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SPEECH

OF

HON. JOSHUA R. GIDDINGS, OF OHIO,

ON

THE DUTY OF THIS GOVERNMENT IN MAINTAINING THE LAW OF NATIONS.

International

DELIVERED

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SPEECH.

Mr. GIDDINGS said he would ask the indulgence of the House for a short time, while he expressed his views relative to the duties which devolved upon this, and other civilized Governments, to maintain that principle in the law of nations, which gives protection to feeble powers who now are, or may hereafter be, found struggling for freedom and independence.

It is (said he) a subject of deep interest, and of grave consideration, to every nation. Unfortunately it has received but little examination in either branch of our National Legislature, nor until recently has the attention of the people been called to it. It is now under discussion in popular meetings, and in our State Legislatures, throughout the Union. I regard it as very desirable that it should be discussed in this Hall, and that our voices should be heard on this question, which is receiving so much attention, not only on this continent, but throughout Europe. The late attempted revolution in Hungary, and its suppression by the arms of Russia, has awakened an intense interest among most of the civilized Governments of the earth.

In 1848 the people of ancient Hungary, feeling the oppression of Austria to have become insupportable, rose in their strength, and appealing to the God of Battles, they struck for freedom and for national independence. The conflict was severe and bloody, but victory preponderated in favor of justice; and the people of Hungary began to hope and expect that they would soon be able to assume a position among the brotherhood of nations. But Russia, a foreign Power, desirous of maintaining the cause of despotism, interposed the force of her arms, crushed the rising spirit of freedom, and compelled the people of Hungary to submit to Austrian tyranny. The civilized nations of the earth looked on, witnessing the perpetration of this great wrong, without remonstrance or protestation. The exiled Governor of downtrodden Hungary has come among us, asking of this and of other nations the maintenance of national law—of those principles of natural justice which constitute the protection of feeble Governments against the invasion and oppression of their more powerful neighbors. With great force of argument, with inimitable eloquence, he portrays the wrongs heaped upon his country—the oppression, the persecution, to which his people are subjected; and calls on us to exert our moral power as a nation to maintain the law of nations, and thereby aid them in regaining their political rights. Under these circumstances, the solemn question is brought home to our consideration, What is our duty toward Hungary, and

toward Russia? What is the duty of other nations?

In order to ascertain our duties, it will be well to inquire, What are the rights of Hungary?

Sir, we were once in the situation that Hungary was in 1848. We felt the pressure of a foreign yoke. We strove against a foreign Power. The world demanded the reasons of our resistance. The convocation of patriots assembled in 1776, proclaimed it a "self-evident truth, that 'whenever any form of government becomes destructive to the liberties of the people, it is their right to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new government, laying its foundations on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form as to them shall seem most likely to secure their safety and happiness.'"

Sir, on those principles were the foundations of our Government laid. These doctrines were not put forth as applicable solely to this nation, but to all nations. They were not peculiar to this continent, but they applied to the whole earth. They were not confined to Americans, but they embraced the whole family of man. They were not temporary, but eternal as God himself—immutable as their Divine Author. These, then, were the rights of Hungary; and our duties, and the duties of all other nations, were correlative, perfectly corresponding with her rights. It would be a contradiction in language to say that Hungary possessed these rights, and that any other nation had a right to interfere with them. The law of nations forbade such interference. The interference of Russia, therefore, was a violation of the rights of Hungary, and an outrage upon the law of nations, and violative of the duties she owed to each and to every Government of the earth, all of whose interests and safety are secured by the maintenance of this law of natural justice.

Now, sir, the President has mistaken the sentiment of this nation when in his message he represents the people of this wide-spread Republic as looking on with folded arms and feelings of neutrality when armed power tramples upon the law of nations, crushes the spirit of freedom, and subjects twelve millions of people to despotic sway.

