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DISARMAMENT

A DISCUSSION

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(LORD PONSONBY OF SHULBREDE)



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TO
MY GRANDSON
THOMAS

**THE ADVOCATE
THE OFFICER
THE LAYMAN**

THE ADVOCATE. Before we embark on our discussion, which must cover a large field and lead us into the consideration of many side issues which may be quite relevant, it will save time, trouble and breath if we can find some common ground of agreement from which we can all three start. For instance, we do not regard war as a blessing. You may laugh. But there are not only militarists but philosophers and professors who regard it as such. You remember von Treitschke said, "It has always been the weary, spiritless and exhausted ages which have played with the dream of perpetual peace." Von Bernhardi, who I admit was an extremist, declared, before 1914 of course, "The appropriate and conscious employment of war as a political means has always led to happy results." One of our own Professors is responsible for the maxim that, "In a world of perfect peace humanity would perish from its own physical and moral corruption," and more recently a prominent British scientist said that "War is nature's pruning hook." But I am taking it that this is not our view.

THE OFFICER. Certainly not. But before we have done we may have to consider some alternative outlet for the energy, one might almost say excess of energy, which can be engendered by the corporate efforts and enterprise of mankind. May I ask if we are going to embark on a discussion of Pan-Europe and world Federation? I think we might set that aside.

THE ADVOCATE. We had better. The prospects of such elaborate international organization is very remote. It has taken a world war to institute even such

a small beginning of international consultation as the League of Nations. Nations, specially just now when the spirit of almost aggressive Nationalism is in the ascendant, will certainly not be inclined to renounce to any degree their sovereignty.

THE OFFICER. There is one other—what shall I call it?—prejudice which I should like to clear out of the road. It is that soldiers and sailors and, I must include now, airmen are *ipso facto* militarists. That because they have to work the war machine they are therefore eager to use it.

THE LAYMAN. The sayings of some of them have rather contributed to the creation of this prejudice. But I am quite prepared to admit that they are by no means militarists as a class, and have often shown themselves more inclined than civilians, who in war time are far from the scene of action, to take a sensible view of what can really be achieved by continued conflict. But without being actually militarist there are undoubtedly many people, not necessarily in the Services, who regard Great Britain's dominant position as being based ultimately on armaments, and who resent the idea that without armaments Great Britain would have no more than an equal voice with other nations, even the smaller ones. These people are very reluctant to renounce, I will not call it supremacy, but the domination which is supposed to come from large military forces. Do you agree with them?

THE OFFICER. No, the future wise governance of the world is not going to rest on a dictation dependent on force. Moreover, large armaments must inevitably involve competition, and their very existence is one of the main contributory causes of the outbreak of war.

THE LAYMAN. Now a further point. Can we all three express disagreement with the fatalist who says war is inevitable, we have always had it, and we shall

continue to have it, and therefore it is no good fulminating against it?

THE OFFICER. By war do you mean conflict involving the use of force or do you mean organized international war?

THE LAYMAN. The latter most decidedly. For goodness' sake, do not let us enlarge the field of discussion by a debate about human anger and passion and all the various expressions it takes.

THE ADVOCATE. Yes, that would carry us too far. We should have to analyse all forms of violence, murder, robbery, civil war and even serious domestic altercations. We must confine ourselves to international war.

THE LAYMAN. The distinction is important because international war, unlike all the others, is not caused by elemental passions and an uncontrollable combative instinct. When the parsons say that war between nations is due to our sinful natures and that until we are "born again" war must continue, it appears to me they are talking pure nonsense. International war has nothing to do with our sinful natures. It is a matter of bad organization, tradition and deception and, I would add, sheer stupidity. This makes our task, difficult as it is, easier because we are not like those who are fighting drink, gambling, prostitution, etc., up against evil human instincts or cravings. We are not even up against racial animosities.

THE OFFICER. Sometimes.

THE LAYMAN. Yes. I admit sometimes, but I will show later, when we come to that point, that control there is not difficult.

THE OFFICER. But to return to this question of inevitability. While I do not take the view that nothing can be done and that we must fold our hands and wait for the next catastrophe, I recognise that war is a pretty tough old institution to which so-called

highly civilized nations have had recourse quite recently; and we are not going to wake up one fine day to find that it has gone. Strife will continue between nations, and weapons for strife will be forged and used.

THE ADVOCATE. Yes, but their use should be strictly controlled. There should be no declaration of war without the formal consent of Parliament, which admittedly would be consulted, but I would also say of the people who ought to have the final decision on their own destiny.

THE OFFICER. How? By a referendum?

THE ADVOCATE. Yes, considering how everyone of them will be affected, they should decide.

THE OFFICER. That seems to me impracticable. If a government makes up its mind that things have come to such a pass that a declaration of war is the only way out, prompt action from the military point of view is absolutely essential; to wait weeks for a referendum to be taken would be out of the question.

THE ADVOCATE. That period of delay, say three months, is just what is wanted to make the hot-headed cool down and to prevent precipitate action. In 1914 no time at all was allowed for reflection.

THE OFFICER. But if the Government were in favour of war the question to be answered by the people would be put in such a way that they would consider themselves unpatriotic if they did not answer it in the affirmative. A government which was ready to put both sides of the question dispassionately and impartially to the people would not be a government desirous of going to war at all. Moreover we cannot be sure that in future there will be any such thing as a formal declaration of war.

THE LAYMAN. Any attempt to tackle the question or put the brake on when that stage has been reached is in my opinion obviously too late.

THE ADVOCATE. I only make the suggestion as a possible check at the last moment. I quite see that you must concentrate on the earlier stages and I therefore believe that by international consultation war and its attendant horror can be mitigated in intensity and frequency. It must necessarily be a slow process. But by limitations and reductions some advance can be made leading gradually to further advance and reducing the possibility of aggression. That is the business they are occupied with at Geneva.

THE LAYMAN. But did not the Kellogg-Briand Pact involve the renunciation of war as an instrument of national policy; that is to say the nations renounced the idea of using war for aggressive purposes?

THE ADVOCATE. Yes. Now, therefore, all that is necessary is to reduce both in quantity and quality the arms required for defensive purposes?

THE LAYMAN. But if the nations have solemnly renounced aggression why should it be necessary for them to have any armaments at all for defence?

THE ADVOCATE. They cannot be quite certain that circumstances may not arise in which they might not be subjected to attack and they have not yet a sufficient sense of security for them to disarm.

THE LAYMAN. No nation has ever yet admitted being an aggressor, and no nation has ever failed to point out that its enemy was the aggressor.

