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ARTICLE V.

THE WORLD'S GREATEST ERA.

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IN this article the proposition is maintained, that, in the natural development of the human race upon the earth, no era of the unmeasured past or of the unfathomable future has been, or will be, equal in importance to the era in which we are now living. The word "natural" is used, in order to admit that the era of the introduction of the Christian religion as supernatural is more important. With the exception of that supernatural event, the proposition here maintained is, that no era of human history, past or future, will ever, in historic retrospect, equal in importance the era of which these current years are a part. This is the fact which makes this era of supreme importance, namely, that it is witnessing the organization of the human race into one formal political body, with political organs for the service of the entire race. When this process shall have been completed, the race, as one complete and organic whole, will be supplied, as other adequately endowed political bodies are supplied, with the three political departments—no more and no less—which are indispensable for the necessary service of the political body; namely, the legislative, the judicial, and the executive. This generation is the most fortunate of all the generations of men, from primitive man to the end of human life on the planet, as far as relates to the inestimable privilege of being on earth during the most important era in the development of the race. Other generations may well envy us

our privilege. If any men in the past foresaw this age, they must have longed to see it actually present. Hereafter, men, looking back upon the critical years, will wish that they had been here to share in the development.

This is the broad truth which is maintained in the demonstration following, that all of the historic forces in the past—whatever is involved in political history, in invention, in trade, travel, and social intercourse, in official national relations, and in all other human activities which bring men together—converge upon this era to the end of bringing all the nations into one organic whole. After that organization shall have been accomplished, then, whatever development may occur in the millions of years which may remain to mankind upon the earth will see only improvement upon, or modification of, conditions established or consequent upon the immensely important era through which mankind is now passing. Doubtless it will be true that the accomplishments of the race will be far greater in years to come than in any of the years of this era. Doubtless the comforts and luxuries of the future will far exceed those of our day. But those improved conditions will be the outcome of forces now operative, and their direction will have been shaped largely by the occurrences of this era. The organization of mankind into one political body must be the most important fact possible in the development of the race, just as the fact of existence is more important than any subsequent facts growing out of, and conditioned upon, existence. Again, the word "era" is used to cover this period of formal development, and in the history of mankind a hundred years, or even half a millennium, cannot be regarded as long. Yet, such has been the recent rapid progress of the visible movement toward organized unity, much faster than seemed at first to be possible, that it is reasonable to predict

that even one hundred years will see long strides toward the full realization of the ideal unity.

So much for laying out the proposition to be demonstrated. Now for the demonstration. First, it will be shown that the organization of the legislative department of the world is in actual progress, that it has been in progress for more than a generation, and that the advance of the movement in recent years has been rapid. To get the idea clearly in mind, let it be remarked that the law of a state or a nation is the expressed will of the people who make the state or the nation. This will fit a democracy. In the case of other forms of government, the law is the will of the governing power, whatever it may be. World law, therefore, is the expression of the will of the world, or of the nations which, taken together, may be said practically to represent the world. Wherever the group of nations which would be commonly accepted as representing the world has put its will on record, there is an expression of world law.

Now, everybody knows that there is not yet any world legislature. One is coming some time, but it is not here yet. How, then, has the world will been expressed? By international conferences and congresses. The entire field of international law is another illustration which might be used; but it is not used here, because that law has never been adopted as a formal code, ratified by the great nations, and better illustrations exist which conform to the requirement of definite propositions ratified by the different governments of the great nations.

Over thirty of these international conferences and congresses of an official nature have been held since 1815. No account is made of great international gatherings of an unofficial nature, like the long series of universal peace con-

gresses or the numerous scientific or trade gatherings from all parts of the earth, which have had their part in bringing the nations together; nor yet of the fraternal and religious conventions, with delegates from all quarters of the globe, whose occasional assembling has developed the fundamental unity of the race, overriding all barriers of distance, climate, race, and religion. Reference here is made to the strictly official gatherings which have formally represented the nations, and have given a formal and representative character to whatever has been done. Some of these gatherings have included only the Great Powers of Europe, such as that which settled the political status of Europe, in 1815, at the end of the Napoleonic wars. Others, such as have been held repeatedly in Washington and in different European capitals, have represented a larger number of nations, even from all parts of the earth. Most comprehensive of all is the International Postal Union, which includes every nation on the face of the earth capable of having a government to act for the people. Presumably about equal to that will prove to be the second Peace Conference at The Hague, which has just been held, at which were represented all of the great nations which shared the deliberations of the first, and which also included the nations of South America, which were not invited to participate in the deliberations of the historic conference at The Hague, in 1899, which established the Court of Arbitration.

