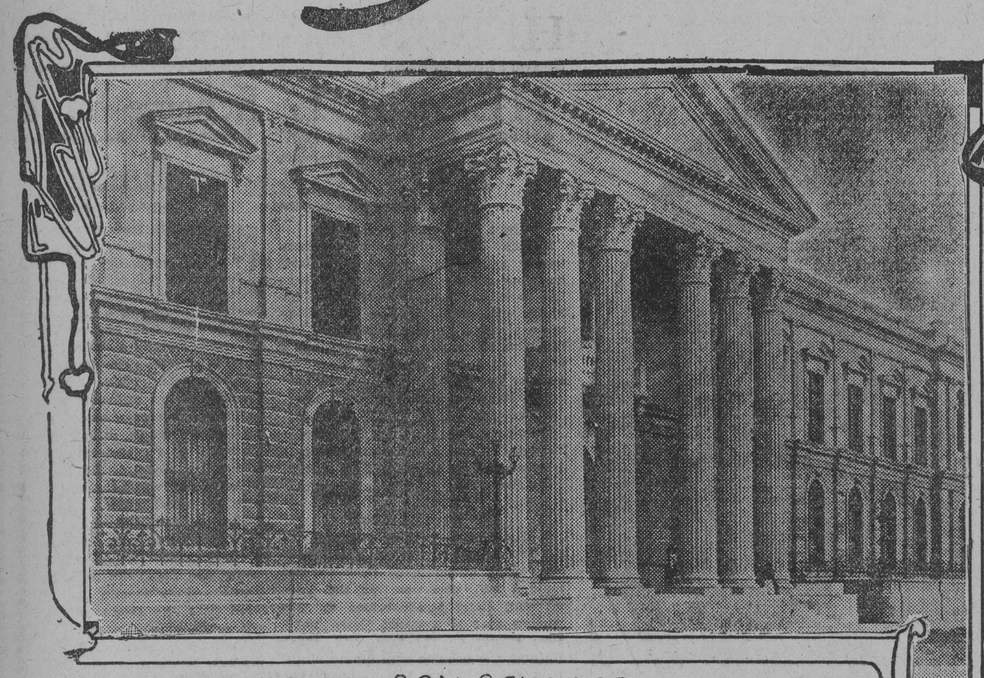
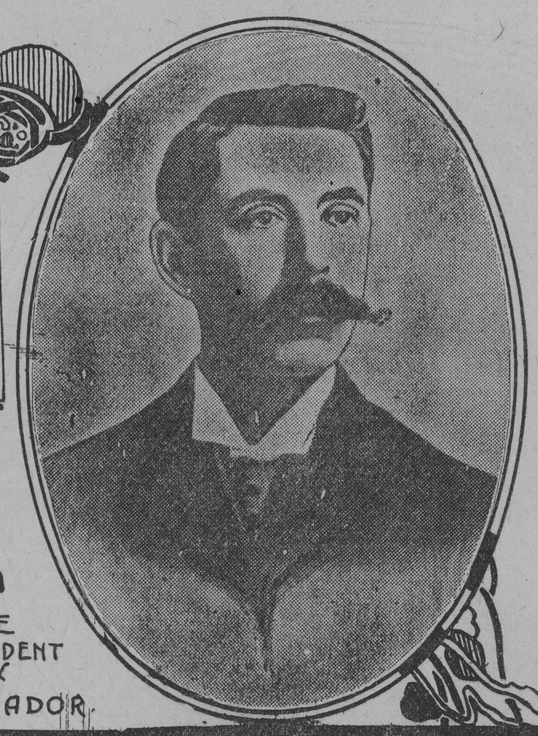
The Smallest American Republic