THE ADVOCATE. That is perfectly true and as aggression is difficult if not impossible to define, nations cannot yet be expected to feel safe unless they are armed and prepared.

THE LAYMAN. It comes to this then, that every penny spent by a nation on armaments is the measure of its distrust of the pledged word of the others. The sum total of that distrust amounts to the sum of 900 millions now being spent on armaments in the world.

THE ADVOCATE. I admit there is distrust and that can only be dispelled by improved methods of arbitration and increased confidence in the League of Nations. That also must take time. In the meanwhile we must thrash out in the Disarmament Conference what weapons can be forbidden, what quantities can be reduced and what expense can be saved.

THE OFFICER. As things stand you will admit that international war is a possible—some people might say probable—eventuality?

THE ADVOCATE. I am afraid so.

THE OFFICER. We should not undertake an aggressive war but we might find an offensive the best defence and at any rate we must be prepared for an offensive on the part of others. Is not it necessary therefore for us to have the best fighting machine possible?

THE ADVOCATE. Certainly.

THE OFFICER. You cannot find a common ratio, standard or percentage for your reductions which can be exactly applicable to all nations, varying as they do in size, wealth, circumstances and geographical position. The dispute as to the relative value and the offensive potentialities of submarines or of battleships is incapable of solution. Neither cost nor numbers is any sure index of armament strength. A bombing aeroplane is far cheaper than a battleship and much more destructive. A gas factory is a potentially more dangerous preparation than a shipyard. A score of men with certain weapons may have a far more devastating power than an ordinary regiment of infantry.

THE ADVOCATE. Certainly. That is why two of the weapons you mention, bombing planes and poison gas, not to mention guns above a certain calibre and tanks above a certain weight, are to be prohibited as explained in the Geneva resolutions.

THE OFFICER. What do you mean by prohibited?

THE ADVOCATE. I mean prohibited by general agreement.

THE OFFICER. But it did not require a conference to prohibit poison gas. All the nations have had the opportunity to ratify the protocol on gas warfare drawn up in 1925, and as a matter of fact it was forbidden by the Hague regulations of 1907.

THE ADVOCATE. I know. But this time, by unanimous agreement, we shall make a formal prohibition of this form of warfare.

THE OFFICER. And what makes you think that will be respected any more than the Hague regulations or the Kellogg Pact?

THE ADVOCATE. Come now, you cannot go forward at all if you do not believe that any agreement between nations will be respected. After all our treaties with nations are based on a belief in their good faith. We can do nothing if we begin by sowing mistrust.

THE LAYMAN. He (the Officer) is only voicing an opinion which Mr. Churchill once represented in Parliament when he said, "No nation has renounced the use of poison gas as a result of Peace Conferences, and further there are nations whose words we could not respect if they did renounce it."

THE ADVOCATE. I do not think that represents enlightened opinion. I believe the great body of sane, reputable and humanitarian people in all nations wish to abolish this terrible form of attack, which has such appalling consequences, specially in regard to the civil population.

THE OFFICER. Yes. I do not want to appear inhuman nor have I the least desire to inflict unnecessary suffering on civilians, but you must face facts. A nation fighting for its very existence will have recourse to any weapon, or any engine, or device which science

can place at its command and will disregard all rules and regulations.

THE LAYMAN. Of course it will. Consider this further point. Agreements between nations, whether they be mere commercial conventions or formal alliances, are based on goodwill, and their maintenance depends on the continuation of goodwill. In peacetime expediency encourages goodwill and becomes the governing factor in the maintenance of international agreements. Now when war breaks out all diplomatic, social, economic and political ties between the belligerents are broken and all agreements fall to the ground. Do you suppose for a moment that the one agreement which at such a time it is most inexpedient for the nation to observe is the only one that will be respected?

THE OFFICER. Moreover the observance of these or any other regulations depends on their general acceptance. If one of the belligerent nations in a war breaks the regulations, whether in using poison gas or firing too heavy a gun or dropping a bomb from an aeroplane, the general obligation on all the others is at once removed. Indeed the very rumour that the regulations have been broken, which in all probability will at a very early stage be circulated, will suffice. Then every nation engaged in the war will have recourse to all the forbidden categories of weapons at once, and will depend on the rapidity with which they can be manufactured.

THE LAYMAN. And the armament firms foreseeing, expecting, and no doubt encouraging such an eventuality will have secretly prepared the material which they know their governments will fall back on sooner or later.

THE ADVOCATE. You two are painting a pretty lurid picture of international morality.

THE OFFICER. No more lurid than that which was presented to us in 1914 to 1918. One really must remember that in war a nation is desperate and a government is forced to be unscrupulous. But we have only been talking of so-called qualitative disarmament and we are by no means alone in condemning this line of approach. At the same time we must not forget that quantitative disarmament is only applicable in peace time. Of course any such restrictions in numbers and size must at once be disregarded as soon as war is declared and recruiting begins.

THE ADVOCATE. But surely a considerably smaller and less aggressive war machine kept in being in peace time is a real advance. It will make any government aggressively inclined hesitate and if war does break out it will be less devastating. Even from the point of view of economy it is a step in the right direction. The financial burden of armaments lies very heavily just now on the shoulders of the people throughout the world. We might dispute about how the money saved might be spent, but we should be at one in affirming that there is no worse way of spending it than this.

THE OFFICER. Economy may be a desirable result but it is not a reason in itself for disarmament. Moreover, as I have already pointed out, some of the most deadly weapons can be manufactured at a comparatively low cost. The great danger of your restrictions and your rules and regulations is that you are deluding people into the supposition that something definite has been done towards disarmament and the abolition of war. Whereas they will find when war breaks out that after a few weeks everything is just the same as it was, or rather worse, because of the new gases and explosives which have been invented in the last fifteen years. The idea of waging gentlemanlike war mildly and in kid gloves is really absurd. The League might just as

well issue regulations that in future guns should be charged with—er—cotton wool.

THE ADVOCATE. I cannot agree with you that a solemn agreement of the powers at Geneva to prohibit the use of poison gas and bombing aeroplanes will not be observed. But, if all this is of no use, what then do you propose?

THE OFFICER. I do not want you to suppose that I am in favour of extravagant expenditure on armaments. I want it to be kept within reasonable limits and, of course, I would not oppose well-thought-out and agreed reductions. But if prohibitions and reductions are to be effected why not, as has been often suggested, adopt the formula for all nations which was imposed on Germany by the Treaty of Versailles? I am not sure that the failure to disarm to this extent may not result in Germany re-arming, so that the Disarmament Conference will end by having increased instead of diminished armaments. At any rate, if this formula were adopted there would be no need for debate; there is a ready-made scheme.