Sir, the people, in whom all power is vested, feel no such neutrality. It is impossible for them to feel indifferent in such case. What, sir! can men feel neutral between the oppressor and the oppressed? between right and wrong? between crime and virtue? I would refer gentlemen to civil life. A man sees a ruffian assail a feeble friend. He stands by, says nothing, but with his arms folded, permits the ruffian to rob or slay his friend, without even remonstrating, or moving a hand to pre-

vent it. The world in that case would regard him as participating in the robbery or murder, and a jury would find him guilty, and he would suffer as a principal in the crime. The same moral principle applies among nations. Those who direct this Government, and wield its influence, must incur great moral guilt if they remain supinely silent, and permit other Governments to trample upon those laws of justice and of nations, in the preservation of which all mankind are interested. The duty of Governments to maintain the law of nations is clear and manifest.

But on a recent occasion we were told, that one practice had ever been opposed to intervention between other nations; that neutrality between belligerent Governments had ever been our policy; and that the efforts now making to place this nation in the attitude of maintaining the law of nations were novel, and unknown in our past history.

Gentlemen should inform themselves before they attempt to teach others. The influence of our Government has been almost constantly exerted upon other nations for the last thirty years. We all remember the time when the South American Republics, including Mexico, proclaimed their independence, and assumed a position among the brotherhood of nations. Spain continued the war against them, and fears were entertained that other European nations would assist her in reducing them to subjection.

Then, sir, in the year 1823, the President of the United States (Mr. Monroe) declared in his annual message, that "we could not view any interposition for the purpose of oppressing them, or controlling in any other manner their destiny by an European Power, in any other light than as a manifestation of an unfriendly disposition towards the United States." Was there any principle which bound us to the Mexican Republic that does not bind us to the people of Hungary? The rights of the people of these two Governments are precisely the same. Our duties toward them are the same; and each claims their right under the same law of nations—the same principle of natural justice.

Sir, we not only avowed our determination to interfere in favor of those American Republics, but we put forth the same avowal of our intention, under certain circumstances, to keep those republics in the sphere of their legitimate rights and duties; and our firm determination to interfere against them if they transcended those duties.

When our Commissioners to the Congress of Panama were about to depart upon their missions, Mr. Clay, then Secretary of State, gave them definite instructions in the following words:

"It is (said he) required by the frank and friendly relations which we most anxiously desire ever to cherish with the new Republics, that you should without reserve explicitly state, that the United States have too much at stake in the fortunes of Cuba, to allow them to see with indifference a war of invasion prosecuted in a desolating manner, or to see employed in the purposes of such a war one race of the inhabitants combating against another, upon principles and with motives that must inevitably lead, if not to the extermination of one party or the other, to the most shocking excesses."

Here, sir, was no neutrality of feeling. The language is that of dictation. I think it is quite too strong. It smacked somewhat of force, of intimidation. It was not a mere protest, which I think it should have been. It is not such as we used toward Russia when about to invade Hun-

gary. They were weak Republics, while Russia is a powerful Monarchy. Toward one we use imperious language; toward the other we appear timid, and say nothing. They are both independent sovereign nations, and should be treated with equal deference and respect.

But I desire to trace this history of intervention a little further. In 1826 Mr. Clay, Secretary of State, addressed a letter to our Minister at St. Petersburg, directing him to solicit the intervention of Russia to put an end to the war between Spain and her revolted colonies on this continent. In plain language, we asked the Emperor of Russia to interfere in behalf of American republicanism. This letter has been published; but the correspondence between our Minister and the Russian Government I believe has not yet been made public. I find that it was communicated to the Senate on the 1st day of February, A. D. 1826, and was then ordered by the Senate to be printed confidentially for the use of the Senate. And I am informed that the injunction of secrecy has not been removed, and we plebeians are not permitted to look into the secret archives of that body; yet I have good reason to believe that the Emperor gave our Minister a favorable answer. Not that he would exert his influence with the Spanish Crown, but would submit the question to the *Holy Alliance*, and would endeavor to persuade them to exert their influence to give peace to our American Republics. This, I presume, will appear to the world when the seals now resting upon this subject shall be broken. I have further reasons for saying that the Spanish records at Madrid show that the *Holy Alliance did in fact intervene in favor of American republicanism*. Sir, we have not only interposed our own influence in favor of the law of nations, and of natural justice, but we have solicited European monarchs to aid us in its maintenance. And they complied with our request. We, sir, are their debtors; and shall we not repay their kindness by exerting our influence in favor of European republicanism? Here, sir, is the precedent—the example which I would follow. Our Government should now call on the Emperor of Russia, of Austria, and on other monarchs, as well as Republics, to preserve this law of nations in its full force; to exert their influence in behalf of its strict observance.