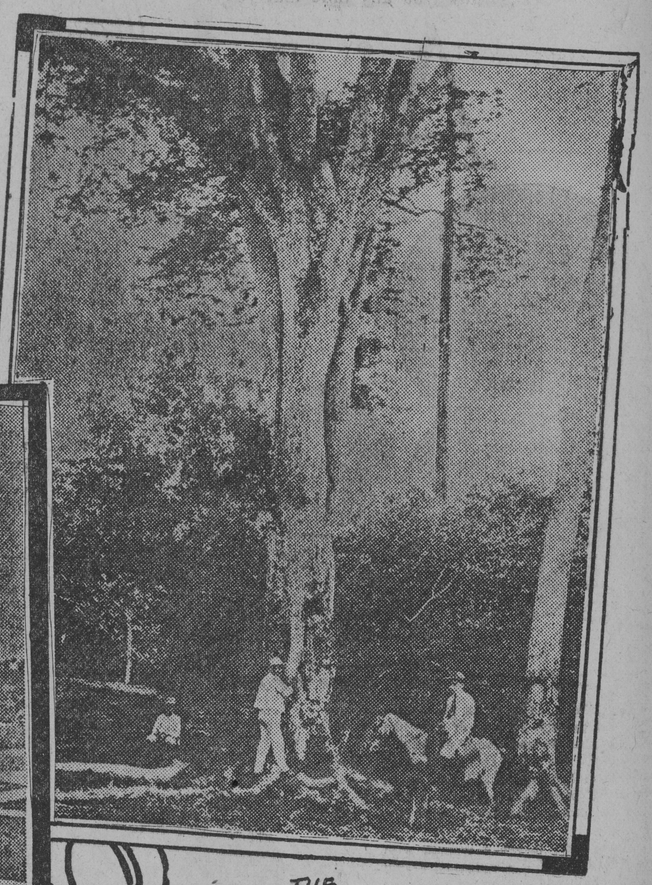


THE CAPITOL, SAN SALVADOR.



THE PRESIDENT of SALVADOR

VOTING IS COMPULSORY IN SALVADOR AND THE PRESIDENT CANNOT SUCCEED HIMSELF



THE BALSAM TREE GROWS ONLY IN SALVADOR

DRYING COFFEE BEANS ON CONCRETE PLATFORMS.

BY FRANK G. CARPENTER.

ESQUINTLA, Guatemala, January 10.

I AM writing this letter at Esquintla, Guatemala. It is the biggest town between the capital and the seacoast. It lies on the Guatemala Central Railroad, some distance north of Santa Maria, the junction where the Pan-American Road will cross the Central on its way to Panama. The Pan-American line is now practically completed from Santa Maria to Mexico, and the plan is to extend the road southward to Santa Ana, in Salvador. The distance betwen these two towns is less than 100 miles, and we shall then have railroad connection between Salvador and the United States. An American syndicate will probably build this road, and the same syndicate has plans for a line from Zacapa, on the Guatemala Railway, on the other side of the mountains, to connect with the Salvador system. When these roads are finished Salvador will be able to ship goods to Port Barrios, on the Caribbean Sea, and it will be within less than three days of New Orleans.

I understand the concessions for these branches are well under way, and that their completion is a matter of a very short time.

These two roads will form a part of a great Central American railway system, the chief owners of which are Minor C. Keith and his associates, many of whom are connected with the United Fruit Company. Mr. Keith controls the roads of Costa Rica and also those of Guatemala. He has large interests in Honduras, and also a grasp upon the railways of Nicaragua. The road from Santa Maria to Santa Ana was originally granted to Mr. Rene Keilhauer, but it is now in the names of Minor C. Keith and Bradley M. Palmer. The line from Santa Ann to Zacapa is also said to be backed by Mr. Keith. It will be 79 miles long, and its gauge will be standard.

Salvador Railways.

As it is now, Salvador has just about 123 miles of railways, and these belong to a British company. Its lines were built with British capital, although they have a number of American engines and cars. Some of the locomotives are Baldwins, and a number of the cars were manufactured in Philadelphia. At present the company is building its own coaches.