No better illustration of the fact of world legislation can be found than in the case of the Universal Postal Union, because it includes all of the nations whose expression of will has taken a definite form, which form has been ratified by every one of them, and whose plan of action is in daily operation in every quarter of the world every day of the year.

bringing the ends of the earth together for the peace, prosperity, and progress of the whole. That expression of world will was reached by an official body of delegates meeting at Berne, Switzerland, in 1874. For practical purposes, that delegate body was in historic line of development of a true world legislature. Present intelligence is at such a low stage, compared with the common jealousy for national sovereignty as an absolute attribute, that the propositions of the body were referred to the home governments for ratification. When the ratifications had been made, then there was a formal expression of the will of the nations. That method of procedure has been observed in every case of world legislation thus far. The international gathering has been devoid of legislative power. It has the power of preparation of the form of propositions, and of submitting them to the home governments for ratification. Very likely that method will continue to be observed for a long time to come, for the present jealousy for national sovereignty promises to continue, and to hinder the grant to this international conference of true legislative power. But, when the true situation shall be better understood, it is impossible to doubt that there will be a true legislature for the world in the international relations of its parts, just as we have a true legislature for the United States, notwithstanding the sovereignty of the states in all interstate relations. World sovereignty does not conflict with national sovereignty, and, when the world's statesmen are educated upon this point, it is reasonable to predict that they will make no objections to the formal exercise of legislative power by the world representative body.

To return to other instances of world legislation, for the reassurance of those to whom the main proposition of an organized political unity of the world may seem a mere idle

dream. Omitting instances of less importance, and coming down to 1856, the Congress of Paris established the international status of Europe after the Crimean War. In 1864 many nations were represented by the Congress at Geneva which organized the International Red Cross Society. In 1868 the Congress of St. Petersburg, including official representatives of many nations, agreed upon propositions which were ratified by the nations, putting restrictions upon certain barbarities of war. In 1875, in Paris, was held the Metrical Diplomatic Congress, which provided that a general conference on weights and measures should meet at Paris at least once in six years, setting a precedent, in this respect, for what is proposed for the whole world for general subjects of world action. In 1885, by invitation of the United States, twenty-six nations met at Washington to agree upon a prime meridian. Numerous other illustrations might be added, including several in 1906, sufficient to establish the fact to the mind of any doubter. World legislation has occurred repeatedly, but only by irregular gatherings called for some specific purpose, whose propositions have been ratified by the home governments.

Regarding the world judiciary, such a department does not yet exist, nor can such progress toward it be shown as toward world legislation. Yet the world already has the Court of Arbitration in successful operation. In the true sense of the word "court," this is not a court; but the judicial nature of its function and the exalted ideas which inhere in the word "court" made that word the fitting one to use when a name was wanted for the new body. Really, the Hague Court of Arbitration is a department of the world executive, just as a state board of arbitration is a branch of its executive service. It is probable, nevertheless, that out of this Court

of Arbitration will be evolved a true world court. Demand for genuine court service will surely arise as soon as there is world law to pass upon, for it is inevitable that nations should have differences, if not quarrels, and there must be some recognized official body to decide whether the expressed world law has a certain interpretation and application. Already there is agitation for the codification of international law. The Interparliamentary Union asks for it, and, as soon as that codification shall have been established, there will surely arise cases demanding the exercise of court functions. Then, with the Hague Court of Arbitration already in practical operation, it will be most natural for the nations to put upon it the genuine judicial function, to change its nature to meet the need, and thus formally to set up the world's judiciary department. Already the way is paved so easily and naturally that the adoption of the proposition would not come as a novel or unwise step to men conversant with world politics and progress, but it would accord with the common sense of practical men, and would evidently be a step which would be most likely to secure justice to the opposing nations.

