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Swords Reluctant

Max Pemberton's *roman-à-clef* about
the Early-Twentieth-Century Peace Movement (1912)

1 Introduction

One of the first organisations campaigning for a united Europe, grown out of concern about the early-twentieth-century armaments race between Imperial Germany and Britain in particular, came from the UK. In 1906, Sir Max Waechter (1836–1924), an Anglo-German industrialist who had made a fortune as a shipbroker and sole British agent of the Nobel Brothers' petroleum business in Russia, had presented a manifesto to King Edward VII, in which he suggested a Federation of European states as a means to prevent war and advance prosperity across the continent. Touring the capitals of Europe between 1907 and 1913 he managed to discuss his scheme, under the title *European Unity League*, with almost all ruling heads of state at the time and secure endorsing statements by many of them.¹ His campaign, for which he usually travelled on the former Austrian archducal steamyacht *S. Y. Rovenska*, on board of which he hosted numerous monarchs, politicians and diplomats, was also regularly reported in the British and European press.² In May 1909 he financed and co-organised one of the first large manifestations of the European movement, the international Congress for European Federation,³ in the presence of William Thomas Stead and Jacques

¹ Sir Max Waechter, *European Federation. A lecture delivered at the London Institution on the 25th February, 1908* (London: C. W. Stidstone, 1908); Sir Max Waechter, *How to Abolish War? The United States of Europe* (London: C. W. Stidstone, 2nd ed. 1924).

² For instance the interview with Waechter in the *Daily Telegraph* in October 1907; Max Waechter, "Der Europäische Bund," *Die Friedens-Warte* (Vienna), 1907: 201–03; Max Waechter, "The Federation of Europe," *The Manchester Guardian*, 29 March 1910; "Sir Max Waechter and European Unity. View of sovereigns," *Daily Telegraph*, 23 February 1914; Max Waechter, "Een Europeesche Statenbond", *Algemeen Handelsblad* (Amsterdam), 15 October 1907; A. Fitzmaurice, "La Ligue de sir Max Waechter," *Le Figaro* (Paris), 24 February 1914.

³ William Thomas Stead, "Towards the United States of Europe. Sir Max Waechter's Conference at Rome," *The Review of Reviews* 39 (March 1909): 231. For accounts of the conference see: *1er congrès de la fédération européenne: Compte rendu sommaire des Séances du 16 au 20 Mai 1909*

Novikov, two fellow campaigners for European unity, and in 1913, shortly before the outbreak of World War I, institutionalised his scheme in the form of a membership organisation in London, that in the fifteen months of its existence before the outbreak of war put an end to it, attracted a membership of 20,000 in Britain alone. As I have demonstrated elsewhere,⁴ this early British scheme constituted much more than a fringe group of pro-European enthusiasts, as which it has often been regarded, but a beginning mass movement, internationally connected, with a network extending far into the fabric of British society, including by the outbreak of war no less than a tenth of the members of both Houses of Parliament and a significant part of the Armed Forces leadership (as well as with James Ramsay MacDonald a future Prime Minister), that had it not been curtailed by the guns of August, was on its best way to become a significant force in British politics. While, on the face of it, a failure as it could not prevent the war nor bring about European Federation, its significance lies in the fact that it was a forerunner of, and a model for, more durable formations thereafter.

Shortly before finalising that manuscript, I came across a completely different aspect of the ‘education of public opinion’ that was part of the League’s public diplomacy campaign: Sir Max Pemberton’s 1912 novel *War and the Woman* (London: Cassell & Co, 1912, 2nd ed. 1914), published in the United States as *Swords Reluctant* (New York: G. W. Dillingham, 1912) and serialised in several Australian newspapers in 1914 and 1915 (fig. 1). In this extraordinary *roman-à-clef* about the early-twentieth-century peace movement in general and Waechter’s campaign in particular, the popular and prolific author of adventure and mystery novels (1863–1950) portrays a fictitious Sir Jules Achon, founder of the *International Arbitration League*, travelling on his yacht *Wanderer* to campaign for a European federation, closely resembling Waechter, his *Grand Tour de l’Europe* with the *S. Y. Rovenska* and the pre-war *European Unity League*. It is the aim of this article to analyse Pemberton’s semi-fictitious account of the *European Unity League*, which clearly shows the popularity of Waechter’s organisation in the years immediately preceding World War I, decipher the narrative and establish

(Rome: Forzani, 1909); *La fédération européenne: discours d’inauguration du Prince de Cassano* (Rome: Forzani, 1909).

4 Ulrich Tiedau, “Max Waechter, Anglo-German rapprochement and the European Unity League (1906–1924),” in *Visions and ideas of Europe during the First World War (Ideas beyond Borders. Studies in Transnational Intellectual History)*, ed. by Jan Vermeiren and Matthew d’Auria (London: Routledge, 2019), pp. 112–49.

what additional information it can reveal on the League's history and significance, as well as to assess the popular novel as an artefact in its own right, against the literary background of its time.



Fig. 1: Cover image of the British edition of Max Pemberton's *War and the Woman* (London, New York, Toronto, Melbourne: Cassell & Co., 1914), printed in large numbers as part of Cassell's famous *Sixpenny Novels* series.

Dedicated to the Scottish-American pacifist Andrew Carnegie and acknowledging the “generous help given to this book and its purpose” by Waechter and his right hand Sir Francis Trippel, the *European Unity League*'s first secretary, in the foreword, the fictional storyline of the novel is both a packing thriller and a fine analysis of (significant parts of) the international peace movement and the issues at stake at the same time, Anglo-German rapprochement, European Federation and the distinction between ‘old’ and ‘new’ pacifism in particular.

To the best of my knowledge *Swords Reluctant* or *War and the Woman* has neither been dealt with from a historical nor from a literary angle before, as Pemberton's work in general has received little critical attention. Monographic treatises, to the best of my knowledge, do not exist, but his work figures prominently in Hugh Greene's edition of *The rivals of Sherlock Holmes* (1970) and related follow up publications,⁵ as well as in portraits and analyses of late-Victorian and Edwardian popular reading culture,⁶ although neither mention Pemberton's peace novel specifically; nor does William Crewdson's 1995 survey article of Pemberton's publications in the *Antiquarian Book Monthly*, although it touches on almost all of his other pre-war books at least briefly.⁷ This is all the more astonishing as of all of Pemberton's forty-seven pre-war novels, *Swords Reluctant* (the forty-third) really is the one that is suited to challenge the commonly heard assessment that Pemberton had been little more than a "literary opportunist" who was only emulating successful authors like Robert Louis Stevenson or Rider Haggard with a view to catering to what he estimated to be the mass public's reading taste.⁸ Then again, Pemberton himself does not mention his peace novel in his autobiographical recollections, published in 1936,⁹ either, probably because the caesura that the Great War presented had rendered his pre-war pacifist thoughts redundant.

Pemberton's short stories, on the other hand, have been carefully edited and analysed in Afroditi Panaghis' thesis from 1978, the introduction of which provides important insights for a study of Pemberton's novels too.¹⁰ So do contemporary newspapers and book trade magazines, especially for the novel's reception. Some relevant correspondence has been preserved in his friend and

5 Hugh Greene, *The rivals of Sherlock Holmes: Early Detective Stories* (London, Sydney and Toronto: The Bodley Head, 1970); Hugh Greene, *More Rivals of Sherlock Holmes* (London: Bodley Head, 1971); Hugh Greene, *The Crooked Counties: Further Rivals of Sherlock Holmes* (London: Bodley Head, 1973).

6 For example Christopher Hilliard, *To Exercise our Talents: The Democratization of Writing in Britain*, Harvard Historical Studies, vol. 150 (Harvard University Press, 2006); Peter Keating, *The Haunted Study: A Social History of the English Novel 1875–1914* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1989).

