compelled to interpret the result of the election in some other way.

On the other hand, the immediate practical effect of the election is unmistakable. It fixes the imperialist policy upon the nation for many years to come, with all its inevitable attendants. The war in the Philippines, which the inhabitants will not stop in order to fulfill the gratuitous prophecies of the imperialist orators, will be pushed with increased severity (the order has already gone forth), in order to complete the subjugation of the people and crush out their last hope of independence. The slaughter of the inhabitants, the burning of their villages, the sacrifice of American soldiers, the awful ravages of immorality, will go on, nobody can guess how long.

The Administration and its confidants will interpret the election as a full approval by the country of all that it has done, from the peace treaty on, and will fortify and strengthen the imperialist position in every possible way. It will laugh at and ignore those anti-imperialists who have supported it in the hope that it can be induced to reverse its policy.