

**THE EXTINCTION IN  
PERPETUITY OF  
ARMAMENTS AND WAR**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649206476

The extinction in perpetuity of armaments and war by Albert William Alderson

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Cover @ 2017

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By  
ALBERT WILLIAM ALDERSON

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P. S. KING & SON  
ORCHARD HOUSE  
WESTMINSTER

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CHAPTER I.

IN the matter of armaments and wars the nineteenth century (and beginning of the twentieth) differs little from preceding ages. Vast strides have been made in the applied sciences, which have immensely increased the material prosperity of the world, and, as regards intercommunication, the nations have been brought within fewer hours of each other than they once were days. In all respects great changes, mainly for the better, have been effected during the last hundred years, but there has seemingly been little alteration in the frequency of wars, in the burden of armaments. Indeed, in the latter respect the present day seems to have reached a point untouched by and undreamt of in former ages. There have never been such vast armies as those we see around us to-day. The direct expenditure of the world on armaments at the end of the nineteenth century is, at a rough estimate, not far short of £300,000,000 per annum; the indirect cost, represented by the wasted labour of the enormous peace establishments of the various armies, runs into many millions more. Altogether the world spends about £500,000,000 per annum during peace on armaments. Capitalised at 5 per cent. this represents a sum of £10,000,000,000. And that is not all

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the tale. This heavy burden is considered preferable to the still vaster expense and misery which wars ever cause. Efforts have been made, more especially of late years, to devise some means of lessening armaments, of avoiding recourse to war, but no progress has been made. Armaments are continually increasing, and wars have occurred in all quarters of the world within recent memory. It is true that the wars of the nineteenth century were not nearly so lengthy as those of previous eras. They were likewise less frequent. But what they have lost in length and frequency they have fully gained in expense and destructiveness. Since mid-nineteenth century there have been the Crimean War, 1854, the Italian Campaigns, 1859, the War of Secession, 1861, the Danish War, 1864, the Austro-Prussian Campaign, 1866, the Franco-Prussian War, 1870, the Russo-Turkish War, 1877, the China-Japan War, 1894, the Spanish-American, 1898, the Anglo-Boer, 1899, the Russo-Japanese, 1904. This list takes no account of minor wars, such as the Indian Mutiny, the Afghan Wars, Transvaal, 1881, Egypt, 1882 and onwards, Greco-Turkish, 1896, perennial disturbances in the Balkans, various wars in South America, and so forth. All these wars have cost in the aggregate many thousands of lives, many thousands of millions of money. And this within a space of only half-a-century—an odd afternoon in the world's history. It is unnecessary to go further into the historical aspect of the question. History shows an unbroken vista of armaments and wars. Innumerable books give the fullest particulars about wars, their cost and course, their effects near and remote. There is also a voluminous literature dealing with the various proposals for avoiding war, and detailing a thousand opinions for and against the possibility of its abolition. The plain fact is evident, that it has never proved possible to abolish armament or war, and that at the present day we are no nearer that



consummation than we ever were. It is held on practically all hands that war and armaments will always exist, and that the future in that respect will not differ from the past. And all the facts we are told go to prove that assertion. War finds its root in our imperfect human nature, and until that is radically altered we shall hope in vain for a warless world. Of course, if war finds its cause in human nature, and if that nature is virtually impossible of alteration, there is no more to be said. But I venture to think, and it will be the aim of this short work to prove, that the causes of war are not in human nature at all, that we need not bother about transforming our earthly nature into something more heavenly before we can rid ourselves of the war scourge. The questions awaiting answer are simply these: What is the cause (or causes) of war, not of this war or of that war, but of every war? and, secondly, Is this cause (or causes) removable? We have the effects of the disease before our eyes: all there is to be done is to find out what causes the disease, and then to remove that cause. When that is done the disease will automatically disappear. I do not suppose that the disappearance of armaments and war will produce the millennium, but neither is it true that we must wait for the millennium before we see the last war.

## CHAPTER II.

WAR is constantly being associated in various ways with Empire ; it is therefore of use to give a few moments to the consideration of Empires. The dictionary definition of the word is : " Supreme control or dominion, the territory under the dominion of an emperor." But leaving definition aside, one may ask, of what use is an Empire to the people of which it consists? To-day there are several Empires in existence : the British, Russian, Chinese, &c. Do they differ from those of the past : the Roman, the Byzantine, &c. ? These latter have " fallen." Will the former likewise " fall " ? And if so, why ? Let us take the British Empire as it exists to-day, and examine it carefully and see whether any generalisations universally applicable can be derived from such examination. The area, population and various facts concerning the British Empire are stated in dozens of books of reference, and scores of political writers have taken this subject as their theme. It is therefore unnecessary to recapitulate any details. The first thing that strikes one is the extraordinary heterogeneousness which characterises the various territories called the British Empire. England, India, Australia, South Africa, Canada, &c., scattered all over the world, are yet one, we are told, in loyalty to crown and flag. There seems very little affinity between, say, the Hindoo of Bengal and the English farm labourer, nevertheless they are grouped together politically on the map as being part of the same Empire. And certainly the same flag flies over both. Is, then, the flag the bond of Empire ? Is it only necessary that a series of communities, differing in race, religion,

language, traditions, customs, in fact in nearly everything, acknowledge one and the same flag, for them to be united? To the present writer, the unity conferred simply by flag and crown seems a strange sort of unity—in fact, to put it plainly, it seems but a delusion. Take the case of language for instance.

The population of the territories called the British Empire is about 350,000,000. But of this population only about 50,000,000 speak English, the remainder speaking various tongues, the Indian languages preponderating. Thus the first fact to be noted is that only one out of seven of the population of the British Empire can speak English. There is nothing new in that, it may be urged; that fact has long been known. Quite true; nevertheless a few deductions from and illustrations of that fact will prove of value. The centre of the British Empire is London, and it is there that one hears most about Imperialism, the Imperial heritage of England, the Mother Country and Daughter lands, the brightest jewels in England's crown, &c. But to give a clear idea to the Londoner of what the British Empire really is, London should undergo some radical changes. At present London is practically an entirely English-speaking town. When you walk down a London street almost everyone you meet is an English-speaker; English is the mother tongue of the vast majority, and the remainder can nearly all speak English. But if London were an accurate reproduction in miniature, an in-small, of the British Empire, only one-seventh of the population would be able to speak English. On walking down a street, of all the people you would meet only one out of seven would be able to understand you were you to speak English to them; suppose a knot of twenty-one people were clustered at some shop window, only three of its group would know English, the other eighteen would speak some not-English tongue. Or again, to use another illustration, suppose you went to a theatre