THE ADVOCATE. But you would not be satisfied that even that would be observed.

THE OFFICER. I won't say that. For one thing, it would be more difficult for the nations not to observe clauses of the very Treaty the strict observance of which they have been demanding from their late enemy for nearly fifteen years. Moreover the moral effect of the lately Allied and Associated Powers declaring that the standard of reduced armaments, almost to police level, which they have imposed on Germany was henceforth to be the level to which their own armaments were to be reduced, would be tremendous. The peoples of the world, who are sick and tired of this controversy and are far more pacifically inclined than their governments, would at once believe that their

governments meant business and the moral authority of the League of Nations would be enormously strengthened.

THE ADVOCATE. I think that is true. Unfortunately the bugbear of Security stands in the way, and it is this which prevents France making any really advanced step, and makes us unwilling to get out of step with France and hang back in our cautious impotence. I admit that it is amazing after the experience of the last war that any nation should believe that security can be gained by armaments. Germany in 1914 had as fine a fighting machine as could possibly be constructed and it availed her nothing. France had the largest and most powerful armed force the world has ever seen on her side before the end, and yet directly the war was, what is called, won she is the first to call out for security.

THE LAYMAN. I know France seems to stand in the way but I think we should be fair and realize the position of French representatives at Geneva. They are very severely hampered by the instability of their governments and by the hold the armament firms have over part of their Press. I won't discuss the causes of the instability but it is a patent fact. Briand was thrown over when he tried to move a little faster, and Herriot, by having to keep one eye on Paris, seems to lack courage and allow caution to get the upper hand. In a less degree this fettering of representatives at Geneva applies to us. Have you noticed that the two governments which are the most firmly established for the time being, whether you like it or not, are the Russian Soviet Government and the Italian Fascist Government, and these are the two which have made by far the boldest disarmament proposals? Nevertheless, if they suspect the sincerity of other nations as indicated by their timid attitude, even these two

governments may swing across quite logically to the opposite extreme. The existence of this instability is not a side issue, it is a fact to be borne in mind when you are demanding unanimity from national representatives who not only change but are constantly in fear of falling.

THE ADVOCATE. Such difficulties are unfortunately inherent in any international body. One can only expect the representatives to speak for the majority of their fellow countrymen.

THE LAYMAN. More correctly for a majority party whose electoral appeal has been made nine-tenths on domestic questions quite unconnected with the disarmament issue. That is just the trouble. With all the goodwill in the world these men are not in a position either to represent the views of the people on this issue, or, if they did, to stand up against the pressure of their parliaments which are primarily concerned with quite other problems. Whatever representation may be necessary on the League of Nations itself, where political problems must from time to time come under discussion, it appears to me that the specific question of disarmament should be treated differently.

THE ADVOCATE. You mean by *ad hoc* and more permanent representatives?

THE LAYMAN. Yes. Representatives chosen to voice popular opinion ascertained by a plebiscite or referendum on this one single issue, instead of party representatives chosen because of their policy on a series of domestic issues. They would be more permanent and they would be representative. I do not think this is an impracticable suggestion.

THE OFFICER. That is worth considering, but we must take the organization as it stands at present. The representatives are politicians and have some control over the causes of war, and to my mind it would

be much more to the point were they to discuss what causes war rather than lay down rules as to how the next war should be conducted.

THE LAYMAN. I am with you as to the utter futility of the latter course but I am very doubtful as to the advisability of the former.

THE OFFICER. But surely you would agree that it is far better instead of taking a weapon out of a man's hand to get the idea out of a man's head which makes him want to use it.

THE LAYMAN. That is perfectly true of the individual but you cannot stretch the analogy to cover a nation. In international war there is no idea in the man's head which makes him want to use his weapon to begin with beyond the notion of disciplined duty if he is a soldier. The ideas, the indignation, the hatred, and the rest of it have to be pumped up, where need be, invented and proclaimed. But had we better begin on the causes of war with their subtle and hidden economic ramifications nowadays. I should certainly be inclined to enlarge on the dangers of capitalist competition and the far more favourable atmosphere which would be created by Socialist Internationalism. But I am reluctant to widen our discussion to that extent. The cause of war is an important and interesting study, but I consider it to be fundamentally irrelevant to what we are discussing.

THE ADVOCATE. But I agree with the Officer. Surely if we could remove the causes of war of which the piling up of armaments is only a symptom we should approach far nearer to the solution of the problem.

THE LAYMAN. We shall find ourselves at once entering into that sphere where fundamental human faults and failings operate. Do not let us set about to try and purify humanity. Believe me that is too big a job. If you make your approach from that direction

people will very rightly accuse you of unpractical idealism. Nations, or rather governments, like human beings, dispute and quarrel and will continue to dispute and quarrel. It is not a question of trying to stop them quarrelling but of persuading them that they do not ever settle their quarrels by killing one another by the million. That is a far simpler proposition.

THE OFFICER. But surely a study of history would. . . .

THE LAYMAN. Forgive me for interrupting, but history cannot possibly help us because in it we can find no parallel for the instrument we now shall use.

THE OFFICER. What do you mean?

THE LAYMAN. Modern warfare with its devastating consequences. I want to concentrate on that single point. Not the faults and failures in the delicate mechanism of the watch, but the fact that a sledgehammer is not the proper instrument with which to mend it. No conceivable cause can be an excuse for using such an instrument.

THE OFFICER. In fact you think that causes for dispute should never be described as causes for war.

THE LAYMAN. Precisely.

THE OFFICER. But how about an unprovoked attack? Would not that be a cause for war?

THE LAYMAN. Here is the aggressor again. I have already said that no nation has ever admitted being the aggressor. I will say further that it was found impossible to make any definition of aggression, even though in every war each nation has loudly proclaimed and easily persuaded its people that its enemy at the moment is an aggressor.

THE ADVOCATE. But we have a definition now, namely, the nation which refuses to submit a dispute to the League or refuses to accept the decision of the Council of the League before resorting to arms.

THE LAYMAN. Yes. If we had analysed the causes of war we should have found that the motive which would induce a nation to take a step of this sort would not be just a blatant desire for aggression, but a complexity of reasons which it would represent to its own people as justifiable and even as defensive. While for quite other diplomatic and tactical reasons such a nation would not be isolated, but would have the support of other nations, even though its case were not submitted to the League. The Covenant envisages corporate action against a nation which makes an entirely unprovoked act of war which is universally condemned. I submit, and indeed I have always maintained, that such a simple and easily recognisable act will and can never take place.

