

" AND LAW.

An old Cornishman cross-questioned after his initiation about Masonic secrets by a curious friend, summarized them as "the nearest thing to nothing." The lay student of International Law is tempted to describe it in similar phrase, and, for that matter, can quote in support of so flippant a definition Rousseau's contention that the laws of war, failing coercive sanction, are no more than chimeras; or the dictum of Clauseworth mentioning. To the legal mind such opinions are heresy unspeakable. International jurists have piled volume upon volume, and though an occasional uneasy suggestion peeps forth here and there in a preliminary chapter that, as the Report of the Royal Commission on Food Supply in Times of War confessed, "there is no absolute guarantee behind international law to insure that its rule will be enforced," nonetheless, the said Law has been coded and criticised, dissected and defended, iterated and reiterated, discussed and sanctioned at Conference and Convention, hedged about by paper forms and word ceremonies, until in the security of the legal library and council chamber it appeared that "there seems no prospect of any revolutionary change passing over it," for in this enlightened age the days must be past when a Grotius could have need to write, "I saw prevailing throughout the Christian world a licence in making war of which even barbarous nations would have been ashamed; recourse being had to arms for slight reasons or no reasons; and when arms were once taken up, all reverence for divine and human law was thrown away, just as if men were henceforth authorised to commit all crimes without restraint."

Grotius made initial error in the assumption that the presumed Law of Nature—upon which his scheme of International Law was chiefly based—could not change because it had for foundation human nature itself. But elemental human nature, that alone knows not change, is barely removed from the level of the brute beast. His system, however, according to one authority, "rests secure upon the alternative foundation of general