7 William H. P. Crewdson, "Max Pemberton," *Antiquarian Book Monthly*, 22, no. 1, issue 248 (January 1995): 10–15.

8 So for instance: Peter Keating, *The Haunted Study*, p. 344: "Pemberton's literary opportunism"; Christopher Hilliard, *To Exercise our Talents*, p. 25: "moved into writing unabashedly derivative novels – initially imitations of Robert Louis Stevenson and Rider Haggard."

9 Max Pemberton, *Sixty Years Ago and After* (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1936).

10 Afroditi Panayoti Panaghis, *An Edition and Study of Max Pemberton's Short Stories*, Ph. D. thesis, Pennsylvania State University, 1978.

associate Alfred Harmsworth's (Lord Northcliffe's) papers, kept in the Western Manuscripts collection of the British Library,¹¹ whereas little of relevance for this novel can be found in Pemberton's own archive, kept in the Fales Manuscript Collection at New York University.¹²

As I believe I can demonstrate, of all of Pemberton's novels *Swords Reluctant* deserves special attention because it was not just yet another bestseller thrown onto the market by an adept author (that too) but because, quite unusually, it carried with it another purpose, a literary-propagandistic one for the specific form of pacifism and Europeanism put forward since 1906 by Waechter. It is also suited to challenge common assumptions about early-twentieth-century Pacifism and provides new insights into the movement for Anglo-German rapprochement preceding World War I and the origins of British pro-European thought.

2 Max Pemberton (1863–1950)

Max Pemberton was one of the first very popular authors brought forward by the “democratisation of literature” in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, as part of the general broadening of the strata participating in cultural life. Among the causes behind the rapid expansion of the print market to a mass audience were the arrival of almost universal literacy amongst the British public as a consequence of the 1870 Elementary Education Act and other reform legislation on the one hand, and the introduction of the forty-eight hours working week as the result of trade union campaigns and labour market regulation on the other, which together for the first time had delivered working people with significant leisure time at hand.¹³ Plenty of new literary periodicals like the *Strand*, *Pearson's*, *Cassell's*, *Harmsworth's*, the *Windsor* and the *Royal* magazines competed

¹¹ British Library. Western Manuscripts. Correspondence and papers of Alfred Charles William Harmsworth, Viscount Northcliffe (1865–1922), journalist and proprietor of the *Evening News*, the *Daily Mail* and *The Times*; 1880–1922; vol. XXV (ff. 1–184), Sir Max Pemberton, *Correspondence, 1905–1922* (Add MS 62177); vol. XV (ff. 1–132), Sir Francis Trippel, *Correspondence, 1908–1919* (Add MS 62167); vol. LXIV (ff. 1–203), Sir Ralph (Norman Angell) Lane, *Correspondence, 1904–1921* (Add MS 62216).

¹² *Guide to the Fales Manuscript Collections, ca. 1700–2000* (MSS.001), http://dlib.nyu.edu/findingaids/html/fales/fales_man/dscaspace_ref13.html#aspace_ref3057, accessed 14 July 2019.

¹³ Karl Mannheim, *The democratization of culture: Essays on the Sociology of Culture*. Collected Works of Karl Mannheim, vol. VII (Abingdon: Routledge, 1997), pp. 171–246; D. L. LeMahieu, *A Culture for Democracy: Mass Communication and the Cultivated Mind in Britain Between the Wars* (Oxford: Clarendon: 1988); Hilliard, *To Exercise our Talents*, p. 5.

for stories to feed to the “new reading public”,¹⁴ an “ever-increasing company drawn from what we commonly call the lower middle class and the working class”,¹⁵ devouring what a fresh generation of authors, sustained by the new profession of literary agents, produced in quick succession. Circulation libraries also grew in number and popularity and added to the demand.¹⁶ The average number of novels published annually in Britain rose exponentially, from 429 in 1875 over 755 in 1886 to 1,315 in 1894, beginning a novel boom that would continue to grow almost exponentially until World War I.¹⁷

Pemberton published his first novel, *The diary of a Scoundrel*, in 1891, in the same year in which the *Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* by his friend and associate Arthur Conan Doyle was serialized in the *Strand* magazine.¹⁸ Of almost equal fame then, if somewhat obscure today, he published forty-seven novels until 1914, including one co-written with G. K. Chesterton.¹⁹ Born in Edgbaston in 1863 to a Birmingham brass foundry owner, Pemberton was educated at St Albans School and Merchant Taylors’ School. After graduating in law from Caius College, Cambridge, he married Alice Tussaud, granddaughter of Madame Marie Tussaud, the founder of the famous London wax museum. He was a lifelong friend of Alfred (“Alf”) Harmsworth’s, the later press baron of Fleet Street (Lord Northcliffe), proprietor of mass circulation newspapers like the *Daily Mail*, *The Times*, the *Evening News*, the *Sunday Weekly Dispatch* and many other British newspapers, in the years preceding World War I controlling forty percent of the British newspaper market.²⁰ The two had met in their youth through their joined interest in cycling through the English countryside and in the mid-1880s shared a flat for a while, writing for *Tit-bits* (*from all the interesting Books, Periodicals, and Newspapers of the World*), George Newnes’ weekly mass circulation magazine that blazed the trail for the novel form of popular journalism on which Harmsworth

14 Hugh Greene, *The Rivals of Sherlock Holmes*, p. 9.

15 Hilliard, *To Exercise our Talents*, p. 16.

16 Panaghis, *An Edition and Study of Max Pemberton’s Short Stories*, p. 4.

17 Hilliard, *To Exercise our Talents*, p. 16.

18 From 1904 to 1907 the two friends, together with a Bertram Fletcher Robinson, had been members of the secretive literary circle *Our Society*, before Robinson passed away at young age, leading Pemberton to finish Robertson’s notes into an adventure story set in anarchist circles across Europe, *Wheels of Anarchy* (1908).

19 See the bibliography of Pemberton’s published and unpublished works in Panaghis, *An edition and study of Max Pemberton’s short stories*, pp. 254–64.

20 John M. McEwen, “The National Press During the First World War: Ownership and Circulation,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, 17 (1982): 466f., 40–71, 747. Cp. J. Lee Thompson, *Politicians, the Press, & Propaganda: Lord Northcliffe & the Great War, 1914–1919* (Kent, OH, and London: The Kent State University Press, 1999), p. 2; Ian Budge et al., *The New British Politics*, p. 319.

would subsequently build his press empire.²¹ When their professional ways parted, Pemberton took on the role of editor of the new weekly boys magazine *Chums*,²² which was started in 1892 by Cassell & Company (and also released in annual editions, until 1941) and became a successful competitor to the long-established *Boy's Own Paper* (1879–1967, with predecessors under similar titles since 1855) after serializing Pemberton's novel *The Iron Pirate* in 1892, as well as Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* two years later (1894).

Published in book form in 1893, *The Iron Pirate* became Pemberton's largest commercial success, a bestseller resembling the style of Jules Verne,²³ that compelled him to leave the boys' journal behind and go down further the route of writing romances, adventure and mystery adventure for a mass audience. *The Iron Pirate* was the story of buccaneers terrorising the Atlantic by using a great gas-driven ironclad, which could outpace the navies of the world. Other notable works of the highly versatile author included *The Impregnable City* (1895), set in a fortified citadel in the Pacific which repulses both the French and Russian fleets, and *Captain Black* (1911), a sequel to *The Iron Pirate*, both of which sold especially well.²⁴ He also "had a serious interest in criminology which he turned to good account in many of his books" and in addition to his novels and journalistic work "tried his talents in playwriting, especially farcical comedies, which were in great demand in those days."²⁵ Between 1896 and 1906, Pemberton further edited *Cassell's Magazine*, in which capacity he published the early works of popular writers like R. Austin Freeman, Clifford Ashdown, William Le Queux, and his own, before joining his friend Harmsworth's soaring business as a director and regular staff writer for the *Daily Mail*.

Greene (1970) characterises him as "one of the now, I suppose, almost extinct breed of clubman journalist, a bit of a dandy (Lord Northcliffe admired his 'fancy

²¹ Martin Conboy, *Journalism. A Critical History* (London: Sage, 2004), p. 150.