THE OFFICER. We cannot be absolutely sure that something very much like unprovoked aggression will not take place. It would not be difficult for me to quote instances, indeed a very recent one. In such an eventuality it is right that the nations should agree to take action against the aggressor, if not military, at any rate economic.

THE ADVOCATE. While I agree with you, I have to admit that nations are very reluctant to do anything of the kind. I too could quote an instance, a very recent one. The Layman is not wrong when he says that the issue is never so simple as to be beyond all doubt, and the motives of the various governments for taking sides are founded on considerations quite other than their judgment of the actual facts in question. Not the offender's aggressive action but his diplomatic or strategic value as an ally will be the governing factor.

THE OFFICER. I cannot help thinking, however, that the idea of combined action against the breaker of the peace is a method of procedure which can

usefully be developed, the idea of neutrality being now out of date.

THE ADVOCATE. Perhaps you would be in favour of an international force?

THE OFFICER. No. I have never regarded that as practicable. The question of its composition, its command, its use and the nature of the immediate authority which would control it would not be possible to solve satisfactorily. But I think that just as individuals will help one another against a criminal, so nations should co-operate against the breaker of the peace.

THE LAYMAN. Be careful not to fall into the trap of pushing the analogy between individuals and nations too far. If the case of the criminal and the police force were on all fours with the case of the nation and the armed forces of other nations, how simple the whole question would be. But there is no such thing as a criminal nation. There are individual criminals in all nations. But a nation which takes action, however much it may be regarded as reprehensible by its neighbours or enemies, must be able to persuade all the best people among its own citizens before it can take any action at all. More than this, it is always able to put up a case which others—I mean some other nations—will support. A crime is a specific breach of a specific law on which a decisive verdict can be given by a court. No so-called aggressive action of any nation can conceivably be defined in this way and any attempt to do so sends us off on a false scent for a remedy. I am not saying that disputes between nations are not all of them capable of solution by a court or a council. Indeed that is manifestly the only way in which they can be solved. What I am saying is that a defiant act of war on the part of a nation cannot be isolated and universally—and I emphasize universally

because of the unanimity demanded—condemned like the crime of an individual.

THE OFFICER. I do not want to push the analogy as far as that, but the general idea of co-operation between nations in the face of what, by general consent, is regarded as a peril, appears to me the right lines on which the family of nations should proceed. The Covenant indeed is based on the idea and the American interpretation with regard to consultation under the Kellogg Pact further endorses the idea. As an internationalist you would, I should have thought, approved this.

THE LAYMAN. Consultation and concerted action are all to the good. But these declarations unfortunately do not seem to tend towards disarmament.

THE OFFICER. But unity of purpose in the family of nations will be some safeguard against the breaker of the peace.

THE LAYMAN. Your expression the family of nations creates confusion, as it perpetuates the idea of the analogy between individuals and nations. You very properly desire to raise the standards of international morality at any rate to the same level as that of individual morality, which, although it may not be very high, is in any case considerably higher than that of international morality. If I had to find a simile I should not choose that of a family or community of individuals, I would take rather that of an organism. The interlocked relationships and the close interdependence of nations, which modern methods of transit and communication have greatly increased, is the important feature which must never be left out of account. Without going so far as to assign to each particular nation a particular organ, they each and all function as vital organs in the whole body. So that the damage or destruction of one

affects the others immediately, directly and vitally. An insane folly exists in war time of supposing that beating the enemy to his knees is a desirable object. This means nothing more than inflicting a deadly wound, not on the enemy alone or even principally, but on the whole organism. We spent four years in beating Germany to her knees. We have been spending nearly fifteen in trying to set her on her feet again and we have not yet succeeded. We are feeling the terrible wound as much as anyone. A striking illustration of the imbecility of war.

THE ADVOCATE. Yes. We are all agreed that war settles nothing. But we must not drift too far from the question in hand, which is how to stop its outbreak, its continuance and its ravages. Let me turn to what appears to me to be a practical proposition with a view to tackling agencies which unquestionably encourage war. You may remember, or probably you will have forgotten, that in 1921 a League of Nations Commission reported on the private manufacture of armaments. Their first conclusion was (I will quote): "That armament firms have been active in fomenting war scares and in persuading their own countries to adopt warlike politics and to increase their armaments," and it further accused them of bribery, of disseminating false reports, influencing newspapers and organising international armament rings. In my opinion this scandal has a great deal to do with the encouragement of war.

THE OFFICER. And what has the League done about it?

THE ADVOCATE. Nothing. That is why I call attention to it, because in its ramifications, in the profit it brings to individuals and in its capacity for producing scares, it is an evil which should be seriously tackled.

THE LAYMAN. That this is a gross and monstrous scandal is unquestionably true and good work can be done in exposing it. It is very typical of the institution of war. Just as the tinsel pretence of glittering life-guards, military tattoos and tournaments conceals for recruiting purposes the mud, blood, and poison which is real war, so behind the highly respectable and impressive array of generals and admirals and air marshals who dominate society you find this mean, sordid, foul and contemptible swindle not only winked at but deliberately kept in being for the support and promotion of war.

THE ADVOCATE. You would agree then that a general resolution to control this industry by national and international methods would do much to get at the root of the evil?

THE LAYMAN. No. It is a symptom, a result, not a cause. War is a dirty business and can only be waged successfully by unscrupulous methods. If you want as much destructive apparatus as can possibly be produced, not only will you fall back on bombs and poison gas against all regulations, but in order to get a sufficiency of these and other weapons you will not enquire too closely into who manufactured them or what the methods are by which they are manufactured, nor even which of your friends are profiting by their production.

THE OFFICER. Nor which of your enemies are going to be supplied with the weapons which are going to be used against your own people.

THE LAYMAN. Nor which of the so-called undeveloped or backward nations who may, I admit, display racial animosities and who would have to fall back on very primitive weapons in their combats, are now fully equipped with the most modern appliances by the great Christian Western nations. No, this is all part of the game, a hideous game I admit. But you

will not get far by merely trying to correct or improve one of the inevitably evil consequences of war. I do not really believe in any of the three ways suggested from time to time; that is to say to mitigate the horrors of war by prohibiting certain weapons, to get rid of the scandal of the private manufacture of arms, or to prevent governments from lying to their people on the outbreak and during the conduct of a war.

