

THE PALIMPSEST

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Swords into Plowshares

Alfred H. Love was a militant advocate of peace. Inspired by the ideals expressed in Charles Sumner's great oration on the "True Grandeur of Nations", influenced by the pacifism of the Quakers, and convinced that arbitration should be substituted for war in the settlement of international disputes, he acted upon his principles. This young woolen merchant of Philadelphia opposed the Civil War. His scruples prevented him from profiting by lucrative government contracts. When drafted for the army he refused to serve or provide a substitute. Only his defective eyesight kept him out of prison for disloyalty.

Nevertheless Alfred Love was a man of vision. He saw that the willingness of many pacifists to tolerate violence would ultimately defeat the peace movement. With other advocates of immediate disarmament and the outlawry of war, Love founded the Universal Peace Union in 1866

and served as president until his death in 1913. His noble spirit, fervent zeal, and vigorous personality had a tremendous influence, even in the arbitration of industrial disputes. Besides editing *The Peacemaker*, he tried to dramatize the cause of peace to attract attention and win the support of common folks. Annual picnics were held, peace hymns were sung, slogans were adopted, and the flags of all nations were displayed.

One of the most symbolic demonstrations occurred at a convention of the Universal Peace Union in Carpenters' Hall at Philadelphia in 1876. In the room where the First Continental Congress had met in 1774, the delegates adopted a Declaration of Peace and celebrated the contributions toward peace in a century of relations between the United States and Great Britain, particularly the successful arbitration of the Alabama claims. The occasion, which coincided with the opening of the Centennial Exposition, was propitious for a dramatic presentation of peace sentiment.

Love proposed that military men surrender their swords for conversion into useful implements. A farmer from Indiana promptly offered ten dollars for the first sword to be presented. Thereupon Colonel Nicholas Greusel of Mount Pleasant, Iowa, came forward with the sword he

had carried in the Mexican War and in the Union army. Though he prized the weapon highly and had planned to bequeath it to his children, he was so thoroughly devoted to the principles of peace that he was willing to contribute his sword for the good of the cause. Clayton B. Rogers of Philadelphia made a pruning hook of it which was displayed on the platform the next day. As the convention proceeded other swords were presented. These were converted into a plowshare of the latest design.

Nicholas Greusel was a Bavarian, born on the Fourth of July in 1817. With his parents he came to America at the age of seventeen. They settled at Detroit, where Nicholas worked for a lumber firm from 1836 until the outbreak of the Mexican War, when he raised a company of volunteers, was elected captain, and participated in the capture of Mexico City. Having completed his two-year term as lumber inspector for the State of Michigan and lost his savings through an unfortunate investment, he found employment as a railroad conductor, first on the Michigan Central and later, when he moved to Aurora, Illinois, on the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy.

First in his town to respond to Lincoln's call for volunteers in 1861, he was active in recruiting the Thirty-sixth Illinois Volunteer Infantry, was

commissioned colonel, and joined the Union forces in Missouri. During the winter of 1861-62 he served effectively under Grenville M. Dodge and Samuel R. Curtis, particularly in the battle of Pea Ridge; during the summer he was with the Army of the Mississippi in Tennessee; in October, commanding a brigade, he "behaved with great gallantry" in the battle at Perryville, Kentucky; and in January, 1863, he was "specially commended for skill and courage" in the Stone River campaign. Finally, in February, 1863, ill health compelled him to resign, whereupon he was given a silver-plated revolver in honor of commanding the best-drilled regiment in the Army of the Cumberland. Having been appointed roadmaster on the Burlington railroad, he moved to Mount Pleasant in 1867. Though he cherished the association with his comrades in arms, his military experience had taught the horrors of war and he became an ardent advocate of peace through disarmament.

The gesture of veteran officers turning their swords into instruments symbolical of creative pursuits stimulated interest in the abolition of war. To the gratification of the Universal Peace Union, the commissioners in charge of the United States exhibit at the Paris Exposition in 1878 accepted the pruning hook and plow. After being

displayed in Paris, these emblems of peace were taken to Geneva, Switzerland, and appropriately deposited in the Hôtel de Ville where the Tribunal of Arbitration had settled the Alabama claims dispute. There they have remained — the plowshare made of swords after the Biblical injunction and the martial pruning hook of an Iowa colonel — exerting, perhaps, some influence for righteousness in the world.

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