

The Conference to be held at Brussels, the object of which is "to lessen by judicious regulations the severities of war," is a bitter satire on the boasted civilization of the age. It seems incredible that nations calling themselves Christian should organize a Conference which recognizes the slaughter of mankind by hired agents as one of the normal and perpetual conditions of human society. Were any one of these nations to formulate an enactment defining the degree of savagery to which any two of its people might lawfully go when engaged in a mutual attempt at murder, there would be throughout Christendom a shout of horror. But, surely, there is nothing more barbarous in the settlement of a dispute between two Englishmen in a street fight, where blows are dealt which are deadly if not parried, than between a mass of Englishmen and Frenchmen struggling to kill or wound each other in the attempt to settle a political dispute between their respective Governments. Yet, to settle an individual dispute by fighting, is now a crime in all civilized countries, and a street fight never occurs except between the most degraded classes, and, even then, only when drink has given the final touch to their brutality. It hardly seems a great achievement of civilization to have taught men to act under restraint of law in settling private disputes, but to act as do the brute creation and savages in settling national ones. We should have preferred in the interests of religion and of humanity that the Brussels Conference had been organized to do for Europe what the common law of those nations represented thereat has done for their citizens, that a code of international law should have been arranged, rendering any appeal to brute force in political quarrels between Governments as offensive, as scandalous, as criminal as is a street fight between two drunken rowdies. The very holding of this Conference is a recognition of a power existing capable of making war a past abomination, as what can regulate could also so far control as utterly to suppress. If the nations of Europe can decide that explosive bullets shall not be used in

war, they might also decide that no bullets at all be used; if they can agree on an elaborate system of care for the sick, the wounded, and the killed; if they can impose on their armies a code of military etiquette regulating the nicer shades of their organization for wholesale slaughter, they might surely establish a code and court of law binding each other to keep the peace and abide in cases of dispute the decision of an international tribunal.

The reported intention of Prussia to recognize the Republican Government of Spain is, we trust, true, though it will lead no doubt to a restoration of Monarchy in that afflicted land. The German Empire would not have been in existence but for Spain, as the quarrel which brought on the French war arose from some real or imagined intention of the King of Prussia to interfere with the Spanish succession. There are few pages of history more varied, more exciting, more instructive in detail and developments than the careers of the old German Empire and of Prussia, which refounds it, and their mutual historic connections with Spain. The lesson is on the surface, it shines out to all peoples as clear as the sun, both to warn and teach. Spain, by Phillip II., was made Catholic to the core, not in religion as much as politics. He inaugurated the career of blind subservience to the Papal Court and the utter subjugation of the people to the Church, which has made Spain the choicest gem in the Pope's tiara—and the dullest. He gave the nation ambition of rule over territory which he and his successors have imagined could be held by an ignorant and superstitious power competing with intelligent and progressive rivals. The rise of Prussia, until it is as Fleury said so bitterly in its early days, "the arbiter of Europe," and the fall of Spain are mere illustrations of the pernicious influence exercised in political affairs by the Church of Rome and the power of a more free and noble faith than it teaches to build up a nation, generation by generation to supreme eminence among States. Spain, a century and a half ago, hoped to rule the old German Empire: it may ere long accept a ruler from the new one.