On the occasion just alluded to, the influence of European Powers, together with the earnest remonstrances of our own Government against the further prosecution of the war by Spain, succeeded in restoring peace; and who can doubt that the same efforts may preserve the peace of Europe, should Hungary again assert her rights?

But I wish to trace this practice of our own Government to a later, a more recent period. We all remember the able letter of the present Secretary of State [Mr. Webster] to the Mexican Minister, relating to the war with Texas, in which he stated very distinctly and emphatically, that other Governments had an interest in maintaining the peace of the world, and that the day would arrive when the United States would feel constrained to interfere between Mexico and Texas, for the purpose of restoring peace. But, sir, this doctrine of intervention was carried further by the present Secretary of State in 1842 than it was ever carried by this Government on any other occasion.

Some Texans had gone to Santa Fé for the pur-

pose of conquest, and were captured by the troops of Mexico. Rumor represented them as being cruelly treated by the Mexican authorities. Against this treatment of prisoners of war, Mr. Webster interposed the influence of our Government; and such was the force and power of his language that I will give his protest in his own words:

"It is therefore (said he) that the Government of the United States protests against the hardships and cruelties to which the Santa Fé prisoners have been subjected. It protests against this treatment in the name of humanity, and the laws of nations—in the name of all Christian States—in the name of civilization and the spirit of the age—in the name of all Republics—in the name of liberty herself, enfeebled and dishonored by all cruelty and all excess."

This was the language which Mr. Webster then used towards Mexico. But such is not his language towards Russia. On an occasion of much interest, that gentleman recently, in a public speech, spoke of the public demonstrations in favor of justice to Hungary. He was willing to see popular meetings, and resolutions, and public dinners, and speeches in favor of Hungarian freedom and Hungarian independence. He avowed his willingness to let these demonstrations go forth to the world—to let them be borne on the winds of heaven to the uttermost parts of the earth; but he carefully avoided all reference to the duties of this Government to speak officially on the subject, to enter its solemn protest against the intervention of Russia to crush the spirit of liberty in Hungary, to subject twelve millions of people to the despotism of Austria. And I understand that it is the policy of the Administration, and its friends in this Hall and throughout the country, for the Government to keep silence on this subject; and in case Hungary shall again make an effort at independence, and Russia shall again send her armies there, in violation of the law of nations and the dictates of justice, to slay her people, to carry devastation and bloodshed throughout the length and breadth of her territory, the Government of the United States is to stand as a disinterested spectator, without uttering a word of remonstrance or of protest.

But no Government on earth, perhaps, has gone further in practical intervention than ours. When Texas was struggling for independence, and Mexico continued the war, we sent our Army and assumed upon ourselves the responsibility of intervention—forcible and armed intervention. I well recollect the time when the question came up in this Hall; and of the whole number of votes then present, only fourteen were cast against that kind of intervention. I opposed it for the reason that Texas had constituted one of the Mexican States—that she and Mexico constituted but one people, and that we ought not to interfere in their domestic strife. But I was overruled, and the people of the United States expended two hundred millions of dollars to carry out the practice of intervention by force of arms, and that, too, between parties in a domestic strife. The case was beyond that now presented, dissimilar, and can have no other bearing upon the present question than to show the inconsistency of those who supported that kind of intervention, and oppose all efforts at this time to maintain the law of nations, urging that it has been our established policy not

to interfere in controversies between other Governments.