These roads connect the port of Acajutla with the thriving town of Santa Ana and also with the capital at San Salvador. The company owns an iron pier at Acajutla, which cost over a million dollars to build, and it has a line of steamers which plies along the coast running to Honduras, Nicaragua and as far north as Salina Cruz, in Mexico. These steamers carry the Salvador mails north to Tehuantepec, cutting down the postal time between Salvador and Europe to only a little over two weeks, whereas it used to be one month. They enable one to go to Salvador from here every few days. With the completion of the Panama Canal, the traffic of Acajutla will be greatly increased, and the road will be a very valuable property. The prospect is that it will eventually go into the hands of the American syndicate.

These railways will bring Salvador into close connection with the United States. It is one of the most interesting countries on this continent. Great parts of Guatemala are savage, wild and unpopulated. Salvador is more thickly settled than most parts of our Union. It has an area less than that of Massachusetts and its inhabitants number 2,000,000. If the United States were as thickly populated it would have more than four times as many people as now, and if our soil throughout were as rich, we would have wealth beyond the dreams of avarice. Salvador has two ranges of mountains, which are rich in iron, copper and lead, and in gold and silver as well. As it is now, its mineral exports are between $2,000,000 and $3,000,000 a year, and the total exports, including coffee, tobacco and sugar, are more than $9,000,000.

The bulk of the exports go to the United States, France and Germany, while the most of the imports come from the British and us. The Germans, who have less than a half million dollars of the exports and about the same of the imports, have large financial interests, and they are doing what they can to capture the trade.

American Trade in Salvador.

Indeed, it behooves the Americans to be up and doing as to Central America. I find the Germans everywhere, and the British have long had a hold on the various countries. As it is now Great Britain is supplying twice as much cotton to Salvador as we do, and it is crowding us close in hardware and in certain kinds of machinery. We have the bulk of the leather imports and most of the flour, and we are shipping several hundred thousand dollars' worth of drugs and medicines—a business in which Germany tries in vain to compete.

As to our imports, we are buying about a million dollars' worth of Salvador coffee, six or seven hundred thousand dollars' worth of gold and a few thousand dollars' worth of rubber and skins. The total exports to the United States in 1910 were just a little over two millions—a bagatelle in comparison with the population and wealth of the country.

Salvador is different from the other Central American States in that it is divided up into small farms. There are many landholders, and nearly every family owns its own home farm. The soil is fertile and the rainfall abundant. There are thousands of little coffee plantations, many indigo farms and here and there a field of green sugar cane.

The government is doing all it can to encourage farming and it has established a school of agriculture, which has an experimental farm situated on the sides of the mountains about 1,300 feet above the sea. This farm is between Sonsonate, the second city of the republic, and Izalco. It is not far from Acajutla, upon a little tableland, on the highest part of which are the school buildings and laboratory. Experiments are being made there in coffee and sugar planting, and also in cattle breeding and dairying. The school sends out bulletins of information somewhat as our Agricultural Department does, although on an infinitely smaller scale.

Coffee and Indigo.

Coffee and indigo are the two chief crops of Salvador. The coffee product amounts to something like 9,000,000 pounds and it brings the highest of prices. The trees grow in all parts of the republic between 1,500 and 4,000 feet above sea level. The plants are grown in seed beds and are set out when they have been well sprouted. They begin to produce at about three years. It costs from five to six cents a pound to raise the coffee and it sells at retail from 10 cents to 25 cents a pound, over half the crop being consumed at home. I am told that which is sent abroad brings very high prices, and the Central Americans think Salvador coffee better than that of Brazil and superior to the coffee of Jamaica or Java.