²² John Sutherland, *The Stanford Companion to Victorian Fiction* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989), p. 496; *Chums. The 48 Annuals and the Storypapers*, <http://www.collectingbooksandmagazines.com/chums.html>, accessed 14 July 2019.

²³ William H. P. Crewdson, "Max Pemberton," 10–15: "Verne-like"; John Sutherland, *The Stanford Companion to Victorian Fiction* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989), p. 496: "Jules Verne-like story of imaginative adventure".

²⁴ Sutherland, *The Stanford Companion*, p. 496.

²⁵ William H. P. Crewdson, "Max Pemberton," 10–15; Dorothy Glover and Graham Greene, *Victorian Detective Fiction* (London, Sydney and Tokyo: The Bodley Head, 1966); Ellery Queen, *The Detective Short Story* (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1942); Ellery Queen, *Queen's Quorum: A History of the Detective-Drime Short Story as Revealed by the 106 Most Important Books Published in this Field Since 1845* (London: Gollancz, 1958).

vests'), moving gaily [in the original sense of the word] and elegantly between Fleet Street and the Savage Club."²⁶ He also regularly contributed to *The Illustrated London News*, *Society* and *Vanity Fair*, whose famous cartoonist 'Spy' (Sir Leslie Ward) also depicted him (fig. 2). Later on, after World War I, Pemberton would also write the first biography of Lord Northcliffe, after the press magnate's passing in 1922.²⁷ A new role for him was that of one of the first professional writing teachers in the country. Financed by Northcliffe, Pemberton in 1920 became founding director of the London School of Journalism (which is still in existence),²⁸ successfully institutionalising the teaching of writing in Britain, for which, in 1928, he was knighted by George V.

Having catered for a mass taste with patriotic novels like *Pro Patria* (1901), in which French armies tried to invade the British homeland via a clandestine tunnel dug under the Channel,²⁹ as well as *The Giant's Gate* in the same year, in which the French were attacking with advanced submarines, both representatives of the then popular genre of invasion and future war literature, there was not necessarily a suspicion that Pemberton might become drawn to Pacifism and the movement for European Federation. And this certainly would not have been the case with traditional forms of the anti-war movement; what seems to have caught Pemberton's attention was a new 'rational' and economically argued form of Pacifism – to that, ironically enough, important contributions came from within Northcliffe's usually jingoistic press empire.

²⁶ Greene, *The Rivals of Sherlock Holmes*, 11.

²⁷ Max Pemberton, *Lord Northcliffe. A Memoir* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, [1922]).

²⁸ A convolute of lecture notes and courses of journalism lessons by Max Pemberton is held by the British Library (shelfmark W. P. 7113).

²⁹ *Pro Patria* was part of the anti-Channel tunnel propaganda of the late-Victorian period; Daniel Pick, *War Machine: The Rationalisation of Slaughter in the Modern Age* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2nd ed. 1996), pp. 123–26.



Fig. 2: Max Pemberton, by the famous cartoonist “Spy” (Sir Lesley Ward) from *Vanity Fair*, reproduced in Max Pemberton, *Sixty Years Ago and After* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1936), after p. 152.

3 Early-Twentieth-Century Peace Movement

The early twentieth century saw a peak of the British and international peace movement, an umbrella term for a great number of ideologically heterogeneous groupings and initiatives that felt uneasy about the armaments race and mounting tensions in Europe. Having had a presence in British public life for almost a century, the anti-militarist scene became dominated by a latent divide between ‘Old’ and ‘New’ Pacifism after the turn of the century, with ‘Old Pacifism’ referring to traditional non-resisting Pacifism on moral and religious grounds, as represented for example by the British Peace Society which, founded in 1816, had

emanated from Quaker Circles.³⁰ ‘New Pacifism’ on the other hand claimed to be based on rational, economic arguments and could trace its intellectual origins back to Richard Cobden’s and John Bright’s mid-nineteenth-century campaign for the removal of trade barriers between the nations as the most effective mechanism for preventing war. It had considerable appeal in liberal circles and often combined the propagation of Free Trade with ideas of international organisation.³¹

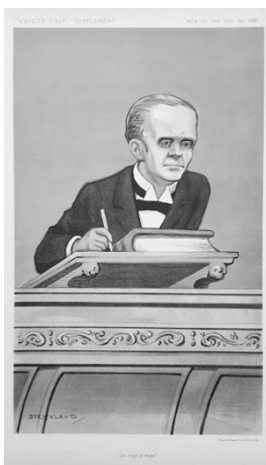


Fig. 3: Norman Angell, ‘an Angel of Peace’ (Man of the Day, no. 1321) by Strickland, *Vanity Fair Supplement*, 6 March 1912.

Building on its neo-Cobdenite roots, the new Pacifist movement experienced a boost when the Anglo-German rivalry in particular came to a heat at the end of the first decade of the twentieth century. The armaments race, especially at sea, and a series of highly perilous political and military emergencies in Europe, from the Moroccan crises to the Balkan wars, had let the European situation, and especially Anglo-German relations, become a powder-keg and caused real invasion

³⁰ Keith Robbins, *The Abolition of War: The ‘Peace Movement’ in Britain, 1914–1919* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1976), p. 7.

³¹ Robbins, *The Abolition of War*, p. 7.

panic in Britain in late 1909,³² when inquiries about the country's readiness to go to war with Germany were held in parliament and the *Daily Mail* published a series of incendiary articles by the hand of Robert Blatchford that when published together in pamphlet form sold more than 1.5 million copies.³³

Concerned about Anglo-German naval rivalry, the journalist Ralph Lane, under his pen name Norman Angell (fig. 3), published his famous pamphlet *Europe's Optical Illusion* in November 1909, worked out to book length in the year after as *The Great Illusion: The Relation of Military Power to National Advantage* (November 1910), which argued that in an economically interconnected world, war would be futile because even the winning side would lose through damage done to international finance:

[M]ilitary and political power give a nation no commercial advantage; it is an economic impossibility for one nation to seize or destroy the wealth of another, or for one nation to enrich itself by subjugating another [...] The idea that addition of territory adds to a nation's wealth is an optical illusion of like nature, since the wealth of conquered territory remains in the hands of the population of such territory.³⁴

War, in other words, in a modern world, did not pay.

32 Howard Weinroth, "Norman Angell and The Great Illusion. An Episode in pre-1914 Pacifism," *The Historical Journal*, XVII (1974), no. 3: 551–574, here: 553; Matthew S. Seligmann, "Intelligence Information and the 1909 Naval Scare. The Secret Foundations of a Public Panic", *War in History*, 17, no. 1 (2010): 37–59.

33 A. J. A. Morris, *The Scaremongers. The Advocacy or War and Rearmament 1896–1914* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), 213; Adrian Bingham, "The Daily Mail and the First World War," *History Today*, 63, no. 12 (December 2013).

34 Norman Angell, *The Great Illusion. A Study on the Relation of Military Power in Nations to Their Economic and Social Advantage* (London: William Heinemann, 1910), vi–viii; Norman Angell, *Europe's Optical Illusion* (London: Simpkin, Marshall & Co., 1909). Also see J. D. B. Miller, "Norman Angell and Rationality in International Relations", in *Thinkers of the Twenty Years' Crisis. Inter-War Idealism Reassessed*, ed. by David Long and Peter Wilson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), pp. 100–21.



Fig. 4: Alfred Harmsworth (Lord Northcliffe) by “Spy” (Sir Leslie Ward), *Vanity Fair*, 16 May 1895.

The Great Illusion became a highly influential international bestseller and founded a new school of thinking about international relations that became known, both admiringly and dismissively, as ‘Norman Angellism’. Although its central theses were partly over-stated and partly under-explained,³⁵ the *Great Illusion*’s out-of-the-box-thinking struck a chord in the tense mood of the time as it seemed to offer a way out of the intractable political situation in Europe, which almost inevitably was leading to war, and found extraordinary resonance in the British public and abroad. Presenting himself as “a sober realist with conservative and business support, rather than an ‘old pacifist’ of leftist and utopian affiliations”,³⁶ it was republished in numerous editions and translations until 1933. The unexpected success was partly due to the influential Keeper of Edward VII’s

³⁵ Martin Ceadel, *Living the Great Illusion: Sir Norman Angell, 1872–1967* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 87.