THE ADVOCATE. You seem to think every road is a cul-de-sac, whereas I believe that exploration and advance up each and every road may culminate in so weakening the ground on which the supporters and encouragers of war take their stand that we shall little by little reach our aim. I do not agree with the Officer that reductions, as drastic as general agreement will admit, will not be most efficacious, but I do agree with him that you are not going to wake up one fine day to find war has been abolished. You condemned just now the fatalistic attitude that nothing can be done, yet you approach very near that attitude when you turn down all suggestions.

THE LAYMAN. After carefully watching the perfectly sincere endeavours which have been made since 1918; the Treaty of mutual assistance, the Protocol, the Washington agreement, the Kellogg Pact, the preparatory disarmament commission and the Disarmament Conference itself, I am fully convinced that there is only one way which can promise success.

THE ADVOCATE. And that is?

THE LAYMAN. Disarmament by Example.

THE ADVOCATE. But surely we have given an example of disarmament by our repeated reductions since the war.

THE LAYMAN. I did not say reduction of armaments by example. I said Disarmament by Example. A more senseless and dangerous policy than reduction of

armaments by example cannot be imagined. It is asking for trouble. I am in full agreement with the Officer that if you are going to wage war in any circumstances you had much better have the best possible machine.

THE OFFICER. Yes, but I never said anything about having no machine at all. Of course, if every other nation gave up their machines too, that would be another matter. But really with all the difficulties we have been discussing is it to be for a moment imagined that you are going to get immediate and complete disarmament by general consent?

THE ADVOCATE. Such an idea is absurd.

THE LAYMAN. At present perhaps absurd. But that is not my idea. The necessity for unanimity, without which as matters stand no small step of advance can be made, is the great obstacle that stands in the way. To get fifty-six nations to agree is a superhuman task and it is proving to be quite hopeless.

THE ADVOCATE. I will admit there has been a deplorable absence of bold leadership on the part of the powers which really count. I believe even in such a large assembly a bold call would receive a surprising response.

THE LAYMAN. That is just my point. A bold call. I am firmly convinced that in this matter of disarmament there is no half-way house. Gradual disarmament is useful as an expression of goodwill, and I, for one, applaud the smallest advance, but I know that fundamentally it is a complete fallacy to suppose that you can close this door by stages. So long as the door is even ajar it can be forced open and will be forced open to the full when the madness which accompanies war seizes humanity. Cool and composed humanity sitting in peace time at a council table has a way of disregarding, almost disbelieving, the transformation it will

undergo and the frenzy which will possess it when the bugle sounds. This change of mind, of disposition, of character, this dislocation of sobriety and calmness by passion and madness, must be faced as a certainty. The rules you lay down must not be rules and decisions for rational beings such as we all feel ourselves to be while we discuss them in peaceful atmosphere, they must be regulations for lunatics, imbeciles, and savages, men who have lost all sense of proportion, all sense of decency, justice, and all power of judgment. No crack of the door must be left open. The door must be bolted, locked and barred for ever, and marked, "No thoroughfare this way."

THE ADVOCATE. That is just what we want, but how are you going to do it?

THE LAYMAN. The representatives of a nation, preferably of this nation, should go to Geneva and say: "We want to take the next step which follows from the Kellogg Pact. By that agreement we renounced war as an instrument of national policy. We believe the existence of armaments engenders fear and suspicion and competition which still endangers peace. Recent events have shown us that war settles nothing, but inflicts intolerable hardship on the whole world. We therefore now renounce war between nations in any circumstances whatever and shall proceed to disarm as quickly as our economic situation will allow."

THE OFFICER. Is not that a loophole?

THE LAYMAN. No, the pace at which we disarm is of no consequence provided the national decision not in any circumstances whatever to have recourse to war with any other nation is made clear.

THE OFFICER. How about sanctions under the Covenant?

THE LAYMAN. The nation in question should declare itself relieved of any such obligation. There would be

no difficulty in that, as these military sanctions have already proved to be unreal and impracticable.

THE ADVOCATE. What about a police force?

THE LAYMAN. I am not a passive resister. I believe that against criminals, marauders, pirates, thieves, incendiaries and such like protection is necessary. Here we are up against possible evils in human nature which cannot be tamed yet awhile. I do not want to be unreasonable. In suggesting that we should not go about weighed down with armour I am not proposing that we should go about naked. It is international war on which I am concentrating my attention.

THE OFFICER. How about the North-West Frontier and the outposts of Empire where raids from savage tribes may at any time be expected?

THE LAYMAN. If we through our armament firms did not furnish these savage tribes you mention with the latest guns and explosives they would not cause very much trouble. I would say that the so-called protection of the outposts of Empire has often been made the excuse for adding a few more hundred square miles to the Empire. I admit, although I regret, these gigantic Imperial responsibilities. But they must be faced and they necessitate genuine protection at times and in places. But our rulers want very careful watching on these points and at any rate this has nothing to do with international war. May I remind you too that our safest imperial frontier is the three thousand miles southern frontier of Canada on which there is not a single gun?

THE OFFICER. Another set of circumstances you must provide for is the protection of our nationals in the Far East and perhaps elsewhere.

THE LAYMAN. Yes, but care must be taken not to take advantage of the comparatively rare occasions when such protection is necessary to stir up ill

feeling with the foreign nation in question. I am afraid many injustices have been perpetrated under the excuse of preserving law and order. I cannot see why individuals, who for commercial profit establish themselves in territories where disturbances are likely, should expect the full might of their government to protect them. We cannot retain war as an institution in order to secure an expanding business for individual traders in every corner of the world.

THE OFFICER. Would you object to an international police force?

THE LAYMAN. Not at all when other nations had also declared they never intended to wage international war. It could be used strictly for police work or for purposes such as our navy performs now in preventing piracy and slave traffic. But this international force must not be constituted into a force for keeping the peace between nations. I do not believe in international armies, navies and air forces to endorse decisions of the League of Nations or to keep so-called aggressors in order. Moreover such a force would have to be very much larger than the small national and international force for purely police purposes.

THE ADVOCATE. But if you had any armed force might it not be an embryo army and navy which might develop at any moment into a menace.

THE LAYMAN. You must remember that the nation in question would have solemnly renounced war in any circumstances against any other nation and it would have to keep its word to its own people who had made the decision.

THE OFFICER. But do you mean to say you would placidly allow bombs to be thrown by another nation on London or a force to be landed at Dover without lifting a finger?

THE LAYMAN. Who is going to throw the bombs or land the force?

