

LONDON PEACE CONGRESS

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# ADVOCATE OF PEACE.

SEPT. AND OCT., 1851.

## LONDON PEACE CONGRESS.

THE Fifth General Peace Congress, held in Exeter Hall, London, on the 22d, 23d and 24th of July, was in numbers, interest, and apparent influence on the public, successful beyond the expectations of its most sanguine promoters. That vast hall, the largest in London, if not in all England, was filled to its utmost capacity during its three days' sessions. The two last days were as uncomfortable as London fogs and rains could make them; yet there seemed to be no diminution in the attendance or the enthusiasm. The number of delegates probably exceeded twelve hundred, and the spectators were still more numerous. Seldom has the world witnessed an assemblage comprising an equal amount of intellectual and moral worth or power; and it is scarcely possible, that such a multitude of such men (between 3000 and 4000) could return from such an occasion to their respective countries without exerting a wide, powerful and permanent influence on the public mind around them in behalf of the great and good object to which the Congress was devoted.

The American delegation, though only three made any set speeches, still had no reason to complain on this score; for, while we did not furnish more than one member in twenty of the Congress, our representatives were permitted to occupy about one-seventh part of all the time spent in the delivery of addresses. Nor did these fail to receive a due share of consideration. Mr. Garnett was received with decided favor. We need hardly say that Mr. Burritt was very generally thought to have made the great speech of the Congress; and of the address by our Secretary, the Editor of the Non-Conformist, one of the best authorities, said in his report of the proceedings, "the foreign speech which pleased us most, was that delivered by the Rev. Dr. Beckwith, an earnest and valuable laborer in the good cause. The gratifying facts which he related, justified his description of the Americans as an eminently 'practical people;' and, if what the respected Secretary of the American Peace Society said, was true, his countrymen have got the start of their peace brethren in England. Let the latter look well to their laurels." Indeed, our English co-workers almost unconsciously show us the respect, paid by them to peace-men in no other country, of treating us as able and sure, without their aid, to take care of the cause in our own sphere, while they expend all their efforts upon Europe, for whose benefit almost alone these Congresses are held, and which can hardly be expected in half a century to reach the point we have already attained.

Other facts respecting the Congress we will give in the just and well-chosen language of the London Herald of Peace:—"Of no public movement ever originated in this country, could it be said with more emphatic truth, *Vires acquirit eundo*. Greeted at its outset by many with an explosion of scorn, and many a dismal prophecy of speedy and

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ignominious failure, it has nevertheless gained every successive year, not only accessions of number, but great increase of influence, earnestness and power. So far as the British part of the delegation was concerned, it may be safely said, that there was never gathered in this metropolis an assembly which embodied so large an amount of the highest elements of English society, its intelligence, its moral and religious worth, and that resolute fixedness of purpose which has enabled the same classes as were represented on this occasion, to achieve so many triumphs before in the cause of liberty, philanthropy and religion. More than a thousand men, from every district of the United Kingdom, representing all the large towns and cities of the Empire, and selected, for the most part, on account of the honorable distinction they had locally acquired among their fellow citizens, including official delegates from important municipal and religious bodies, the chief magistrates of many towns, the parliamentary representatives of not a few influential constituencies, more than two hundred ministers of the gospel of various denominations, appointed by their respective congregations, eminent professors in our collegiate establishments, and a considerable body of men inferior to none in this country for their scientific, literary and theological attainments. It was a noble array, not unworthy of the great cause which they came forth to espouse. The very circumstance, which caused the only serious perplexity to those who had to conduct the proceedings — the extraordinary affluence of persons willing and competent to address so vast and imposing an audience — was of itself the most gratifying proof that could be adduced of the large amount of moral and intellectual power which the assembly comprised. It is impossible not to feel some pain and regret, that so many distinguished and eloquent men, so well qualified to shed the light of superior intellect on the great questions which the Congress discussed, had no opportunity of expressing their thoughts. But we confess, that even now we do not see how the selection of speakers that was actually made could be much amended, however strongly we might desire that the time could have admitted of its being enlarged.

We cannot disguise our exultation at having secured such a President. We verily believe that the three kingdoms could have hardly supplied another so eminently qualified for the position. His high moral and religious character, his world-wide and brilliant scientific reputation, his eloquence and power as a writer, and the lofty moral courage which he has so often displayed, all combine to render Sir DAVID BREWSTER one of the most illustrious and venerable names which our country can produce.

Among the foreign delegates, the place of honor is due to our American friends, inasmuch as their presence involved an amount of sacrifice and self-denial, in travelling so vast a distance at so great an expense, in the highest degree honorable to their zeal and devotedness to the cause. We believe that the American members of the Congress exceeded sixty, representing sixteen different States. Some of these had crossed the Atlantic expressly for this one purpose, having travelled more than one thousand miles before they embarked. All honor and admiration to the men who could testify their zeal at so great a sacrifice. They were well and worthily represented in the tribune by Dr. Beckwith, Mr. Burritt, and Mr. Greely. The speech of the former gentleman was particularly valuable on account of the many cheering facts it recorded respecting the triumph of our cause in the United States.

We do not at present know the exact number of French members of the Congress; but it was very considerable, and we need hardly say, that in intellectual power and influence, it was second to that of no country represented in the Congress. To have gained the hearty sympathy and devotion of such a man as M. de Cormenin to our cause, was worth all the trou-

ble and expense of the Paris Congress; and when we look at the goodly array of names who have identified themselves with the movement in France, and who by their presence or their letters have renewed their adhesion in the present instance, including Victor Hugo, Girardin, Say, Garnier, Coquerel, Bouvet, Molinari, St. Hilaire, Carnot, de Tracy, and others of scarcely inferior mark, we feel convinced that it requires only a little better organization of their forces, (which we believe M. de Cormenin intends soon to attempt,) to enable our French allies to accomplish great things.