³⁶ Ceadel, *Living the Great Illusion*, p. 87.

household and *éminence grise* of the period, Lord Esher's (Reginald Brett's) subscribing to Angell's ideas and arranging for its wide dissemination via a newly found institution, named after its sponsor, the industrialist Garton, to study and spread Angell's theories. Angell himself the *Great Illusion* would lead to devote his life to that of a Peace Campaigner, culminating in the award of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1933.

Interestingly, like Pemberton, Angell was an employee of Lord Northcliffe's (fig. 4), editing the continental edition of the *Daily Mail*, a newspaper that was not exactly known for its Pacifism or arguing in favour of Anglo-German rapprochement, as Blatchford's articles and many others show. The *Great Illusion* had a great effect on Northcliffe, if mostly for the reason that the publisher was proud that "one of his editors had written a sensational pamphlet." It had little impact on the *Daily Mail's* editorial policies though, as "Germanophobia remained 'good copy' for many years to come."³⁷ As Angell wrote himself retrospectively: "Northcliffe frequently discussed my book with me, [and] professed to be greatly impressed with it. But as a matter of fact, he never understood what it was about and what really impressed him was that it could be a success without any help from him."³⁸

In a similar vein as Angell, Sir Max Waechter (1836–1924, fig. 5), after having witnessed the belligerent anti-British atmosphere in Germany on a business trip to his country of origin, which in his assessment also originated from the press,³⁹ worried about the deteriorating Anglo-German relations and, from 1906 onwards, put his energy and fortune behind a sustained campaign in favour of a European Federation as a means to prevent war, with Anglo-German rapprochement as its core element. A personal friend of the Kaiser's, whom he met regularly during the Kiel regatta weeks and other yachting occasions, as well as of King Edward VII's, both of whom encouraged him to pursue his ambitious plan, Waechter embarked on a grand tour of European capitals to present his manifesto in person to the remaining sovereign heads of state.

³⁷ Albert Martin, *Sir Norman Angell*. Twayne's World leader series, vol. 79 (Boston: Twayne, 1979), p. 37.

³⁸ Angell to Richard Falk, 28 Nov. 1936, quoted after Martin, *Sir Norman Angell*, pp. 260f., fn. 43.

³⁹ Sir Max Waechter, *How to Abolish War*, 4f.: "I found to my astonishment a strong war-like feeling apparently pervading the whole nation. Probably it was produced by the Press of that country, which, with one or two exceptions, was entirely dominated by the War Party. The idea of the War Party was to smash France completely, seize some of the Channel ports, and then deal with England. The latter was the main object. I made up my mind to do all I could to prevent, if possible the carrying out of this plan."



Fig. 5: 'Max Waechter, Esq., D. L., J. P., High Sherriff of Surrey', painting by Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema, R. A., in: *Royal Academy Pictures 1902: Illustrating the Hundred and Thirty-Forth Exhibition of the Royal Academy* (London, Paris, New York and Melbourne: Cassell and Company Ltd., 1902).

His scheme, which differed from Angell's approach in making an economic case not for mutual disarmament but for a Federation of the states of Europe (as a consequence of which arms reduction would follow automatically), was largely based on the proposal of pooling in one hand, for example that of a permanent conference of the great powers, defence and foreign policy plus introducing a single tariff and free trade across the continent. Apart from in Cobdenism its intellectual roots can be found in the late-nineteenth-century discourse in Liberal circles about federalism and customs union as a means to secure the permanent unity of the Empire, put forward by late-Victorian and Edwardian organisations like the *Imperial Federation League*, the *British Empire League* and the *Tariff Reform League*, from where models for federation and customs union were transferred to the even more pressing question of securing peace in Europe. Together with federal solutions for the Irish question ('home rule'), Michael Burgess has

called this school of thinking the ‘triad’ of British federalist thought (Ireland/Empire/Europe).⁴⁰ John Robert Seeley, the famous historian of Empire, in his influential book *The Expansion of England* (1883) for example, had not only argued for the transformation of the British Empire to a federation in order to secure its continued existence, but also, as early as 1871, for a United States of Europe, and so had the publicist William Thomas Stead and his influential magazine *Review of Reviews* on the eve of the first Hague peace conference (1899).⁴¹ Together with similar proposals from like-minded campaigners on the continent (the Franco-Russian sociologist Jacques Novikov in particular, 1901),⁴² this had paved the way for Waechter’s initiative.

But what brought a commercially successful, ostensibly opportunistic and stylistically “derivative”⁴³ author to write a strong propaganda piece for the anti-war movement? And one that still managed to stay in line with what his faithful audience expected from him, on a controversial topic that possibly could upset that part of his audience that did not subscribe to the views expressed in this work? There was little in his previous forty-two novels that would point to this development.

Pemberton’s taking side has been made pretty obvious by his dedicating the book to Andrew Carnegie on the one hand and acknowledging Waechter, as well as his ally Sir Francis Trippel, in the (brief) foreword “for the generous help given to this book and purpose” on the other,⁴⁴ before adding the obligatory disclaimer for any *roman-à-clef*: “While the characters in it are entirely fictitious, the scheme for the Federation of Europe is wholly due to Sir Max Waechter’s initiative”.

40 Michael Burgess, “‘Empire, Ireland and Europe’. A century of British Federal Ideas,” in *Federalism and Federation in Western Europe*, ed. by Michael Burgess (London: Croom Helm, 1986), pp. 127–52; Michael Burgess, *The British Tradition of Federalism* (Madison, WI: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1995).

41 John Robert Seeley, *The expansion of England*, ed. and with an introduction by John Gross (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 1971); John Robert Seeley, “United States of Europe” (1871), prefaced and edited by Luigi V. Majocchi, *Federalism in the History of Thought*, 31 (1989), no. 2: 159–188.; William Thomas Stead, *The United States of Europe on the Eve of the Parliament of Peace* (New York: Doubleday & McClure, 1899).

42 Yacov Aleksandrovič (Jacques) Novikov, *La Fédération de l’Europe* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1901 [1900]).

43 Hilliard, *To Exercise our Talents*, p. 25.

44 Pemberton, *Swords Reluctant*, p. v. All page numbers after the American edition of the novel, available via *Project Gutenberg*, <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/42763>, accessed 14 July 2019.

Whenever an author feels the need to underline the fictitiousness of their characters, there is reason to doubt this claim,⁴⁵ and the remainder of the acknowledgement (“This scheme has obtained favour at the Courts of the Continent and is warmly approved by many in this country, who realise how inseparably the Peace question is allied to that of the national finance.”) positively identifies the *European Unity League* as inspiration for the novel’s plot, as well as the novel as one meant to support Waechter’s scheme. The “Courts of the Continent” and “many in this country”⁴⁶ also are explicit references to Waechter’s campaign and the alliance with “national finance” refers to Waechter’s scheme for peace dividend and prosperity that would result as a consequence of abandoning the vast armament costs and introducing one tariff across Europe. Or, as his plan is referred to in the novel, “Kill war by commerce – you can’t kill it any other way. Europe’s paying ten per cent taxation as against America for her armies and navies. Make one federated state with no commercial barriers, and you knock the ten per cent down to two. That’s Sir Jules’s notion”.⁴⁷

Pemberton’s unusual taking a political stance, so much in contrast with the author’s previous record, did not go unnoticed by the press. As the *Daily Mail* announced on 2 May 1912, in the very first review that I could locate:

Mr. Norman Angell has found an unexpected ally, an ally who will be very useful to the Cause of Peace. Arguments against war and in favour of the federation of all civilised peoples may convince the intellect of the few. It is by an appeal to their imagination that the many must be converted. A master of popular fiction like Mr. Max Pemberton can bring home to the million the horrors of organised bloodshed and the dangers of the Armed Camp with more effect than all the solid treatises that could be printed or all the closely reasoned addresses that could be delivered in a hundred years.⁴⁸

And further:

That he is quite serious he proves by the few words which he sets on the threshold of the book by way of introduction. The scheme for a European Bond, including, of course, the

⁴⁵ William Amos, “Introduction. Original Sins”, in William Amos, *The Originals. Who’s Really Who in Fiction* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1985), pp. xiii–xx.