THE OFFICER. We have been obliged to admit earlier that nations unfortunately cannot be trusted, and that however much they may disclaim being aggressors, they may be tempted at any time to make an attack.

THE LAYMAN. Yes. I think it was you who said an offensive might be the best defence and I think you were right. But this could not possibly apply as towards a nation which had disarmed and from which consequently you could not expect any attack whatever. You have now got to imagine an absolutely unprovoked aggressor—a rarish bird even as matters now are. But if he can exist now it is only because the government of the nation in question can still persuade its people that it has a high motive, a defensive motive, a noble purpose. How could it do that when by making war on a disarmed nation it would be proclaiming to the world that it was a blatant aggressor, a self-confessed indisputable aggressor. No government, however immoral you may think them, could do it. Say for instance that Denmark were completely disarmed. Is it conceivably possible that any nation having a sharp dispute with the Danish Government would proceed to bombard or drop bombs on Copenhagen? Low as my opinion of international morality may be I do not for a moment believe such a thing possible. I am convinced that Disarmament really constitutes the only absolute security.

THE OFFICER. But there would be a risk.

THE LAYMAN. What would that risk be compared, not with the risk, but with the certainty of war with all its attendant horrors which we have got to face sooner or later as matters stand at present?

THE ADVOCATE. I am not at all disposed to quarrel

with your extreme method. But you must admit that it is extreme and how can you hope to persuade people to adopt it ?

THE LAYMAN. You call it extreme because it suggests a new doctrine which is not yet understood. As a matter of fact it is the next logical step to the Kellogg Pact. It has, too, this merit that we have got to concentrate our attention on our own people. We have not got to argue the matter out with Frenchmen and Germans and Americans and Japanese. That narrows the field and makes the procedure easier. But there are minds in those countries thinking along these lines. Although a long quotation, I will give you what a prominent French politician, M. Léon Blum, has said, because it puts the whole case very well :

“ In this connection I shall put forth a view which is my personal idea, and which does not implicate anybody else. I personally believe that the War created such a state of mind in Europe that it actually would have been possible for a great nation to take the initiative to disarm completely. Let there be no mistake ; I do not mean a plan for a proposal, I mean the act itself. If such a nation had thrown down its weapons, without any preliminary understanding with the other nations, and without any reciprocal agreement, it would have run no risks at all, for its moral prestige would have protected it against attack. The moral strength of its example would have obliged all the other states to imitate it. In this, as in other matters, I believe in the strength of good examples. That was certainly possible in the years immediately following the War ; and despite the more difficult international situation of to-day, it might still not be impossible.

“ Think how the world would be stirred if, instead

of little Denmark, France were suddenly to give public opinion the supreme proof of her pacifism!

" I have mentioned France, because France is the strongest military power, the power which marched at the head of the victorious nations ; I have mentioned her also out of national vanity, for, being a Frenchman, I should naturally want her to have this claim to glory. Would we not, by disarming, break at one and the same time, the weapons of all the nationalists, militarists, *revanchards*, and even of the dictatorships? Is there a government which could resist the torrent of popular enthusiasm, the powerful will of the peoples? These have been my thoughts for a long time ; so why should I not express them! "

And, in one sentence, Senator Frazier of Washington has said :

" I think the United States should take the lead in the matter of Total Disarmament and should fight it, and in my opinion if that were done several other nations would gladly join her."

I agree with him, I think the example would be immediately followed. I would go so far as to say that if we made up our minds to take this step and sounded other nations, informing them of our intention to make this declaration, we should find that several of them would immediately follow suit. You said just now that, if it had been suggested by one of the leading powers that the simplest and most direct method for the Geneva Conference to adopt was general reductions down to the level of Germany, the moral effect of this would have impressed the world and the sincerity of the governments would not be questioned. I believe this would be still more true of a declaration on the

part of one of the leading powers to disarm, irrespective of agreement on the part of the others.

I was impressed by the Soviet's original proposal for complete disarmament. I am sure they were sincere, because the Bolsheviki want to concentrate their attention on more important and productive objects than keeping up armies and air forces. But I believe that, if they had had the courage to go further and declare their intention of disarming by example, it would have made a tremendous impression even, or I would say specially, as coming from them. They were frightened of their neighbours and of Western Europe. They did not see that by such a step their security would be ten times greater than it can possibly be now.

THE ADVOCATE. You may think it unreasonable of the Soviet Government, but although they may be mistaken, they are convinced of the danger. Take the case of Germany smarting under the Versailles Treaty with deep grievances with regard to her Eastern frontier and the Polish corridor; can you imagine Germany deciding to disarm completely by example? The whole tendency is in precisely the opposite direction.

THE LAYMAN. But the unilateral partial disarmament forced on Germany is responsible for the state of unrest in Germany to-day. No conceivable policy could be further removed from what I propose.

THE ADVOCATE. Well, then, take the case of France. She suffered in the last war and in many previous wars. Her territory has often been a battlefield. She is apprehensive of Germany's economic recovery and of the spirit of revenge which a strong recrudescence of nationalism may fan into flames. She is not comfortable about Italy and we, although recently her ally,

may become *perfidie Albion* at any moment. Do you expect her to disarm?

THE LAYMAN. Why not, if at last she finds that that is the road to the security she is seeking? Whoever starts, the attitude of the other nations to such a country must immediately undergo a complete change. Fear, jealousy and suspicion disappear. The position of this leading country, far from being inferior and below the others, would become at once enviable and above the others who will want to copy it.

THE OFFICER. Fundamentally I believe you are right. But you have got an immense crust of superstition and prejudice to pierce through. War is so firmly established as an institution. The tradition and prestige of the fighting services are so deep founded and strong, the thoughtless so-called patriots are very numerous, and have no belief in the possible abolition of war, and the various peace organizations are at sixes and sevens and are quite unable to concentrate on any one line of advance.

THE ADVOCATE. Yes, and while politicians are accustomed to differ automatically from what their opponents suggest, so idealistic a proposal as that of our taking the initiative in complete disarmament cannot possibly be expected to receive the necessary national support.

THE LAYMAN. What stands in my way is not my excess in idealism nor the impracticability of my proposal, but the difficulty of overcoming a superstition. Much the same obstacle confronted those who first proposed to abolish duelling. I admit there are difficulties and obstacles. But on the other side I believe there is a very strong feeling on the part of the people for measures being taken which will give them some genuine assurance that they and their children will not live to see another war. I think that the new

complexion which warfare has taken on, I mean its mechanical and diabolically destructive character, has robbed war of the romance and heroism which could be claimed for it in the past. I am not at all sure that, when people see that after fourteen years the method which demands unanimity from international conferences has produced nothing of value, they will not be ready to adopt and insist on more drastic and decisive means of gaining their end. I believe they will come to the conclusion that there is no half-way house and I only trust that they will reach that conclusion before most of them have been blown from the scene.

