

In its platform the conference also urged upon the President of the United States the early creation of the peace commission authorized by Congress in June last; directed public attention to the importance of immediate and careful consideration of subjects to be submitted to the international committee to be created in two years for the preparation of the program of the third Hague Conference; and endorsed the proposal recently submitted to Congress for a joint agreement by the nations of North and South America that in case of war between any of them no taking of territory from one by another shall be permitted as a result. The platform also urged comprehensive plans for a celebration of the centennial of peace between Great Britain and the United States.

The tone of the conference was one of quiet confidence; its utterances were definite and progressive, and its influence will be large.

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ROBERT SPENCE WATSON.

Small in numbers, the Quakers occupy a large space in the history of individual liberty, political reform, and international peace. This is self-evident to the American who sees in Pennsylvania the initiative and foresight, the political and reforming spirit of William Penn. The influence of the Quaker in advancing the cause of peace is just as real, if not so obvious, and in the great movement Penn is again the pioneer. His essay towards the present and future peace of Europe, published in 1693-4, has been, as it were, an arsenal of peace, and it is interesting to note that an Argentine delegate to the Second Hague Peace Conference called it to the attention of the proposers of the Court of Arbitral Justice as containing the best method of apportioning representation in the projected court.<sup>1</sup>

The late Robert Spence Watson was a Quaker, worthy of the best traditions of the Society of Friends, and his death on March 2, 1911, in his 73rd year, was a distinct loss, not merely to his family and to his country, but to the friends of progress and humanity in the world at large.

<sup>1</sup> *Deuxième Conférence Internationale de la Paix, Actes et Documents, Vol. I, p. 325:*

Dr. Watson was passionately devoted to the cause of education, and he gave years of his life and his best thought to the public schools of Newcastle and its public library. Through his exertions, the city was endowed with Armstrong College, a branch of the University of Durham, and he served the new institution which he founded as president.

The son of a Radical, he was a Radical of the Radicals in the matter of political and social reform, and from 1884 to 1897 he was president of the Newcastle Liberal and Radical Association. He was connected with the National Liberal Federation from its organization, and from 1890 to 1902 was its unwearied and efficient president. The spirit of the man was shown by his opposition to the circular issued by the conservative government of 1875 instructing the captains of British vessels to give up to their owners any escaped slaves who took refuge on the vessels.

Dr. Watson was a keen lawyer, and the practice of his profession led him with unerring eye to detect the danger lurking in an instrument, however carefully drawn. He declared in public that if a single slave were returned to its master from a British ship, he would indict the captain of the vessel under the kidnapping act, with Benjamin Disraeli, then Prime Minister, as an accessory. Dr. Watson's purpose was bold and extreme, but he knew his ground. Thus, Sir Farrer Herschell, afterward Lord Chancellor, wrote to him: "I have no doubt you can take such proceedings, and if they should be necessary, I shall be ready to take the matter up and fight it through." The circular was withdrawn and the deck of a British ship, synonymous with freedom, was never dishonored by the return of a fugitive who had sought refuge upon it.

Dr. Watson was, by his religion, consecrated to the cause of peace. Thus, in 1870, he collected a large sum, amounting to £70,000, to alleviate the sufferings of the non-combatants in Alsace-Lorraine, a contribution raised by the Society of Friends, of which he was always an active member. He was president of the Peace Society, and not only believed but practiced arbitration; in more than a hundred cases he was chosen arbiter in labor disputes, and, to his great honor be it said, he served without compensation.

His creed and the practice of a life-time are admirably summed up in his own words:

"It is ours to combat tyranny and oppression of whatever kind whenever and wherever they may be found; it is ours to love our country so well that we cannot bear to see her do wrong to any people."