Indigo grows almost everywhere and it once was the chief export of the country. It is produced from a plant which flourishes upon nearly all soils. The ground is first burnt over and then scratched with the plow. The seed is scattered broadcast and the plants soon grow to the height of your head. They are then cut and the indigo extracted by soaking them in water in vats. It takes about 100 pounds of the green plants to produce five or six ounces of indigo. The business is not so profitable as it was in the past, when as much as 1,800,000 pounds were produced in one year, a value equal to about $3,000,000. The output today is much less, the indigo dye having been largely driven out of use by the cheap analine dyes.

Another queer Salvador export is the balsam of Peru, whose name reminds me of that which Senator Palmer chose for his log cabin home outside Detroit. He called the place Font Hill, and when asked why replied that it was because it had no fountain and no hill. This is the case with the balsam of Peru. It does not come from Peru, but from Salvador, and this is about the only place where it grows well. This balsam is largely used in perfumery and medicines. It is sometimes called cocoa balsam because it was once shipped in cocoanuts. It really comes from a great tree of the tropical forests which, when full grown, is over a yard thick and from 80 to 100 feet high. The tree has a white bark and the wood is hard and durable. It has white blossoms and its fruit is much like a bean pod, with a single seed. These trees grow in the forests and the balsam is collected almost altogether by Indians, who tap the trees in the winter by scraping off the bark in patches to the depth of one-tenth of an inch. After this the scraped places are heated with burning torches and then covered with scraps of old cotton cloth. The cloth sticks to the tree and in a day or two the sap has soaked into it. The rags are now taken off and boiled in big iron pots. They are then put under pressure and the balsam juice squeezed out. It must now be refined and put up in cans for the market. The product is a grayish-red mass which smells like vanilla. It is said to be especially good for skin diseases and as an antiseptic. It sells for $2 or $3 a pound.

Visited by Secretary Knox.

Secretary Knox took a run through Salvador during his stay in Central America, and he has proclaimed it one of the prettiest of our sister republics. The lowlands and sides of the mountains are covered with farms. The villages are quaint and the cities have many beautiful buildings.

The biggest town is Santa Ana, with about 34,000; then comes San Salvador, with 32,000, and then San Miguel, with 23,000. Sonsonate, where the railroad shops are, has 12,000, and the port of La Libertad is almost as large. The total city population, including towns ranging from 3,000 upward, is about 180,000.

The capital, San Salvador, is one of the beautifully located towns of Central America. It lies in the foothills of the mountains, right under a magnificent volcano and about 2,000 feet above the Pacific Ocean. In some respects it compares with Mexico City. Near it is Lake Hopango, a beautiful green sheet of water with a shore line of perhaps 30 miles. All the country about is volcanic and this lake formerly had islands which some years ago dropped out of sight at the time of an earthquake, while another island 500 feet in diameter rose out of the lake to a height of 150 feet. At the same time the water became intensely hot, although it is ordinarily cold. There are now villages and hotels about Hopango and it is the favorite resort of San Salvador.

The capital of the republic is well built. Its streets are wide and well paved, and its public offices compare with those of the great cities of Europe. The new cathedral is magnificent and the White House, or Casa Blanco, the university, the theater and the National Institute are worthy of mention. There are fine homes, consisting of one or two stories surrounding open courts or patios. Most of these have beautiful gardens and not a few have fountains. The houses are painted in bright colors and the roofs are of tiles. The sidewalks are paved with slabs or rocks from the quarries nearby and there are tramways which give a 10-minute service. A new theater is now building which is subsidized by the city. It will cost about a million francs and will seat 1,200.

San Salvador's President.

San Salvador has numerous parks, in which the people walk about during the evening, when the bands play. It is a great club center, and is the social hub of the republic. It is where the president lives and where congress meets. The present executive is Don Manuel Enrique Araujo, who was vice president under the last administration, and who, I am told, is very popular. He was elected by both parties and great things are expected of him. He is one of the young men of the country and has long been noted for his fairness on all public questions. He is a physician by profession, and is well known as a surgeon. He is also an inventor, having designed some very delicate instruments, which are now in common use in the big hospitals of Europe.