⁴⁶ The text does not seem to have been changed for the American edition as “this country” refers to the UK, where the novel has been written.

⁴⁷ Pemberton, *Swords Reluctant*, p. 61. Waechter’s taking the US as a model for the United States of Europe also attracted attention on the other side of the Atlantic, see for example “For United Europe, not to oppose us. ‘Sir Max Waechter to Urge Union of Continental States’. Special Cable to The New York Times,” *The New York Times*, 20 September 1908.

⁴⁸ Anon., “Mr. Max Pemberton’s Peace Novel,” *The Daily Mail*, 2 May 1912, p. 6.

United States [of Europe], is due, he acknowledges, to the initiative of a well-known public man, Sir Max Waechter.⁴⁹

In a similar way, the *Times Literary Supplement* commented on 9 May 1912: “Mr. Max Pemberton has seen a good chance for one of his energetic narratives in the modern peace movement; and particularly in that side of it which connects peace with successful commerce.”⁵⁰ The tragedy of the *Titanic* in the previous month (April 1912), among whose victims was William Thomas Stead, until then the most famous advocate of a European Federation of his day, will also have added to the novel’s appeal, certainly in those circles that were already receptive to pacifist ideas. The *Boston Daily Globe* in its review from 3 August 1912 for example misidentifies the novel’s protagonist Sir Jules Achon as “the late W. T. Stead, who appears under a thin disguise.”⁵¹ In his influential *Review of Reviews*, Stead had repeatedly extended his support to Waechter’s scheme, e. g. in March 1909 stating that “the cause of European federation has secured no such whole-hearted advocate as Sir Max Waechter.”⁵²

One possible explanation, which would stay in line with the common assessment of Pemberton as a prolific and versatile but also “literary opportunistic” writer would be that *War and the Woman* had been commissioned by Waechter, especially as Pemberton, like Stevenson, Conan Doyle, Haggard, Kipling and other contemporary writers, preferred to write on demand.⁵³ But no evidence for this assumption exists in his correspondence, nor in any of material I have seen on Waechter and the *European Unity League*, so that I consider this explanation, while not impossible, to be unlikely. It also would not explain Pemberton’s dedication of the novel to Andrew Carnegie (“Non exercitus neque thesauri praesidia regni sunt verum amici”⁵⁴). At any rate, whether commissioned or not, Pemberton, in the last years preceding World War I, appears to have been a real convert to Angell’s, Waechter’s and Carnegie’s forms of (new) pacifism who likely was introduced to the *European Unity League* via a friend and associate they had in common, the person thanked in Pemberton’s foreword alongside Waechter: Sir Francis Trippel (fig. 6), like Waechter a German-born naturalised Briton, who as

49 Anon., “Mr. Max Pemberton’s Peace Novel,” p. 6.

50 Anon., “List of New Books and Reprints,” *Times Literary Supplement*, 9 May 1912, p. 194.

51 Anon., “World Peace is His Theme. But Love Stories in ‘Swords Reluctant’ Relieves Pemberton’s Book of Any Suspicion of Dryness,” *Boston Daily Globe*, 3 August 1912, p. 7.

52 William Thomas Stead, “Towards the United States of Europe. Sir Max Waechter’s Conference at Rome”, *The Review of Reviews*, 39 (March 1909): 231.

53 Panaghis, *An Edition and Study of Max Pemberton’s Short Stories*, p. 4.

54 “Not armies or treasures are the sign of rulers but friends.”

honorary secretary looked after the day-to-day operations of the League, and like Pemberton stood in Northcliffe's services.



Fig. 6: Press photo of Sir Francis Trippel on the steps of the White House, Washington, 6 May 1922 (in possession of the author).

4 Sir Francis Trippel (1866–1930)

Born in Duisburg in the German Rhineland, Trippel (1866–1930), three years younger than Pemberton, had left his country of origin after his military service to settle in England, first as a teacher of German and French at a school in Southend-on-Sea, of which he later became headteacher. Naturalised in 1892,⁵⁵ he went on to a career as army coach and proprietor of the Military College Richmond (inspected by the University of London), rising to the rank of Major. After his retirement from the army he devoted himself completely to what he called “organisation work, especially fundraising for national, imperial, educational and

⁵⁵ The National Archives hold his naturalisation certificate, no. A12633 (HO 334/33/12633).

philanthropic objects”,⁵⁶ for which he frequently collaborated with Northcliffe’s broadsheet and tabloid newspapers.

The at first sight unlikely collaboration between the Anglo-German fundraiser and the fiercely anti-German publisher who, during the war, would also be in charge of British propaganda in Lloyd George’s government,⁵⁷ had come about on the occasion of the *Daily Mail*’s campaign for the Union Jack Club for members and veterans of the Armed Forces, in which Trippel had taken the lead, a role for which he was ennobled in 1909, on personal suggestion of Edward VII, then still Prince of Wales, the Club’s president.⁵⁸ During his army years, Trippel, “the most cunning of public beggars, able to extract thousands where other men cannot raise pennies,”⁵⁹ had also been involved in raising a Field Force Fund for the *British Empire League* to support Lord Roberts’ army in the Boer War, and, in 1905, carried out what he called a “patriotic mission” on behalf of the Field Marshall, lobbying the headmasters of Public Schools to integrate physical training and miniature rifle practice into their curricula.⁶⁰ Roberts, one of the foremost advocates of military preparations for a future war with Germany, was campaigning for the introduction of conscription in Britain (then one of the few major powers without). In 1906 he also provided a foreword to William Le Queux’s fictionalised

56 Trippel to Northcliffe, 26 October 1914, British Library, Western Manuscripts, Northcliffe papers., vol. XV, Add MS 62167, ff. 73–80.

57 J. Lee Thompson, *Politicians, the Press, & Propaganda. Lord Northcliffe and the Great War* (Kent, OH, and London: The Kent State University Press, 1999).

58 Major H. J. Trippel (ed.), *The Flag. The Book of the Union Jack Club* (London: Daily Mail, 1908). Other causes Trippel organised fundraising campaigns for Harmsworth’s newspapers for included Douglas Mawson’s Antarctic Exploration (1911–1914), the British team for the Olympic Games planned to be held in Berlin in 1916 (cancelled because of the Great War), *The Times* Crystal Palace Fund, the *Daily Mail* Aviation Competitions, the Boy Scout movement and other charitable causes. He also played an important role in academic initiatives like the establishment of new headquarters for the University of London “worthy of the Capital of the Empire” Anon., “London University. The Duke of Bedford’s Gift,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 22 March 1912, p. 14; Anon., “University and Educational Intelligence”, *Nature*, LXXXIX (1912): p. 75) and the foundation of the George Watson Chair for American History in 1921, the first incumbent of which would become Lord Bryce; Viscount Bryce, O. M., *The Study of American History. Being the Inaugural Lecture of the Sir George Watson Chair of American History, Literature and Institutions. With an appendix relating to the foundation* (New York: Macmillan, 1922), p. 48.

59 Anon., “Diary of the War,” *The Sun* (Sydney), 17 March 1915, p. 7.

60 Anon., “Sir Francis Trippel [obituary],” *The Manchester Guardian*, 29 July 1930, p. 15; Anon., “Sir Francis Trippel” [obituary], *The Times* (London), 29 July 1930, p. 16; H. F. Trippel, “Lord Roberts’ National Appeal and the Public Schools,” *The Empire Review*, X, no. 58 (November 1905): 295–307; Trippel to Northcliffe, 26 October 1914, British Library, Western Manuscripts, Northcliffe Papers., vol. XV. Add MS 62167, ff. 73–80 (f. 74).

account of a German invasion of the UK in 1910 that was commissioned by Northcliffe and serialised in the *Daily Mail*.