I hold it to be our imperative duty to exert our influence for maintaining the rights of each and of every nation;—that we should do so *immediately*. We ought not to wait for the recurrence of a case like that of Hungary in 1848. We may now address Russia, and all other Powers, without giving offence to any. I had prepared resolutions, which I intended to offer whenever we go into Committee of the Whole to consider the President's message; and in order that gentlemen may understand my views more distinctly, I will ask the Clerk to read them. They are as follows:

Resolved, That we hold the self-evident truth, that the people of every nation have an indefeasible right to alter or abolish their form of government and to institute a new one, laying its foundations on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall appear most likely to secure their safety and happiness.

Resolved, That the best interests of mankind, the dictates of natural justice, and the law of nations, forbid the armed intervention of any foreign power to defeat or suppress the will of a people who are striving to reform or perfect their government.

Resolved, That it is the duty of all civilized nations to unite their influence to prevent such armed intervention, to maintain the law of nations, and to restrain each government within the sphere of its legitimate rights.

Resolved, That to effect these objects, the President be and he is hereby requested to open a correspondence on this subject with each of the several nations with whom we hold diplomatic intercourse, and to request their coöperation for the maintenance of the law of nations, and the establishment of universal peace.

As to the rights of a people to form their own government, I have commented sufficiently. I have shown that the law of nations, as well as the dictates of justice, sustain that right.

I do not deem it necessary to enter upon an extended argument to sustain the principles expressed in the second and third resolutions. The direct interest which all nations and kindred and people have in maintaining this law, is too obvious to require illustration. As it is the duty and the interest of individuals to maintain the municipal laws of our country, to prevent murder and other crimes, and to secure each in his person and property, so it is the duty of each and of every nation to maintain the law of nations, to prevent national crimes, and to secure every people in the enjoyment of their rights so to modify their government as to them shall appear most likely to subserv their happiness. My fourth proposition is, that the Executive shall at once open a correspondence through our Ministers and *Chargés d'Affaires*, with every Government now holding diplomatic intercourse with us; soliciting their attention to this subject, and their coöperation in the maintenance of national law, and the rights to which every nation is entitled under it.

The time has arrived when the voice of this nation should be heard in behalf of national rights, of national duties, and of national law. As a people, we possess great moral influence among civilized Governments. That influence should be exerted for the benefit of mankind. It should be actively employed in support of the great principle of justice, of natural right, of national law. The maintenance of justice and of law will establish and perpetuate peace among all nations.

I therefore say, that should Hungary again strike for freedom, and Russia should indicate an intention to interfere, I would tell her calmly, firmly, and respectfully, that the law of nations

has given to the Hungarian people the right to modify, improve, or abolish their government; and if Russia persists, it will then become the duty of this nation to protest against such violation of natural justice, "IN THE NAME OF HUMANITY AND OF THE LAW OF NATIONS—IN THE NAME OF ALL CHRISTIAN STATES—IN THE NAME OF CIVILIZATION AND THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE—IN THE NAME OF ALL REPUBLICS—AND IN THE NAME OF LIBERTY HERSELF." Thus, sir, I would adopt the nervous language of the Secretary of State. I would invite all civilized nations in that case, to unite in such protest. Nor, sir, would I object to uniting with Great Britain in such a duty for the reason that she oppresses Ireland. I know that a gentleman, standing high in the nation, a candidate for the Presidency, [Mr. DOUGLAS,] on a late public occasion said he would not unite with England in a protest while she withheld justice from O'Brien and his Irish associates. If England will unite her influence with ours, in maintaining the law of nations, surely we ought not to refuse protection to the people of Hungary because we cannot give protection at the same time to those individuals of Ireland. Why, sir, suppose when we solicit Great Britain to unite with us in this national duty, she should turn around and say to us, "No—let the people of Hungary suffer; *let despotic oppression weigh them down, until your Government shall relieve your American serfs; until justice be done to the Africans of your own land:*" would not such language be offensive to that gentleman? Why, sir, it would be our duty to unite with all civilized nations of the earth, whether Mohammedan or Christian, in this work of maintaining the law of nations and the rights of humanity.

