

### War against War.

THE last issue of "War Against War," the organ of the International Peace Crusade, whose editor has been Mr. W. T. Stead, contains an interesting article by M. Bloch, author of the War of the Future on "The Impossibility of Aiding the Wounded on the Field of Battle." All that concerns the care of the wounded is of direct interest to nurses. We therefore quote from the article some of its most salient points:—

"The increase in the strength of armies, the introduction of coated bullets which produce effects similar to those produced by explosive bullets, and artillery projectiles filled with explosives, have so changed the tactical conditions of War that battles will last uninterruptedly for the course of several days. We may well repeat the question, What will become of the wounded? It is plain that a reform is demanded in the means and systems of aiding the wounded. But for this is essential an investigation of the conditions which will arise on the field of battle, and a comparison of them with those of past Wars. Such an investigation will prove the need for widening the provisions of the Geneva Convention and even for establishing a new agreement which will make it possible for the ambulance corps to carry out their duties.

"The assistance of the wounded, both on the attacking and defending side, in consequence of the manner in which armies will be scattered, will be very difficult. Even houses will be turned into defensive points, which will have to be stormed. In this case, the assistance of the wounded will not differ from that practised in preceding Wars. But quite other conditions will appear in the defence of wooded positions.

"The Bavarian chief military physician, Doctor Port, communicates the following: After the Battle of Worth he set out with ambulance men to assist the wounded, and met with a great number of Turcos who were in need of assistance. After this, entering the wood, he found a number of walls of corpses placed across the road. On looking at these he found that the bodies towards the bottom were placed regularly, while those on top lay in disorder. The last were apparently bodies of soldiers struck by bullets, who fell upon the walls after they had been made. Port looked at the corpses attentively to see if any of those in the lower ranks were alive, but found that all were dead. "And this may easily be understood," he observes, "as the weight of the bodies on top and later bullets must of course have killed off those who were placed there alive." Port declares that such walls of bodies will be

constructed also in future Wars. One reason of this will be that trenches, dug in a hurry, will have no connecting passages with the rear, so that the reinforcements sent to them will be compelled to traverse an entirely unsheltered space, and hastily jumping into the trenches will cause injuries to those already lying there. When many dead and supposed dead will have accumulated in the trenches it will be necessary to throw them out. It will be impossible to throw them out behind, as this would interfere with the approach of reinforcements, and therefore they will be thrown out in front, that is in the direction of the enemy, thus forming a breastwork. For the living to be thrown out there, says Dr. Port, will be the best of fates, for a later bullet will soon end their sufferings, while those who remain in the trenches will suffer torment.

"But no better will be the position of the wounded on the side of the attackers. Professor Pavlof asks the question—When can the wounded expect to find themselves in the hands of the doctors?—and answers late. Formerly the wounded were borne away in the sight of the enemy. Now, it can hardly be considered humane to undertake the removal of the wounded in time of battle in view of the long range and accuracy of rifles. On the contrary the ambulance men, and the wounded they bear, are likely to be struck. Out of the instinct of self-preservation the wounded soldier, knowing the qualities of the modern rifle, will as soon as possible conceal himself, and not show himself to the enemy. The lines of riflemen lying down will also very much impede the work of the ambulances.

"Thus almost all the wounded will remain without assistance, and the delay in the removal of the wounded, in view of the postulated length of battles, ensures an even greater mortality from loss of blood and even from hunger.

"Formerly night interrupted the battle, and the wounded remaining without aid on the battlefield could hope for salvation; but now, when the whole battlefield is stricken by an uninterrupted hail of bullets, and when, in view of the difficulty of attack in the face of modern fire, the cover of night will certainly be taken advantage of for attack, no hope for the wounded remains.

"Modern armies, owing to their size and the difficulty of transport, will be subjected to terrible deprivations, and thus the losses from sickness must be very great. Owing to the immensity of armies, the difficulty of regular supply will be extraordinary, all the more difficult since armies will remain for long periods on the same defensive lines. In consequence of bad food and of

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