The government of Salvador, as is the case with all the Central American states, is modeled after that of our country. The republican government is divided into three branches, legislative, executive and judicial. The legislature has but one house, which is known as the National Chamber of Deputies. This consists of 42 members, who are elected by popular vote for a term of one year. All males have the right to vote after they reach the age of 18, and they are compelled to do so. There is no mugwumping or shirking the polls in Salvador.

The executive branch consists of a president and vice president, who are elected by popular vote. The president is not eligible for re-election until four years after the close of his term, and he cannot succeed himself as vice president. He has his cabinet, consisting of four secretaries, each with a large number of clerks.

The Army of Salvador is small, but quite large enough for the country. It numbers about 15,000 men as a regular force, 11,000 as a first reserve and 15,000 as a second reserve. In case of war, military service is compulsory, and the country can put into the field on short notice, something like 80,000 men.

Up-to-date Sanitation.

Salvador is now becoming live to the new sanitation. Some of the finest buildings of the country are its hospitals, among which is that of Rosales, which has an endowment of more than $4,000,000. This building is situated at San Salvador. It was bequeathed to the nation by Don Jose Rosales and was sustained by him during his lifetime. There are other hospitals at the capital and also in the chief towns, and something like 8,000 patients are treated in them every year.

Not far from San Salvador is a tuberculosis sanatorium, where the open-air treatment is employed, and the people claim that they have a less death rate from consumption than in any other Spanish-American capital. The number is a little over 13 per 10,000, which compares very favorably with Lima, the capital of Peru, which has over 62; Caracas, the capital of Venezuela, which has 60, and Rio de Janeiro and Santiago de Chile, each of which has 38. The mortality in Mexico City per 10,000 from this disease is 14, and that of Montevideo, Uruguay, 16.

Fighting the Hookworm.

I have written of what the Costa Ricans are doing as to the hookworm. They have their doctors everywhere and they are greatly reducing the extent of the plague. In Salvador recently it seemed as though the country would have an epidemic of smallpox. The National Institute of Vaccination took up the matter and supplied enough serum to vaccinate all the people. The work was much the same as that which we did in Porto Rico at the close of our war with Spain, when we vaccinated 800,000 within a month or so. The Salvador work was so effective that within a few months smallpox was wiped out of the republic.

This vaccination work was done largely by traveling doctors in connection with the Rosales Hospital, which has a factory in which a thousand tubes of vaccine are monthly prepared. In addition to this a great deal is imported from France and Switzerland.

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A COON HUNTING REMINISCENCE

SEVERAL Frankfort sportsmen, according to the State Journal, are upon their way to High Bridge upon a houseboat, carrying 1,000 live minnows and other bait and two coon dogs, says the Louisville Courier-Journal. They will hunt 'coon in the hills about High Bridge.

Good coon dogs are rare sporting animals nowadays. They never were as common as good bird dogs, but when there was more virgin forest in Kentucky than there now is, and when the wages of farm laborers were less than they now are, there was a fair profit in coon hunting, as well as fair sport, and nearly every round-log or hewn log cabin boasted a coon dog. When six bits a day was the pay of a strapping farm labored, even in corn shucking time, and 'coon pelts were worth a half dollar, a really good coon dog could earn more for the man who followed him than could be earned in the field from sunup to sundown. Coons were plentiful in the woods. A man with a first-rate dog—usually a cur which knew better than to waste time jumping up rabbits, and whose nose was set for the trailing of "varmints"—and with an ax to chop down trees and a shotgun or cap-and-ball rifle to use as occasion offered, was pretty sure to come home with more than six bits' worth of 'coon fur before midnight.