Hail to the German fatherland! We confess that we turn with special affection and hope to our Teutonic brethren. Despite the present unfavorable circumstances of their country, they have in them the true stamina and stuff. There were but comparatively few of them at the Congress, (38,) but they were emphatically of the right sort. Dr. Creizenach's speech was one of the most telling and successful delivered during the three days. The English portion of the audience were taken by surprise to find a foreigner expressing himself so admirably, as regards both style and pronunciation, in their own language, and they testified their delight accordingly by very cordial applause. Some German friends, unhappily not with us in person, were present to the minds of that vast auditory; and the hearty cheers with which the names of Dr. Varrentrapp and Dr. Spiess, and others of the Frankfort Committee were greeted, when mentioned by Dr. Creizenach, testified how lively a recollection was cherished by many of the eminent services rendered by those gentlemen to the friends of Peace, during their visit last year to Germany. The few words uttered by Dr. Scherer, of Vienna, with so much simplicity and gentleness, fell on the audience like a shower of dew.

M. Visschers, ever foremost of our continental associates, headed a respectable number of Belgian members and adherents, whose allegiance to the cause has been secured mainly by his own indefatigable exertions. This gentleman is entitled to the most conspicuous and honorable place among the friends of Peace; for nothing can exceed the simple-hearted devotion with which he has attached himself to the enterprise ever since our visit to Brussels. His speech at the Congress was every way excellent, as our report will testify. His allusion to the suppression of the Peace Society at Koenigsberg, as well as the reference made by Dr. Creizenach to the same event, drew from the audience an expression of spontaneous and ardent sympathy, which would have been, we doubt not, very gratifying to those of our German brethren who are suffering from that tyrannical act.

Italy and Spain, Holland, Sweden and Norway, had also their fitting representatives. It was a noble spectacle to see all these nations, accustomed in the evil times that are past, to meet on the battle-field for purposes of mutual hatred and destruction, now mingling their sympathies and voices in the hallowed work of universal concord.

‘A holy gathering! — peaceful all,  
No threat of War, no savage call  
For vengeance on an erring brother;  
But in their stead the God-like plan,  
To teach the brotherhood of man,  
To love and reverence one another —  
As sharers of a common blood,  
The children of a common God.’ ”

#### ORGANIZATION OF THE CONGRESS.

PRESIDENT — SIR DAVID BREWSTER. — VICE-PRESIDENTS — for England, RICHARD COBDEN, M. P., and CHARLES HINDLEY, M. P.; for France, M. de CORMENIN and HORACE SAY; for America, HON. WILLIAM

JACKSON and Hon. John M. NILES; for Belgium, M. VISSCHERS; for Germany, M. RAU, Professor in the University of Heidelberg.

SECRETARIES — for England, Rev HENRY RICHARD and Rev. WILLIAM STOKES; for France, M. JOSEPH GARNIER and Rev. ATHANASE COQUEREL, Jr.; for America, ELIHU BURRITT and Rev. G. C. BECKWITH, D. D.; for Germany, Dr. CREIZENACH and Dr. MARQUARDSEN; for Italy, M. JULES AVIGDOR, of Nice.

#### OPENING ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT.

I should have shrunk from occupying the chair in which your kindness has placed me, were I required to address to you any formal and lengthened argument in favor of the grand object which the Congress of Peace has been organized to accomplish. I shall consider this part of my duty discharged by a brief reference to the nature and the justice of the cause which we are this day met to plead.

The principle for which we claim your sympathy, and ask your support is, that war, undertaken to settle differences between nations, is the relic of a barbarous age, equally condemned by religion, by reason, and by justice. The question, "What is war?" has been more frequently asked than answered; and I hope that there may be in this assembly some eloquent individual who has seen it in its realities, and who is willing to tell us what he has seen. Most of you, like myself, know it only in poetry and romance. We have wept over the epics and ballads which celebrate the tragedies of war. We have followed the warrior in his career of glory, without tracing the line of blood along which he has marched. We have worshipped the demigod in the Temple of Fame, in ignorance of the cruelties and crimes by which he climbed its steep. It is only from the soldier himself, and in the language of the eye that has seen its agonies, and of the ear that has heard its shrieks, that we can obtain a correct idea of the miseries of war. Though far from our happy shores, many of us may have seen it in its ravages and in its results, in the green mound which marks the recent battle-field, in the shattered forest, in the razed and desolate village, and perchance in the widows and orphans it made!

And yet this is but the memory of war — the faint shadow of its realities — the reflection but of its blood, and the echoes but of its thunders. I shudder when imagination carries me to the sanguinary field, to the death-struggles between men who are husbands and fathers, to the horrors of the siege and sack, to the deeds of rapine, and violence, and murder, in which neither age nor sex is spared. In acts like these the soldier is converted into a fiend, and his humanity even disappears under the ferocious mask of the demon or the brute.

To men who reason, and who feel while they reason, nothing in the history of their species appears more inexplicable than that war, the child of barbarism, should exist in an age enlightened and civilized, when the arts of peace have attained the highest perfection, and when science has brought into personal communion nations the most distant, and races the most unfriendly. But it is more inexplicable still that war should exist where Christianity has for nearly two thousand years been shedding its gentle light, and that it should be defended by arguments drawn from the Scriptures themselves. When the pillar of fire conducted the Israelites to their promised home, their Divine Leader no more justified war than he justified murder by giving skill to the artist who forges the stiletto, or nerve to the arm that wields it. If the sure word of prophecy has told us that the time must come when men shall learn the art of war no more, it is doubtless our duty, and it shall be our work, to hasten its fulfilment, and upon the anvil