

first on which side we are; the impartial distribution of relief merely prolongs the agony.

BOLTON HALL.



The Rights of Neutrals.

Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Holland are objecting to the carrying of the war out upon the fields of commerce; and are asking this country to join in a protest against the planting of mines in the high seas. The right of warring nations to mine their own waters is recognized, but to mine international waters is to place an unnecessary hardship upon neutral countries. The burden of international war must in any event be felt by the innocent, but to carry destruction of peaceful commerce upon the high seas is only less objectionable than the invasion of a neutral country. The declaration of London, and of the Hague Court will be in sad need of revision by the time this war is finished. If wars must go on, means should be found to prevent the warriors from disturbing such of the inhabitants of the earth as are not a party to the fight. What with dropping bombs on non-combatants from air craft, and setting floating mines adrift in the paths of commerce, one begins to wonder wherein lie the hero-making forces of war. It was a dry jest after all, that protest against the inhumanity of employing African savages in civilized warfare.

S. C.



Disarmament and Peace.

A reader of *The Public*, who considers its views on war "out of tune with the opinion of most sensible thinking men," offers the following comment:

First, I think you seem to forget that the war is not something that all parties concerned can enter or keep out of at will. Your attitude about Belgium, for instance, should take into consideration that the Belgians had no other courses open than to fight to the death, or walk off and give their land to the aggressors. They are to be looked upon only as the most unfortunate people now on the earth, as they have been killed or driven out homeless, due to no act of their own. No criticism of those who would help these helpless people, or of the principles involved in acting charitably toward them, is in order or should be tolerated among humane people, however wrong or futile that kind of help or charity is under other circumstances.

Second. War is a fact. However strong a country may be made by singletax, nevertheless we of the United States have no singletax yet, and even if we did it would not prevent the possibility of a thoroughly imperialistic power profiting by conquest of our country. Where there is a possibility of a profit there is usually someone ready to get the profit. And so it might be if we were to disarm and

render ourselves defenseless. Some well armed power could easily drive us out and take possession, or levy a tax upon us which all the high ideals and brotherly love on our part could not help us from paying. To disarm with the world as it is would be to court this danger. Armaments for defense must be maintained at any rate until we have reached the singletaxers' dream of perfection. So disarming is no question to consider now.



That the Belgians are entitled to sympathy probably no one will question. But it does not follow that no criticism should be tolerated of wrong or futile plans to help them. On the contrary, the greater the distress, the greater the need of adopting correct methods to remedy it, and the greater the need of criticizing those who—however good their intentions—resort to wrong or futile methods.



The objections to disarmament, urged above, are such as might have had weight in the days of the viking pirates, but are not applicable to modern conditions. Neither the levy of a tax nor any other form of robbery, could profit a modern conquering nation enough to compensate for disturbance, caused by war, to its own trade and industry, to say nothing of the expense of carrying on a war. Under Free Trade, even without the Singletax, an imperialistic nation would injure itself as much by carrying on a successful predatory war as would any of the States of our Union should they wage such a war against the other States. Even without Free Trade war is less probable between an armed and an unarmed nation than it is between two nations presumably prepared for war. To prevent by physical force a predatory attack requires not merely an army and navy, but a stronger army and navy than any other nation, or possible hostile combination of nations. That means that there must always be some defenseless nations, and that peace can not be assured by a policy of international terrorism.



While disarmament is the best guarantee of peace under existing conditions, were such conditions established in any country as would follow complete application of the Singletax no other policy would need to be thought of. That would be a benefit not only to the inhabitants of that country, but to the world. War waged against it would at once cut off industrial opportunities from all outside people, including those of the attacking nation. There is surely not a nation of today, classed as civilized, the people of which would approve so unbusiness-like an act.

S. D.