Dogs trail coons more readily after a light rain has fallen. When it is damp in the woods and the various forest scents mingle and form a perfume that is grateful to the olfactories of human beings, the raccoon upon his way from his home in a hollow tree to his fishing in the shallows of the creek leaves more of the perfume of his "pads" upon the fallen leaves than is left upon a dry night. And if the clouds have blown away and there is a full moon the hunter is not put to the trouble of getting the coon out of the tree by climbing the tree or by chopping it down, a method common enough when timber was looked upon as inexhaustible and when axmen were more expert than they now are and did not look upon ax work as intolerable labor. Upon moonlight nights the coon was usually discoverable to the hunter somewhere in the "crotch" of the tree or flattened out upon the top of a large limb trying to hide. All that was necessary was to walk about the tree, keeping its branches silhouetted against the moon until the fur of the coon was seen. The coarse hair that grows longer than the soft short fur upon thre coon's back showed readily against the moon, and sometimes the end of a tail left hanging carelessly over a limb would reveal the whereabouts of the animal whose presence was denoted by the refusal of the dog to leave the butt of the tree. Pelts are not at their best until the heavy frosts have made the raccoon put on his winter coat. By that time the leaves have fallen, leaving the branches bare against the sky. A man accustomed to shooting squirrels from the topmost branches of "shellbark" hickories with a long rifle could pot a coon by moonlight by getting his fur against the face of the moon, and hunters who were primarily interested in getting pelts saved time by doing so. A wild turkey roost was sometimes found by a hunter while circling a tree looking for a coon.

Upon cloudy nights, or in the dark of the moon, it was not worth while to carry a gun of any kind. The dog and the ax constituted full equipment. The coon treed, there was nothing to do but cut down the tree or climb it. Cutting the tree had one great disadvantage: an eager dog would sometimes fail to allow for the spread of the branches and get killed by the falling tree. If the dogs were held back there was always the possibility that the coon would get up another tree before he could be caught. An old and experienced animals sometimes managed to jump from the branches of a falling tree to a standing one, leaving no trail and sometimes escaping the eyes of the dogs. Climbing the tree had also one great disadvantage. The supposed coon sometimes turned out to be a wildcat. It is safe enough to straddle a limb and make a coon run out to the end of it, where he may be shaken into the jaws of the dogs below. But a wildcat is inclined to dispute possession of the limb, and an enraged wildcat encountered in the dark by a bare-handed human opponent is somewhat more terrible than an army with banners. Because of its rapidity in action the wildcat also seems, in such a situation, to be as the sands of the sea for a multitude. Old coon hunters used to tell grisly stories of limb-end encounters with "catamounts" to which they would have been glad to apologize in time if they had known what manner of savage beast they faced in the inky darkness in the depths of the forests.

But notwithstanding its drawbacks, 'coon hunting was regarded as good sport by primitive ruralists who had not been lectured by the modern writers upon the wickedness of cruelty to animals, and who relished a finish fight between an old boar 'coon and a fearless dog which had learned in a bloody school of experience where to grip the 'coon and how important it was to hang on. Only the dog which has learned from trained 'coon dogs how to get the death grip and hold it is a match for a full-grown 'coon. And if the 'coon is treed near water and can manage to beat the dog to the creek the inexperienced dog who plunges in and tackles him is pretty likely to be drowned by an animal who has a peculiar and deadly knowledge of how to fight without swallowing water and who can remain under water for a good while without drowning.

Nowadays coon hunting in the more thoroughly tilled sections of Kentucky has become unpopular with the commonality. The game is not plentiful enough to make the hunt profitable. And really good coon dogs—dogs that will not follow the hunter instead of the trail, and will not "lie," which means barking up the wrong tree—are hard to find. Coon hunting has been tried as a diversion for "Society," but it is a rough sport, pursued in the darkness and, necessarily, through thickets and briars, it has never had a vogue with the set that hunts foxes. Nowadays trees are getting so few and far between in Central Kentucky that many coons seek refuge in sink holes when pursued, and some of the few coon hunters who still follow them insist that "ground coons" and "tree coons" are separate species.

