

[May 31, 1906]

HON. CHARLES S. HAMLIN (Boston, Mass).

MR. CHAIRMAN AND LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: I cannot adequately express the pleasure with which I have listened to the eloquent and able addresses that we have heard here. I can truthfully say that I would travel half around the world to hear the address given us yesterday by Dr. Abbott (Applause) and I can as truthfully add that, having reached that distant point, I would gladly complete the circuit without rest or sleep to be back in time for the learned and eloquent address we have just heard from His Eminence, Cardinal Gibbons. (Applause.) I was not among those who were invited to be present here to deliver any address; I assumed that the task, the golden task of silence, was to have been imposed on me, and I came ^{as} ~~to be~~ a listener and not a speaker, for I think in every well ordered convention or convocation it is necessary to have a number of good, faithful listeners, and such I supposed was the task to be assigned to me. But having been called upon at a half hour's notice to say something, I feel that to decline would not only be a discourtesy to our host to whom we owe so much, but would, as well, seem an ungracious refusal to join in this important discussion, and therefore I gladly contribute my mite, and I assure you it will be as small as the widow's mite of old. It demands preparation, my friends, -whatever may be the need of preparation for war, it certainly demands preparation to be able to speak on the great subject of peace. I feel that the good work that this conference has done could not adequately be expressed,

if a man were to be given hours to devote to this subject alone. You have done much through the inspiration and leadership of our host of today, you have done much to mould public opinion, and I certainly hope that he, at least, will live to see the full fruition of the reward of his and your labors. (Applause).

I am glad to record myself as among those, -and I believe they constitute a majority of the people of our country, -who believe that the principles of public and private morality are one and the same. (Applause). We believe that what is right and just for an individual should be right and just for a nation; and conversely, a course of action which is wrong, unjust and immoral for the individual is wrong, unjust and immoral for a nation.

(Applause). In harmony with this view, my friends, we see today, as compared with the past, a great difference in the relation of nations one to the other, just as we see a precisely similar difference in the relations of individuals one to the other. If we go back to the early English philosophers, we find prominent the writings of the philosopher Hobbes, who thought men were almost wild beasts, that life was a struggle of one man against the other; that society was simply armed neutrality and that the exact measure of the gain of one man was the exact measure of the loss of the other. But, my friends, there has been since those days a great development in philosophic thought. First came the Earl of Shaftesbury, who called attention to sympathy as a bond between men, -a recognition of the kindly association rather than of competition between men, and of their fellow feeling rather than of

their envies, hatreds and jealousies. Next came the philosophy of Bentham recognizing a conception of an enlarged self; he spoke of the greatest good of the greatest number,-a distinct recognition of the common dependence of one man upon another. That conception was carried further by John Stuart Mill; and finally in the great German philosopher, Kant, we see the recognition of a broader self, a universal self, the brotherhood of mankind. So it has been with nations. It is not so long back in history to a time when nations looked upon one another as eternal foes; the National maxim seemed to be the survival of the fittest and the measure of the gain of one nation was considered to be but the exact measure of the loss of the other. Today, however,-largely through the influence of societies and convocations such as this,-we see an active conception of the broader national self, precisely as we recognize the conception of a broader individual self,-a unity of National, as well as of individual fellowship.

Now, my friends, we hear a great deal said about the necessity for preparation for war. I confess that does not appeal to me. Of course, there must be some preparation for defence against unjust aggression, but when I hear this war cry continually dinned in my ears in and out of Congress, I cannot help feeling it is better for a nation not to be absolutely prepared for war, not to have its guns shotted and even aimed at some other great nation. I believe there is nothing that so tends to calm, sober judgment and thought before action as the feeling that, after all, we are

not absolutely prepared for war, with shotted guns, awaiting the hysterical command of some excited chief. (Applause).

I hope this meeting will send, with one united voice, a request to the President of the United States, to use every endeavor to have the Hague Tribunal take up the question of limitation of armaments. (Applause). There may be subjects here upon which we differ, but I want to speak and ask for action along the great lines on which we all agree, because where we speak with united voice, we speak with force and strength and we send a message not only over this country, but over the civilized world. We should record here our agreements and leave our disagreements to be discussed and thrashed out and merged into agreements perhaps at some time in the future. (Applause).

I very well remember, and you all remember the Columbia Exposition at Chicago in 1893; the Court of Honor surrounded by those beautiful buildings and the Peristyle, and back of it the beautiful water of the lake. On that Peristyle were written in letters of gold, the sacred words, -"And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." Let us seek that truth; let us know that truth and let us crystallize it by strengthening the Hague Tribunal, by establishing a Congress of Nations; and that truth, crystallized into the laws of international peace, will free us from barbaric conceptions of National power and will conduce to the greatest benefit of the individual, the state, the nation, and of all mankind. (Applause).