But like in the case of Norman Angell and Lord Esher, British patriotism and being in favour of strengthening defence was not inconsistent with “a desire to avert an impending conflict between Britain and Germany, either through improving relations between the two countries or by maintaining such naval dominance that it would deter the Kaiser from aggressive actions.”⁶¹ Since 1911 Trippel was also secretary to the King Edward VII British-German Foundation that Sir Ernest Cassel, Edward’s personal banker, of Anglo-German origin himself, had bestowed in memory of his late friend, with the aim of fostering better understanding between the two antagonistic countries, and Lord Esher as Chairman.⁶² The Royal Keeper, who had also been good friends with William Thomas Stead, “feared that a war between the major powers would sound the death knell for the British Empire”⁶³ and Pacifism and Anglo-German rapprochement thus also offered a way for preserving the *status quo*, with reasonable adjustments. In a public lecture at Cambridge University in 1912 Esher had even drawn a direct comparison between Seeley’s *Expansion of England* and Angell’s *Great Illusion*, expressing the hope that among the audience present there may be one “who, stimulated by the discussions of the ‘Great Illusion’ will do for the cause of European peace what Cecil Rhodes [on the basis of Seeley’s book] did for the further expansion of our Empire.”⁶⁴

Safeguarding the continued existence of the Empire with peaceful means seems to have been the motivation for a patriotic writer like Pemberton too,⁶⁵ as well as for Trippel and for Waechter, who in his manifesto had explicitly warned

61 Michael Humphries, “‘Perfectly Secret and Perfectly Democratic’. Lord Esher and the Society of Islanders, 1909–14,” *English Historical Review*, CXXVII (2012), no. 528: 1156–1179, here: 1176.

62 Anon., “King Edward VII Foundation – Sir Ernest Cassel’s Gift,” *The Times* (London), 13 May 1911, p. 10; Ceadel, *Living the Great Illusion*, p. 90; Steven Wai-Meng Siak, *Germanophilism in Britain. Non-Governmental Elites and the Limits to Anglo-German Antagonism*, Ph. D. London School of Economics and Political Science, 1997; Humphries, “‘Perfectly Secret and Perfectly Democratic,” 1176, fn. 101.

63 Humphries, “‘Perfectly Secret and Perfectly Democratic,” 1177.

64 Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge. *The Papers of Viscount Esher* [Public lecture in] Cambridge, 2 December 1912, ESHR 22/4–5, f. 21.

65 See Panaghis assessment of Pemberton as “Politically conservative [but] nevertheless flexible on the matter of reasonable changes and modernizations of various life systems and of society in general. He did not approve of revolution, or revolutionary movements. Overthrown kingdoms and rebellious mobs trying to rule do not make for a better life”; Panaghis, *An Edition and Study of Max Pemberton’s Short Stories*, 42.

against the threat of a major war leading to the loss of the British dominions,⁶⁶ although as Anglo-Germans these two likely also had an emotional involvement here. What further bound the unlikely group of friends together was an interest that Harmsworth, Pemberton, Waechter and Trippel shared. All of them were early adopters of motoring, and took a keen interest in car racing as well as in early aviation that was burgeoning at the time and supported by them financially.⁶⁷ They regularly met in the *Royal Automobile Club* on Pall Mall and Pemberton would later edit one of the first motoring magazines and, as well as, in 1934, write a biography of the car engineer Sir Henry Royce of Rolls-Royce.⁶⁸

Like Waechter, who before he embarked on his campaign for European Federation had been vice-president of the *British Empire League*, a successor organisation to the *Imperial Federation League*, that sought to secure the permanent unity of the Empire, Trippel came from a British Imperialist background. In 1912 he had been honorary organising secretary of Joseph Chamberlain's *Tariff Reform League* that sought to establish Imperial Preference in the British tariff system with a view to transforming the Empire into a single trading bloc,⁶⁹ before moving on in the same capacity to Waechter's *European Unity League* in 1913, a very practical indication for how thought patterns about federation and customs union were transferred from one context to the other. The overlap and unresolved conflict between the two federation projects, Waechter had to concede himself in an interview with the *Daily Telegraph* in February 1914, stating that "it is possible that the federation of the British Empire must precede the federation of Europe, of which it will form part."⁷⁰

In the novel represented by the figure of Rupert Trevelle, Pemberton's account reveals Trippel's central importance for the organisational success of the

66 Sir Max Waechter, *After the War. The United States of Europe*, by Sir Max Waechter, D. L., J. P. (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1916), p. 31 (a copy in National Archives, FO 395/55/213032).

67 Max Pemberton, *Sixty Years Ago and After*, 197 ff. On the occasion of the 1909 aviators' meeting in Rheims, Waechter supported the French flight pioneer Robert Esnault-Pelterie for example, who in Pemberton's novel makes a passing appearance as 'Issy-Ferrault' meeting an accident of a flight day in 'Montey'; Pemberton: *Swords Reluctant*, p. 266.

68 Max Pemberton, *The life of Sir Henry Royce Bart M. I. E. E., M. I. M. E.: with some chapters from the stories of the late Charles S. Rolls and Claude Johnson* (London: Selwyn & Blount, n. d. [1934]).

69 British Library. Western Manuscripts. Robert Cecil papers, vol. XC: June 1910–June 1913 (Add MS 51160), ff. 178–84.

70 'Sir Max Waechter and European Unity. View of sovereigns', *Daily Telegraph*, 23 February 1914.

European Unity League. Characterising Trippel's *alter ego* as a "polished gentleman" and "[n]ot a lover of money, but a persistent seeker after social credit, when it could be gained by worthy ends",⁷¹ Pemberton depicts Trippel as "Sir Jules's right hand"⁷² and "the life and soul"⁷³ of the *European Unity League* who managed to put his thirty year older friend's initiative on its feet in practical organisational terms: "And here he was in these critical days by the side of the man whose genius might well be the salvation of his fellow-countrymen".⁷⁴

What is more, Pemberton's semi-fictional account, the full accuracy of which of course is difficult to establish, suggests that it was Trippel with his public appeal and fundraising qualities ("He's got nearly twenty thousand pounds for us in five days"⁷⁵) who convinced Waechter to transform his high-level elitist initiative into a popular mass organisation, which Carl Pegg in his history of the *Evolution of the European Idea* had called Waechter's "most impressive effort".⁷⁶ Until the two met, Waechter, as a member of Britain's financial and societal elite, had worked quietly among the good and the great of Europe and tended to overestimate the power, influence and sole-decision making power of the sovereign heads of state. In Pemberton's story, his working method is described as follows:

Sir Jules Achon was a man of infinite patience and superb tenacity. Few but his intimate friends knew much about him. He has amassed a great fortune as a shipbroker, and now with advancing years, he devoted the bulk of that fortune to this tremendous project of European Federation. Yet it was all done without any claptrap whatever. The newspapers had hardly heard of it. There was no writer of eminence to talk it up. Sir Jules worked in great places, but he had worked silently [...].⁷⁷

Trippel, on the other hand, with his experience of mass campaigns for Northcliffe's tabloids and sense for how to appeal to the public, turned Waechter's top-down approach upside down by bringing in the power of Fleet Street and a bottom-up approach to building a popular membership organisation. His influence on Waechter and the course of the *European Unity League* is represented in the novel in form of a conversation between the American war contractor Faber and Trevelle:

⁷¹ Pemberton, *Swords Reluctant*, p. 237.

⁷² Pemberton, *Swords Reluctant*, p. 208.

⁷³ Pemberton, *Swords Reluctant*, p. 231.

⁷⁴ Pemberton, *Swords Reluctant*, p. 237.

⁷⁵ Pemberton, *Swords Reluctant*, p. 231.

⁷⁶ Carl H. Pegg, *Evolution of the European Idea, 1914–1932* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1983), 6f.

⁷⁷ Pemberton, *Swords Reluctant*, p. 81.