The Curse of War

By KINAHAN CORNWALLIS

I.

A cruel, blighting pestilence is war!
With robbery and murder for its aim!
A God-defying sacrifice of life!
"Thou shalt not kill"! is the Divine command!
A wanton spoliation of the land,
With devastation and destruction dire!
A tempest of base passions and revenge?
A sorrowful abuse of human power!

II.

Behold the roaring battle's surging hell!
War's sweeping, flashing, smoking hurricane!
With thundering cannon hurling bolts of death!
And rides rattling as their missiles fly!
While batteries belch aloud their fatal fire!
And hissing shells deal havoc as they burst
And turn to mangled masses fighting men!
And charging troops are pierced by bayonets,
While yells of triumph deaden dying groans!
And stricken horses with their riders fall!
The wounded, with the dead, oft trampled down;
And flashing sabers, glittering in the sun,
Proclaim their mission as they drip with blood!
Yet fife and drum are heard amid the storm—
The fierce barbaric tumult of the fight,
And fire the courage of the warring hosts.

III.

What moral right have rulers thus to slay
And with disaster scourge the lands they rule?
Why should Ambition's goal be bought with blood?
And Governments their people doom to death?
Those they should foster and protect from harm.
Should territory be by slaughter won?
And States by loot and carnage greater grow?
No realm shall prosper by such evil deeds,
But by its people be restrained from war,
Or share the fate of Babylon and Rome.
War's sacrifice through all the past appals!
The world's long record of the millions slain!
And makes Humanity and Mercy weep!

IV.

Mankind from Marathon to Waterloo,
And later, through more desolating wars,
Has fought with splendid courage misapplied,
With sentiment perverted, false and base,
And wasted in destruction manly strength,
And falsely deemed it righteous thus to fight;
For why should men their fellowmen assail?
Men who are strangers and have harmed them not,
And drench with blood and tears their native land?
The tears of women o'er their kinsmen slain,
Mourning the loss of those who fought and died,
Mourning the stern, dread tragedy of war.

What worse could be to settle hot disputes?
What greater wrong and folly could be wrought?
Sad, horrible and terrible is war!

V.

Curst be unrighteous rulers of the earth
Who sacrifice their countrymen for spoil,
With disregard of all but force of arms,
In violation of all human rights!
Alas! that such destruction e'er should be,
And worse than barbarism reign,
With men as fiercely battling as the brutes!

VI.

Yet Christian nations thus resort to arms,
And work unchristian vengeance on their foes,
And falsely deem it patriotic strife,
And glorify the victors in the fight,
Yea praise their courage in the work of hell!
God grant that soon the gladsome time may come
When war will be a pestilence no more!
When PEACE in splendor through the world will reign!
PEACE bringing weal and happiness to man!
PEACE building—not destroying—here below!
PEACE adding to the opulence of all!

VII.

No greater curse than war afflicts mankind!
No more destroying and satanic blight!
No greater foe to all things civilized!
A foe that turns the tide of Progress back!
No more calamitous and woeful wrong!
How dark its stain on the historic page!
And men ere long, through all the world, will rise
Against the tyrants who would bid them fight!
Then armies will—like navies—cease to be,
And PEACE enthroned will glorify the earth,
And lighten burdens we have now to bear,
While Art and Science, Letters, Morals, Laws,
Will all reflect our higher plane of life!

VIII.

Humanity and Reason cry for Peace!
And naught can justify the scourge of war.
So time will this barbaric blot efface.
And usher in a happier age for man.
Responsive to enlightenment to come,
The nations will in unison disarm,
And join in peaceful bonds to banish war,
And Seek JUDICIAL REMEDIES for wrongs,
And ARBITRATE where now they draw the sword!
Then may they boast—"Behold us Civilized!"
And see enriched their heritage on earth.
Let all the world unite to war no more!
And bless mankind with universal peace!
Peace—everlasting peace—from pole to pole!

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