THE ADVOCATE. All this, however, means a gradual process whether they reach your conclusion or any other.

THE LAYMAN. I am not so sure. After all war is not gradual in its occurrence, it is sudden and catastrophic. Peace, that is to say ensured peace, might be brought about by a sudden awakening.

THE ADVOCATE. You seem to depend on possible but highly improbable eventualities. I want to use and improve the machinery we have at hand in the League of Nations and give it every chance.

THE OFFICER. I cannot say that gives us very much hope either. The Layman at any rate agrees with me that while these doubtful reductions and fallacious prohibitions are under discussion it will be best for us to be prepared to keep our powder dry and not allow ourselves to be cramped on the plea of economy, or on the false supposition that such minor reductions make the world safer against war.

THE LAYMAN. It is rather too much to say, I agree with you. I think that point of view is logical and defensible.

THE OFFICER. Well, I say let the politicians get to

work, study the causes of war and the roots of international disputes and strengthen their methods of arbitration. When they have done this satisfactorily, they can allow us in the Services to be pensioned off, but not before. I say to them what Lord Haig said: "Your job is to make my job impossible." But until they do I am going to stand at attention.

THE ADVOCATE. You place security before disarmament.

THE OFFICER. The two are interdependent. But unless a nation, however unreasonable you may consider it to be, is satisfied it has security, it will not disarm.

THE LAYMAN. Until it can be shown that Disarmament means security, we must dispel the fallacy that an unarmed nation is vulnerable. This misconception arises from the perfectly correct conclusion that a badly armed nation is very vulnerable.

THE OFFICER. It may be a misconception; personally I should not object to your calling it a delusion. But it takes a good deal to dispel a delusion of this sort. The Governments and their representatives on the League of Nations may well be expected to do a great deal more than they have hitherto in freeing the world from these dangerous misconceptions.

THE LAYMAN. I do not think it is quite fair to place the whole burden of responsibility on the politicians, the Governments, the Conferences or the League. This is also, I am not sure I would not say primarily, a matter for the people; the people are directly concerned. They are the agents without whom war cannot be waged and they in the long run are the victims. While I am deeply convinced that my road is the only one that will lead to anything like a permanent solution, and although I am fully aware of the formidable difficulties which stand in the path of the acceptance

of my proposal, I do not feel in so despairing a mood as you might suppose. This for two reasons, apart from any hope I may have of any progress which may be made towards disarmament by example. Firstly, the League of Nations with all its faults in constitution and procedure performs a most valuable function in keeping this question of Disarmament persistently to the front in season and out of season, year by year. So that after every wrong road has been explored it is not inconceivable that the right road may be discovered. Secondly, I know that the public study of the question, and the bitter experience which numbers of people still have of war, have produced a determination in far more people than is generally known to refuse absolutely to accept the preposterous absurdity of supposing that any international dispute can be solved or any national advantage can be gained in the long run by the wholesale destruction of life and property and national treasures on a colossal scale. On the grounds of the highest patriotism they will refuse, and indeed are refusing, not only here but in many other countries. Professor Einstein, who is not a politician but a scientific observer, has declared in speaking of international war, which he described as "this antiquated barbarous institution" (I will give his own words): "I advise the recruiting of people for this all over the world. And for the timid ones who say, 'What is the use of our trying, we are so few in number,' my answer is, 'If you can get only 2 per cent. of the population of the world to assert in time of peace that they will not fight you will have the solution of international troubles.' Even so small a proportion as 2 per cent. will accomplish the desired result." Consequently the knowledge that a large body of the population will undoubtedly resist all war service, and will not be hoodwinked by the specious falsehoods which

have to be disseminated for the waging of war, with make Governments hesitate before they again play the war card in their diplomatic negotiations, at any rate for some time to come.

THE ADVOCATE. Nevertheless, so far as Geneva Conferences are concerned, you despair of any good result.

THE LAYMAN. I am afraid I do. Nor am I alone in looking in vain for some concrete disarmament measure in the Geneva resolutions which has been published. I repeat the necessity for unanimity, for the smallest step is an insuperable obstacle to advance. Others are being driven to the same conclusion and they will then be more ready to listen to this constructive proposal of Disarmament by Example. So deeply inoculated are people by the idea that arms alone mean safety and protection that it must take time to understand that it is a fallacy and that the exact opposite is the truth.

THE ADVOCATE. I am afraid there are governments which really do not mean business on the question of disarmament.

THE LAYMAN. So am I. That is why continually trying to march in step with them definitely prevents advance. By acting independently you get over that difficulty.

THE ADVOCATE. If you were successful, would you not, in your reduction of the Services and closing down of armament works, enormously increase the already high figure of unemployment?

THE LAYMAN. That is a very important consideration. It is one that cannot be left to chance. In telling you what I would do it will seem perhaps that I am assuming dictatorial powers. But so great a change in the national mind as the definite decision to abjure international war would necessitate the concentration of national energy in some other direction. The

Officer at the beginning of our discussion spoke very rightly of the great energy which can be engendered by the corporate efforts and enterprise of mankind. We have been able, as we know, to harness this great force and spend seven millions a day on it for destructive purposes. I do not believe that it is beyond us to organize and utilize it for constructive purposes without any expense at all. Why should we not wage war against one of the pernicious evils produced by the real enemy? Can we not find a crying scandal which is growing and which defies the tentative palliatives which political parties adopt towards it from time to time? I mean housing. Up and down the country, but more especially in our overgrown cities, there are thousands upon thousands of hovels, some even condemned for human habitation, in which vast numbers of our population are forced to live and to withstand as best they can the degradation, discomfort, and squalor which such surroundings must inevitably encourage. Can we not organize a great force, a great army with the co-operation of the Trade Unions, utilizing the present unemployed and those who would be dismissed because of the reductions in the Services? Could we not give this great enterprise under disciplined military regulation some of the excitement, the interest and the ardour which accompanies real war? With a well-thought-out plan this force could be used for the destruction of miles of slums and for the immediate erection of temporary dwellings while the permanent reconstruction of the areas in question was proceeding.

THE OFFICER. A pretty ambitious and costly scheme.