I am aware that objections are constantly made to any alliance with Great Britain for the purpose of maintaining the law of nations. But this is a novel objection. We now are in alliance with that nation, and have been for many years. The object of that alliance is the protection of the people of Africa. By that alliance we are bound to keep up constantly a naval force on the African coast, at an expense of about \$2,000,000 annually to maintain the law of nations there. Yet no gentleman objects to this alliance on account of the injustice of England towards Ireland; nor does any one quote Washington's Farewell Address against "entangling alliances" for that purpose. And are the people of Hungary less entitled to the protection of the law of nations than are those of Africa? I am constrained to say, that it is difficult for me to discover the consistency of gentlemen who are so sensitive in regard to our uniting with Great Britain in a protest against the intervention of Russia, while we are in strict alliance with that nation for the protection of Africa.

Mr. JOHNSON, of Tennessee. I wish to ask the gentleman, if it is wrong for Austria and Russia to put down Hungary, is it not equally so for Austria to do it alone? And are we not as much bound to interfere in the latter case as in the former?

Mr. GIDDINGS. Austria claims Hungary as a part of her own dominions, as constituting, with the Austrians, one people, one nation. Now, the gentleman cannot fail to notice the distinction between interfering between them in their domestic controversy, and protecting both Austria and Hungary from the intervention of a foreign nation.

It were impossible for us, or for any other nation, to enter into controversies between those political parties found in every Government; we have no means by which to determine which is right or which is wrong. The majority of such people possess the right to form their political institutions. The law of nations, to which I have adverted so often, the dictates of justice, secure to the majority this right. For us to interfere, in order to prevent the exercise of this right, would constitute a violation of justice and of the law of nations, and we should be guilty of the identical wrong now charged upon Russia.

But it is said that, should we protest against the intervention of Russia, and she should treat our protest with contempt, we should then be bound to enforce our doctrines by the sword. This, we are told, is the doctrine of Governor Kossuth; and we see attacks upon him daily through the public press, representing him as desirous of involving us in war with Russia. I do not so understand him; but I leave him to the people and to history. I am not reiterating his sentiments, nor defending his views; I am for maintaining the law of nations, for doing our duty without reference to his sentiments. He however asserts, that no war would follow the assertion of these doctrines, or our protest against Russian intervention.

The age in which we live is emphatically an age of progress. Men and nations are now taught to rely more upon reason, upon truth, upon justice, than in former times; and less upon the power of arms—of physical force. Wars are not as fashionable as they were fifty years since. Statesmen, and even monarchs, now look with horror upon the vast expenditure of blood and treasure necessary to the prosecution of a war. Philanthropists and Christians shrink at contemplating the sufferings and the crimes attendant upon war.

The Government of Russia is controlled by men of wisdom, by statesmen of enlarged views. They, sir, will never look with indifference or contempt upon the solemn protest of this Government, when they contemplate a violation of the law of nations. There is a power in truth, when brought to bear in favor of justice and of law, that few intelligent men will resist; but when that truth is sustained by the influence of one or more powerful nations, it will not be treated with disrespect. I have not the most distant idea that Russia would disregard the protest of this Government; but if England were to unite in such protest, as she undoubtedly would, it could not fail of being heard and respected; and if the Sublime Porte should also unite with Great Britain and the United States in such protest, (and such I have no doubt would be the case,) Russia would not hesitate for a moment in manifesting her perfect respect and obedience to the law of nations. But the friends of the Administration still insist that Russia might treat our solemn protest with disrespect; and they urge, that we shall now say what we will do in such case. I reply, that when such a question shall be practically presented to me, I will consider and decide upon it. We are dealing with present duties, and could not, if we would, determine the action of those who come after us. It is our duty, at this time, to take such action as will be likely hereafter to prevent the violation of international law. That is a present duty we are bound to

discharge. Should Russia, at a future day, treat Great Britain and the United States with contempt, other statesmen will decide for themselves upon the course they shall pursue. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." At this time it would be disrespectful towards Russia for us to presume that she will disregard the protest of two or three powerful Governments, and coolly violate the law of nations in order to subject the people of Hungary to Austrian despotism. Yet timid men, carrying the subject to the extremity of hypothesis, insist that we might, in a remote contingency, become involved in war, by the contempt with which Russia might treat the remonstrance of other nations as well as ours.