“What you have to do, Mr. Trevelle, is to educate the people; but I’m telling you nothing new. You know that as well as I do.” – “Most certainly I do; I have told Sir Jules so some ten thousand times. He has a great idea, but he must have public opinion behind it. The people make war to-day, not the princes.” – “But princes have a say in it, sure.” – “They do when the people are willing that they should”.⁷⁸

So it seems reasonable to defer from Pemberton’s account that the transformation of Waechter’s elitist project into a public campaign and mass membership organisation originated from and was implemented by Trippel. His name is also reported in Bertha von Suttner’s regular column in the Swiss pacifist journal *Die Friedens-Warte*, although misrepresented as “Sir Francis Temple”.⁷⁹ Waechter eventually came to embrace Trippel’s approach and regard it as complementary to his own, as for example a letter to Robert Cecil, then Undersecretary of State in the Foreign Office, shows, in which he presented himself as “being in touch with both the leaders and the masses of the people.”⁸⁰ He also bankrolled all salaries and expenses of the new pressure group, which operated out of 39 St James’s Street, Piccadilly, an address Trippel also had used for some of his previous campaigns.⁸¹

The imminent foundation of the *European Unity League* Waechter announced in the *Fortnightly Review* and the *Deutsche Revue*, two of the most prominent and influential magazines in Britain and Germany of the time, in May 1913, in which all readers were urged to join the new organisation,⁸² a move that Suttner in a beautiful formulation placed into the series of pacifist demands of the time but also into the ever increasing series of ‘signs of the – still embryonic, but already vibrantly pulsating – development process of the European Union’ (“doch zugleich mehrt sich auch die Serie der Zeichen des – noch embryonalen, aber schon lebenspulsierenden – Werdeprozesses der europäischen Union”).⁸³ In

78 Pemberton, *Swords Reluctant*, p. 167f.

79 Bertha von Suttner, *Der Kampf um die Vermeidung des Weltkriegs*, vol. 2, 481f. (May 1913). The subtitle of *Die Friedens-Warte*, ed. by Alfred Hermann Fried, was *Zeitschrift für zwischenstaatliche Organisation* (“Journal for International Organisation”).

80 National Archives, Kew. Waechter to Robert Cecil, 19 June 1916, FO 395/55/213053.

81 British Library. Western Manuscripts. Northcliffe papers, vol. LXIV (Add MS 62167): Sir Francis Trippel, Correspondence, 1908–1919, ff. 1–203.

82 Max Waechter, “England, Germany, and the Peace of Europe,” *Fortnightly Review*, 93 (1 May 1913): 829–841. The same article appeared in German as ‘England, Deutschland und der Friede Europas’ in *Deutsche Revue* (Mai 1913). See also Max Waechter, “The Federation of Europe. Is it Possible?,” *Contemporary Review* (Nov. 1912): 621–630, and, for Angell’s interest in Waechter’s scheme, their letter exchange from 1912–1914. Ball State University, Muncie, IN. Special Collections. Sir Norman Angell papers, box 26, folder 56.

83 Bertha von Suttner, *Der Kampf um die Vermeidung des Weltkriegs*, vol. 2, 481f. (May 1913).

early 1914, the announcement was followed by full-page advertisements in two dozen national newspapers, including the front page (!) of Northcliffe's *Daily Mail* from 7 February 1914, proclaiming the *European Unity League's* founding manifesto (fig. 9).⁸⁴ The spectacular campaign did not fail to get noticed on the other side of the Atlantic too, where the *Wall Street Journal* commented:

A novel form of propaganda has just been launched with success in England by Sir Max Waechter [...] He has issued page advertisements in all the principal daily newspapers, proclaiming that the time has come when the different countries of Europe must federate on one basis, and on one basis alone – in future there must be no war. The experiment cost him hundreds of thousands of dollars, but it has succeeded in arousing the British to something like action.⁸⁵

And the part of “writer of eminence to talk it [the *European Unity League's* campaign] up”, that according to the novel's account was lacking so far,⁸⁶ was of course the role Pemberton had carved out for himself.



Fig. 7: Hiram Maxim, inventor of the machine gun and model for ‘Faber’, by “Spy”, *Vanity Fair*, 15 December 1904.

⁸⁴ Max Waechter, “The European Unity League. An instrument for carrying out the greatest and most important reform,” *Daily Mail*, 7 February 1914, p. 1; also in *The Times* (London), 31 January 1914, p. 6; *The Standard*, 19 February 1914, p. 17, and numerous other national newspapers.

⁸⁵ Brooklyn Eagle, “Advertising a New Form of Movement for Peace,” *Wall Street Journal*, 16 May 1914.

⁸⁶ Pemberton, *Swords Reluctant*, p. 81.

5 The storyline

Pemberton's fictitious storyline reflects two contemporary pacifist discourses, Waechter's campaign for European federation along the lines of the United States of America as a means for securing peace and prosperity in Europe ("death of war by commerce" in Sir Jules' words), and the inventor and arms manufacturer Hudson Maxim's campaign against pacifism, Andrew Carnegie and the arbitration movement in particular, in the United States. Incidentally or not, drawing on two debates on different sides of the Atlantic also made the book suitable for both markets.⁸⁷

While Achon (Waechter) himself does not play a large role and remains largely the grand inspirational figure in the background, the storyline's two main characters are the American gunmaker John Sebastian Faber, an immensely wealthy manufacturer of arms, who has no scruples about making his fortune by selling rifles to all parties. He embodies the "War" from the novel's title, whereas his antagonist, the young peace activist from Achon's entourage Gabrielle Sylvester is "the Woman". As can be expected from a popular romancier like Pemberton, the two, against all odds, feel attracted to each other, and their romance is what keeps the storyline and the novel's purpose together. As the *Times Literary Supplement* commented:

For such a novel there is only one way: you must have a Nonconformist girl who is an enthusiast for peace, and a millionaire who has made his fortune out of guns, and make them fall in love with each other. But war and peace and the 'scheme' adumbrated, which – so the author announces – has 'obtained favour at the Courts of the Continent,' are really of much less importance than the story, which, we need hardly say, Mr. Max Pemberton keeps going with great verve (with a glimpse of the horrors of war in the Balkans).⁸⁸

The war contractor's name is of course a reference to the concept of *homo faber* (Latin for 'the tool maker' or 'man the maker'), the idea that human beings are able to control their environment and their destiny as a result of the use of tools.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Some newspapers had initially also misreported Waechter's proposal as being directed against America. See 'For United Europe, not to oppose us: Sir Max Waechter to Urge Union of Continental States. Thinks Plan Will Succeed. First Step Then, He Says, Would Be to Seek Treaty of Reciprocity with This Government. Special Cable to The New York Times', *The New York Times*, 20 September 1908, p. C1.

⁸⁸ Anon., "List of New Books and Reprints," *Times Literary Supplement*, 9 May 1912, p. 194.

⁸⁹ Henri Bergson has referred to the concept in his *Creative Evolution* (1907), which had just been published in English in 1911. Max Scheler, Hannah Arendt and Max Frisch would later use

It is not difficult to recognise the brothers Hiram and Hudson Maxim as real-life models for Faber,⁹⁰ both prominent American inventors of war technology and dealers in armaments. Hiram, the inventor of the machine gun – rendered in the novel as “the famous ‘Faber’ magazine rifle, the greatest instrument of war the twentieth century had yet seen”⁹¹ – had set up his manufacture on this side of the Atlantic, in Crayford, outside of London (fig. 7). His brother Hudson, a chemist whom Thomas Edison had referred to as “most versatile man of America”,⁹² was well-known on both sides of the Atlantic too (fig. 8). For a while he had joined his brother’s armaments workshop, improving smokeless gunpowder, before returning to the United States and inventing a number of high explosives that he licensed to the DuPont company. In the years preceding World War I he also “carved out a second career as a public speaker and inveterate writer of magazine articles and letters to the editor, freely venting his opinions on [...] invention, progress, and public affairs”.⁹³ In an anti-Pacifist crusade, starting in 1911, he targeted Andrew Carnegie’s arbitration movement in particular and argued vociferously for American rearmament.⁹⁴

it to some fame. A Lady Faber had also already played a role in Pemberton’s 1894 novel *The Ripening Rubies*.