THE LAYMAN. Not costly. It might not cost a halfpenny because we should be saving millions on our service estimates and also on unemployed benefit. Ambitious, yes. But throw your mind back to 1914 and the subsequent years. Under the pressure of panic we

were able to organize the whole population as sailors, soldiers, airmen, munition makers and in all the multifarious trades and occupations for the continued waging of war. This would not mean anything like so extensive a national effort and the object to which the work would be devoted would not only have the whole-hearted approval of everyone, but would be an ennobling and enriching service for national improvement in the very highest sense. I cannot enter into details but I give the bare outline of the sort of scheme which would absorb workers and be a splendid focus for corporate national effort.

THE OFFICER. It sounds very admirable, but I wonder what is going to induce a government to initiate the policy of abandoning international war and inaugurating war against slums—a great idea.

THE LAYMAN. Perhaps the same sort of panic as produced the situation of 1914 will be the motive force. A panic produced by the inexorable approach, if matters are allowed to drift, of another war and the knowledge of what another war would mean—the destruction of our capital and all our great cities, the destruction of our wonderful monuments and of all our great treasures, the destruction of men, women and children by the thousand in their homes and perhaps the destruction of civilization. It may require a government. Conceivably it may only require the authoritative voice of one man who is in a position to be listened to. It is up to us of this generation who took the sensational stride back into barbarism to make an equally sensational step forward. We have a unique opportunity. But if another twenty years or so are allowed to pass and the generation which has known the Great War disappears from the scene, the new generation I am very much afraid cannot be expected to show the same zeal and they will be misled. It is

now that mankind demands this compensation and Geneva will not give it.

THE ADVOCATE. You seem to depend on moral feelings and on rousing the moral conscience. Do you find that the Churches who are supposed to represent morality support you?

THE LAYMAN. You are mistaken. I am very reluctant to introduce any moral argument. I have repeatedly emphasized the fact that I am not qualified, and I do not know who is, to raise man's moral nature. This is purely a matter of reason, of expediency and of common sense. I think the best morality contains these elements. But I am not going to depend on the parson's pulpit, any more than on the politician's platform, or on the agitator's soap-box, to carry conviction. I believe in the homes of the people the ground is prepared. It is the voice which is lacking. As for the religious bodies, apart from individual parsons and ministers who see the matter clearly and understand the over-mastering significance of this question, institutional religion, with the exception of the Friends, is on the whole more listless and apathetic about it than other classes of the community. Without doubt the Churches have a special mission on this question considering the precepts on which their religions are founded. But they have lost their authority largely because of their attitude in the war and the reactions which have arisen from it, and as institutions they have no value whatever in pressing for a new order of thought and striving to their utmost to prevent this impending calamity. But I welcome all help because the daring nature of an appeal may make it reach different sections of the community. Disarmament by Example is unquestionably an advance towards Christian precept, it is an advance towards the extreme attitude adopted by the passive

resister, it is acceptable to the pure rationalist, it can be favoured by the economist, it is admitted by military authorities to be the only logical and satisfactory alternative to keeping up to the highest point the efficiency of the services, and although supporters of the League of Nations are rather inclined to think that it queers their pitch, I submit that it is of value to the real authority of the League as a warning of the danger of deluding the world by unreal and misleading decisions. It is the change from small steps to a big stride.

THE ADVOCATE. Well, the net result of our discussion seems to be that we are none of us satisfied with things as they stand nor with the inevitable course they will take if no fresh approach to the subject is made. I think if our fellow countrymen saw the dangers which face us as clearly as we do, they would rouse themselves and press the government, of whatever complexion it might be, far more insistently. I cannot help thinking public opinion is apathetic.

THE LAYMAN. I do not agree., Public opinion is focussed by the politicians on the many important financial, social, economic and industrial problems of the hour. But I am sure Arthur Henderson was right when he said: "In respect of every forward policy in the last twelve years, the public opinion of the nations has always been ahead of what the Governments were prepared to do." In my experience if you talk at a public meeting of this vital underlying question of Disarmament and Peace, there is an immediate and heartfelt response. They all know what it means and the more simply the case can be put to them the more readily will they respond. That is one of the great merits of Disarmament by Example as against complicated arguments about tonnage, standards, ratios, calibres and relative cost. No, I believe the inarticulate

masses who say least about what they feel deepest are very far from apathetic.

THE ADVOCATE. I hope you are right. Now, having agreed generally on what is wrong we part company in reaching any agreement about what is the best method of approach. You, both of you, condemn the course taken by the Disarmament Conference. I, too, am critical but the fact that nations are getting together to discuss the matter seriously is an advance, and this Conference is not the end of all things. Its decisions will perhaps be meagre but it will be a beginning, and some method is likely to emerge for continually exploring the ground. I desire to give the League all the support I can and not to turn my back on it because it does not go as far as I should like. You both mistrust the Conference method and fear that its decisions may be represented as some achievement, whereas on the lines they are going it will be worse than no achievement, a dangerous delusion. In the circumstances, therefore, with the present state of unrest in the World and the great stores of armaments which exist, you think we had better be efficiently prepared for the by no means remote possibility of war. You (the Officer) want more attention to be paid by the politicians to compulsory arbitration, to assured security, and to the analysis of probable causes of conflict. You (the Layman) want to break entirely fresh ground. Your proposal of Disarmament by Example must be far more clearly explained than it has been hitherto. It is capable of being misunderstood and represented as a weak-kneed policy, of allowing yourself to be trampled on, whereas, as you explain it, it is a courageous move to persuade people of an important truth, which after an orgy of violence they are slow to appreciate, namely that in disarmament alone will they find security.

THE LAYMAN. And that in poisons and explosives

there can be no security. Disarmament by Example is certainly often misunderstood, but that is the fault of those who advocate it, and can be corrected. What I object to is the opposition of those who seem to imply that it is no good trying Disarmament by Example, because they have a much better way of reaching the desired aim. Where is the much better way? What signs are there that the nations have even begun to travel along it?

THE ADVOCATE. I won't call it a much better way but an alternative way and the only practicable one at the moment. But while I feel I must endeavour to make the best of the machinery now at our disposal, I wish well to the advocates of your proposal in their work of conversion.

THE OFFICER. So do I, because it is the one suggestion which, if adopted, would make me feel quite justified in being relieved of my job.

THE LAYMAN. We might put you in charge of a large scheme of slum demolition.

THE OFFICER. Nothing I should like better. At present I am in charge of machine guns.

THE LAYMAN. We should want some explosives, I expect.

THE OFFICER. There are plenty ready.