The correspondence which, by the resolutions I propose, the President is requested to open with other nations, will, of course, be directed to this point. The proposed arrangement will provide the mode of enforcing obedience to national law. The stipulations on the part of each Government will doubtless be, that in case any nation shall violate the principles of justice, of international law, all civil and diplomatic intercourse shall be withdrawn from such offending nation. That, having disregarded the law of nations, on which the safety and security of each depends, she thereby becomes unworthy of associating with civilized Governments, and henceforth shall be regarded and treated as an outlaw from the commonwealth of nations, left alone in her savage barbarity, and cut off from all commercial and diplomatic intercourse with civilized Governments. This mode of enforcing respect for the law of nations would be far more efficient than war; while it would save the vast expenditure of blood and treasure, and would avoid the appalling crimes and guilt always attending an appeal to arms.

Mr. JOHNSON, of Tennessee. I desire to ask the gentleman from Ohio if this Magyar race, at a certain period of their history, were not Democratic, and if afterwards they did not of themselves give up their republican form of government and establish a monarchy?

Mr. GIDDINGS. I am not aware of any such incident in the history of Hungary. I think no such exists. Yet I am not discussing the history of that people, nor the form of government which they ought to adopt. I repeat, that is a subject on which they alone should judge. I may differ from them in opinion on that point, but I have no right to control their choice as to the form of government under which they shall live. They have the indisputable right to select such government as to them shall appear best adapted to their wants, whether it be a monarchy, oligarchy, or democracy.

Mr. WILLIAMS. Suppose Hungary should make another struggle to obtain her liberty, and in that struggle she should call in the assistance of the Sublime Porte, would not that be as much a violation of the laws of nations, of which my friend speaks, as if Russia had interfered in behalf of Austria, and would it not be as much our duty to enter our protest against such interference?

Mr. GIDDINGS. If the Grand Sultan sends his armies to assist Hungary in defending her against Russia, such defence surely would be no interference with the rights of Hungary.

Mr. WILLIAMS. The gentleman does not

understand me. I say that suppose the people of Hungary should enter into another struggle for liberty, and the Sublime Porte should step in to assist them, would it not be in conflict with the law of nations and the eternal right of which the gentleman speaks?

Mr. GIDDINGS. I think the gentleman has not well considered his question. Should Hungary again assert her rights, and Russia, in violation of international law and of justice, should again attempt to subject her people to the despotism of Austria, and the Sublime Porte should send an army to sustain the law of nations, by driving back the Russian army and leaving Hungary to establish such government as her people desire, such act cannot be a violation, but a support of the law of nations—it would be no interference with Hungary, but would prevent such intervention.

Mr. WILLIAMS. Will the gentleman permit me to state another case? When France sent troops to this country, when struggling for liberty, was not that an interference? We were part and parcel of the British Government.

Mr. GIDDINGS. I desire to make no issue with gentlemen upon mere words. We were not part and parcel of the British Government; we had no voice in that Government; we were separated from them by a vast ocean; we constituted a separate and distinct people, possessing the inalienable right to constitute such form of government as to us appeared most likely to secure our safety and happiness. This right was vested in us by the law of nations. England violated that law when she sent her army to subdue us. France maintained the law when she sent her army to protect us and to support the law of nations. Had Austria and Hungary been thus situated; the law of nations would have recognized the right of each to govern itself, and neither would have possessed the right to control the other by the exercise of physical power.

My friend does not distinguish intervention for the purpose of violating the law of nations from intervention to uphold that law. One constitutes the commission of national crime, the other prevents such crime. The supposed intervention of the Sublime Porte to uphold the law of nations, to keep Russia from the invasion of Hungary and protect the Hungarians in forming a government, would surely have been no violation of justice or of law.