Regarding the world executive, the outlook is even now clear, as to precedents already established, and the lines seem to project themselves into the future with considerable definiteness, though the natural fear of a world emperor or arbitrary central power—if the imperial policy of conquest and annexation is to prevail—might easily fill the mind of the average patriot with alarm. But the outlook is positive that there will never be a world emperor. More than that, the prospect is manifestly for the peace of the world, and for the final establishment of the office of a supreme world executive, who shall be the coördinating head of many previously existing

world executive departments, which will have been in exercise for the unquestionable benefit of all the nations.

Now for the facts. In the first place, the germ of the world executive department is actually in sight. Rather, there is more than one germ, each independent of the other, but each performing true world executive functions by direction of the expressed will of the nations, that is, by world law. World law has already created the world executive department. Here is the illustration. The International Postal Union, established in 1874 by the will of the world, has a permanent secretary. His office is in Berne, Switzerland. He is an executive officer, not of any one nation, but of all the nations which are in that Union, and they comprise all the world. Here, therefore, is a genuine world executive officer, formally established by the expressed will of the world. That is, under an act of world legislation, by a body which is in the historic line of development toward a world legislature, there has been set up a genuine executive office. This shows that the development of the world executive department need not begin with a world emperor, or even a world president, but that, like all products of long-continued evolution, it originates in a germ so small that its true nature and function are not recognized at the time of establishment, but only as the years reveal the wonderful reality.

Another germ of the world executive department exists in the case of the International Committee of Weights and Measures. On May 20, 1875, a convention was signed by seventeen of the nineteen nations which were represented at the Diplomatic Metrical Conference at Paris. This convention provided for the support, at the cost of the contracting nations, jointly, of a permanent international bureau of

weights and measures, which should be neutral and should have a permanent location near Paris. An international committee of fourteen persons, from the nations making the contract, were to have exclusive direction of this bureau. The conference itself meets every six years. Thus, in this executive committee, there is another unquestionable world executive organ, as far as the seventeen nations represent the world, and the case is sufficiently general for an illustration.

These illustrations seem to foretell the line by which the world executive department will be developed. Under the operation of the will of the nations in establishing other world bodies, such as the International Postal Union and the International Bureau of Weights and Measures, there will be created executive secretaries, or whatever term be applied to the office, to act as such officials act in connection with regular national or state commissions, such as all the people of the United States are perfectly familiar with. These will be true executive officers, but of a decidedly subordinate grade, as they are in the existing instances cited. As world departments multiplied, there would be need of comprehensive supervision and coördination of their results, so that the condition and progress of the world as an organic whole might be studied and understood. Out of the necessities of this situation there would arise the office of commissioner-in-chief, as central official over all the others. Whether such official would ever hold relations to the world legislature corresponding to those of our national and state executive chiefs toward the national and state legislatures, and whether he would have power over the world police corresponding to the rank of the president of the United States over the army and navy, and similar details, would be determined by the evolution of the times, about which there is no occasion now to be concerned.

What seems clear at present is that the world executive department is already in practical existence, and has been for almost a generation, in an obscure way, serving all the nations and arousing no apprehensions, and, further, that the development of this department will proceed slowly and humbly as bureaus or commissions are created which need constant executive service. Thus we have the demonstration of the political organization of the world into one working body as already visibly in progress, and the records of the last few years, with frequent world conferences of official delegates, show that the progress has been rapid.

This proposition of the practical organization of the world into one body is manifestly the broadest and deepest political proposition which ever has arisen or ever can arise. It comes at the time when international forces of many kinds—political, commercial, industrial, religious, scientific, fraternal and social —are hurrying all the nations into a closeness of contact utterly unknown to the previous generations. It has now reached a prominence where it challenges attention, not only as the greatest political proposition possible for humanity to entertain, but as now actually becoming urgent in consequence of the development already accomplished toward this formal organization, and of the pressing problems which will engage attention at the coming international conferences which will surely follow the first and second conferences at The Hague.