But I return to the subject on which I was speaking when interrupted; and I repeat, the object of this Government should be the maintenance of peace with all nations and among all nations. This can only be attained by supporting the law of nations. I need not speak of the benefits resulting from this policy. For centuries, the peasants, the laboring men of Europe, have been oppressed, borne down by heavy burdens incurred for the support and for supplying vast armies and navies, employed only in the work of human butchery, or preparing for the destruction of human life. The immense debt of Great Britain was contracted almost exclusively in the prosecution of bloody wars, in carrying devastation, suffering and death among brethren of the same great family. Her people are now suffering the penalty brought upon their nation by former wars. They are taxed to the extent of endurance to pay for shedding the blood of their fellow men in former days. Such

is also the case, to a certain extent, with most European Governments: nor are the Governments of this American continent exempt from such burdens.

We have now reached the meridian of the nineteenth century. As the sun of intelligence shines brighter and more luminous, the folly, the injustice, and the guilt of war and its consequences are more and more revealed to the view, and to the comprehension of mankind. Christianity shrinks back with horror at the contemplation. All our feelings of philanthropy and of patriotism are stirred within us as we survey the sufferings to which war has subjected our race. The question is now forced upon us, upon all Christian, all civilized nations, whether this policy shall continue to deluge the world in blood? Shall intelligent, civilized, Christian men continue forever to slay, to butcher each other? Shall the great mass of people of different nations continue to toil and contribute their utmost earnings to the work of slaughtering their fellow men—not because those who are slain have committed crime, but because they have been so unfortunate as to have weak or wicked rulers? Such policy is only worthy of the dark ages in which it originated: it is unsuited to Christian nations, or the age in which we live.

Here I will remark, that I have read a printed circular on this subject of intervention from a distinguished philanthropist, President of the American Peace Society, the venerable Judge Jay, of New York. I always treat his opinions with great respect; but on this question I think he is laboring under an important error. He bases his argument upon the presumption that intervention will involve us in war; that the exercise of our moral powers, our entire national influence in favor of national law, in favor of peace between Russia and Hungary, will involve us in hostilities. On this erroneous presumption he bases his whole argument.

Now, sir, I may be excused for saying, that to maintain peace among nations we must adhere to principles of justice, which is nothing more nor less than maintaining national law; that our utmost influence should be exerted to induce all other nations to observe and sustain this law. This I propose our Government shall do. And I will add, that our efforts in favor of universal peace will, in my opinion, be of little avail while we remain silent, permitting other nations to trample upon this law without remonstrance or protest from us.

We, sir, and every other nation, have a direct interest in the maintenance of law and order among

other Governments. Every Government is bound to exert its influence in support of this law in its full force. The nations of the earth constitute but one vast brotherhood. "If one member suffer all must suffer." If the rights of one be violated all must feel it, for no one will be safe under the law, but in such cases each must rely on physical force to defend its rights. Hence, I regard it as perfectly clear, that observance of national law, which may be regarded as synonymous with natural justice, must supersede the sword before the world shall be blessed with universal peace.

In civil life the observance of law alone insures peace to community. We all see this, and are conscious of the necessity of maintaining our municipal laws to insure peace and safety to individuals. But this duty is not more obvious in civil life than it is in the society of nations. This Government owes the same duties to the society of nations that each individual of this body owes to the society which surrounds him in civil life. There, sir, we exert our individual influence to uphold the law; we remonstrate with our fellowmen, and protest against their violation of law. We cut off from our social circle him who violates the law and tramples upon the rights of others. The same duties devolve upon this and on other Governments in relation to those who disregard the law of nations.

To carry this policy into practice among the nations of the earth, it is requisite that some individual government should first move in relation to it; some one must take the initiative. It will prove a glorious mission to that nation, whose statesmen, inspired by the spirit of Christian benevolence, of elevated philanthropy and of duty, shall move forward in the great work of redeeming the world from the crimes and the horrors of war. This honor I would secure to my country. Let the history of this age bear to future generations the fact that this Republic was the first to solicit the coöperation of other Governments in behalf of universal peace, by the maintenance of the code of international law. I shall regard the fame acquired by such an act of humanity as far more important than all the bloody victories which have stained the annals of our race. The present is a propitious period in which to commence this great work of harmonizing the nations of the earth, by inducing them to observe and obey the great principles of unfalling, enduring justice. Then shall our "swords be beat into plough-shares, and our spears into pruning-hooks; and the nations shall learn war no more."