Two of the propositions most discussed latterly are the limitation of armaments and a general arbitration treaty. Upon both of these the progress of the political organization of the world has weighty bearing. With that process further advanced, there would be no doubt not only of the limitation of armaments, but of complete disarmament. The discussion of a general arbitration treaty would be needless, because it

would be behind the times. Both of these results would be secured through the development of the world court for the interpretation and application of world law. No better illustration, both as regards theory and practice, can be found than that of the United States. Our several states are absolutely sovereign in regard to all matters upon which they have not specifically ceded their sovereignty to the United States. Yet war between them is forever impossible. That is not because the fighting spirit has ceased to burn, or because jealousy of individual rights has no occasion, or because misunderstandings do not arise, but solely because there is a recognized judicial tribunal, superior to the states, to which they can take their differences, and be assured that justice will be awarded, as far as human nature in its best estate is capable. State sovereignty is preserved within its proper sphere. Rights are completely and promptly, peacefully and economically, secured, compared with the injustice, the delay, the extravagance, and the horrors of war. Between these forty-five sovereignties which are under the United States flag, war is forever impossible under a government which has for many years been a practical, working success.

As a peace proposition, therefore, the organization of the world is the most efficient method yet proposed. Though its approach to the problem of prevention of war might seem to be indirect, yet it would be the shortest cut, the safest reliance, and the most comprehensive of all the plans proposed. World organization includes all that the peace movement includes, and far more. The occupation of the Hague Court of Arbitration, as such a court, would be gone after world unity were accomplished, because of its higher function as a true world court to pass upon world law in general, not merely upon national differences which threatened to become the occasion

of war. Peace between the nations would be as secure as it is between the states of the United States, and no nation would overturn the prescribed order of procedure, and fly to war with its neighbor, any more than one of our states thinks of a resort to arms when it has a difference with its neighbor. The world court would be the resort of all.

Right in the path to the desired organization of the nations as one, stands the doctrine and claim of absolute national sovereignty. In our own country the persistence of the hold upon state sovereignty indicates that the persistence of the claim of the nations would be much more marked and prolonged, especially since racial jealousies and prejudices would be far more strongly operative. But just as state sovereignty is right within its limits, and yet has limits beyond which it is untenable, so national sovereignty has its rights, and also its limitations, in the presence of the sovereignty of the entire body of mankind as an organized whole. In the right adjustment of local and central rights and powers, no conflict would arise and no fears would be justified, just as they are not warranted in the right adjustment of the relations of our state and national governments. Nations have nothing to lose by recognition of the doctrine of world sovereignty. They would retain all of their present national sovereignty as far as related to the power of the government over their own citizens, and they cannot claim any more power now, rightfully, than if they came up to the higher plane and admitted, what all nations now theoretically deny, the existence of world sovereignty. The adjustment of relations, as in the case of our states and the nation, is to be made calmly and judicially, with absolute assurance that the balance of local and central rights and duties would ultimately secure the largest local activity and prosperity with the general well-being of the or-

ganized whole. Until that security was attained, there would be constant agitation for justice.

As the United States offers the conspicuous working example of how the problem is to be solved in bringing the nations into an organized whole, it is for the United States to exert its influence upon the other nations for the accomplishment of this end. The one proposition which is in line with the development of the world unity is that which stands first in the list of five prepared by the Interparliamentary Union,—that for a regular international congress or parliament with recommendatory powers. It is now the idea of those active in the movement that the Hague Conference itself should become this regular delegate body of the nations, with power to frame propositions to be submitted to the nations for their ratification, out of which, in process of development, is expected to grow a true world legislature. This proposition was one submitted to President Roosevelt in September, 1904, by the Interparliamentary Union, after its first session in this country (at St. Louis), and it was included in the invitation sent out in October, 1904, by Secretary John Hay, by direction of President Roosevelt, to the nations, inviting them to a second conference at The Hague. It may, therefore, fittingly be termed the American proposition. It was indorsed by the Interparliamentary Union on initiative from the United States (by Congressman Richard Bartholdt of Missouri), and it has such standing that it is reasonable to expect that it will be accepted by all workers for the political unity of the world as their most vital measure. This is the status, at this important hour, of the greatest political proposition possible in the history of the human race.