90 The *Boston Daily Globe* did so for example in its review article “World Peace is His Theme. But Love Stories in ‘Swords Reluctant’ Relieves Pemberton’s Book of Any Suspicion of Dryness,” *Boston Daily Globe*, 3 August 1912, p. 7.

91 Pemberton, *Swords Reluctant*, p. 156.

92 Clifton Johnson, “Preface,” in Hudson Maxim, *Reminiscences and Comments* (London: William Heinemann, 1914), pp. v–vi, here: p. v; Iain MacCallum, *Hiram and Hudson Maxim. Pioneers of Modern Warfare* (London: Chatham, 1999), p. 201; Arthur Hawkey, *The Amazing Hiram Maxim. An Intimate Biography* (Staplehurst: Spellmount, 2001), p. 153.

93 Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, DE. Manuscript and Archives department, Hudson Maxim papers (1851–1925), 4, http://dla.library.upenn.edu/dla/pacscl/ead.pdf?id=PACSCCL_HML_2147, accessed 14 July 2019.

94 See e. g. anon., “Can’t Stop Wars, Says Hudson Maxim. Gun Inventor Tells Economic Club That Arbitration Must Inevitably Be a Failure,” *New York Times*, 23 May 1911, p. 5; anon., “Waitful Watching Attacked by Maxim. Carnegie Peace Foundation Is Blamed for Failure of U. S. to Act in Mexico,” *New York Times*, 17 April 1914, p. 3; anon., “Maxim Urges Greatest Navy. Fears Pacifists May Crucify Uncle Sam,” *Boston Daily Globe*, 16 October 1915, p. 7. His 1915 book *Defenseless America* (New York: Hearst’s International Library, 1915), in which he ridiculed Carnegie and a great number of other progressive era pacifists, would even be turned into the propaganda film, *The Battle Cry of Peace* (1915); Eric van Schaack, “The Coming of the Hun! American Fears of a German Invasion, 1918,” *The Journal of American Culture* 28.3 (September 2005): 284–92.

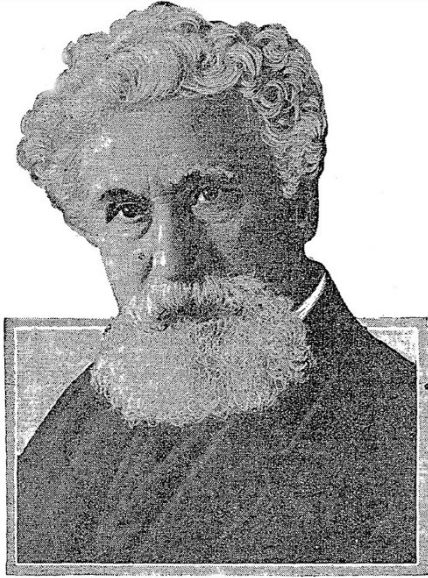


Fig. 8: Hudson Maxim, inventor of smokeless pulver and model for “Faber”, after Edward Marshall, “Explosives have key to the war: Hudson Maxim Says Each Hard-Won Success of Conflict Has Been Victory for High Explosives”, *New York Times*, 11 November 1915, SM7.

Pemberton attributes Faber’s entrepreneurial success largely to the American’s rationality. Ruling over a city in Charleston, South Carolina, where his works employed more than five thousand men, the character is presented as the “high priest of the temples of labour his own brain had built up” and spoken about as “‘the new Krupp,’ the young genius in steel who could make or mar the fortunes of empires”,⁹⁵ referring to the prominent German armaments producer. Faber’s life was also regularly reported in the newspapers, “many of which he owned”,⁹⁶ pointing to an element of Northcliffe in this composite character, personifying “War”. Still, “women pursued him relentlessly, remembering his eleven millions”.⁹⁷

Apart from the romance between Faber and Gabrielle, which is driving the plot, and which his faithful readership will have expected from Pemberton, the narrative also contrasts the two magnates Achon and Faber with each other.

⁹⁵ Pemberton, *Swords Reluctant*, p. 108.

⁹⁶ Pemberton, *Swords Reluctant*, p. 108.

⁹⁷ Pemberton, *Swords Reluctant*, p. 108.

Whereas Achon believes that war can only be abolished by trade, and is striving for the federation of Europe, Faber desires peace too, but considers it his business to prepare the nations for war. In spite of his cynicism and ruthlessness, his character is more complex than that of a prototypical militarist and war profiteer though. Asked by Trelville about his opinion of Carnegie and the arbitration movement, Faber responds:

I never turn my back on brains wherever I find them. These earnest men, some of them men of genius, are educating the people of the whole world. I wish them God-speed! They are as truly defending their country as the man who holds a rifle. Their enemy is the brute beast, born in us from the beginning. They have to cast out devils – there's one in every man's story, but the best of us keep them under. It's just because there are others that men like myself are necessary. We bring brains into the argument – no country was yet saved without them, or ever will be.⁹⁸

His antagonist Gabrielle Sylvester, who is trying to win Faber for Achon's *International Arbitration League*, is the daughter of a Congregationalist minister active in the traditional peace movement, like Faber in all likelihood a composite character, representing Waechter's second wife Armatrude, *née* Hobart, fifty-five years junior to her husband,⁹⁹ and the other young activists sharing his voyages to the courts of Europe with him, for example the Irish actress Constance Malleon (stage name Collette O'Niel) who, barely eighteen years old, had accompanied the Waechters on their trip to the Baltic and Scandinavia in summer 1910.¹⁰⁰ Waechter's entourage was young as testified in the novel ("He talked very little of all this to those with him on the yacht. It was, in effect, a young people's party and a merry one at that"¹⁰¹). Both women would become pacifists in their own right, Lady Waechter as honorary secretary of William Randal Cremer's *International Arbitration League* and Constance Malleon, a later companion of Bertrand

98 Pemberton, *Swords Reluctant*, p. 176f.

99 Francis Trippel was Waechter's best man on the occasion of this wedding; anon., "Social and Personal", *Dominion* (New Zealand), 6, no. 1581 (26 October 1912): 10.

100 Constance Malleon kept a diary and photo album about their encounters on the journey, including personal autographs by William II and the kings of Denmark and Norway, and published an account of her journey in the memoirs of her youth. McMaster University, Hamilton, ON, Canada. Bertrand Russell archives, Lady Constance Malleon Fonds, box 6.73, f. 8; Constance Malleon [stage name Collette O'Niel], "Norway, Denmark and Germany," in Constance Malleon, *After Ten Years. A Personal Record* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1931), pp. 49–71.

101 Pemberton, *Swords Reluctant*, p. 82.

Russell's, as organiser of the conscientious objectors' movement in Britain during 1914–18.¹⁰²

War and the Woman is set in the tense political situation of pre-1914 Europe, without actually depicting War itself. Rather the threat of a major war, that is to be averted, is looming large in the background of the plot. The most dramatic episodes of the plot are Faber's realisation of the barbarity of warfare when witnessing Turkish atrocities in a Balkans village during an inland excursion from Ragusa (today's Dubrovnik), and the collapse of public order in England caused by the interruption of the food supply by an unusually harsh winter. Added to this are fears of the Germans taking advantage of the situation and rioters ransacking London. Eventually, after many twists and turns, the country is saved by Faber, who, converted under the influence of Gabrielle and his epiphany in Montenegro, "proves himself to be the master of the country's fortunes."¹⁰³

The invasion-scare in the middle of *Swords Reluctant* clearly ties in with the widespread fear in the late Victorian and Edwardian period of enemy forces landing on the British islands. As mentioned above, it had seen bouts of various intensity but peaked in general hysteria in 1909. The sentiment had given rise to the popular genre of invasion and future war novels, starting with George Tomkyns Chesney's *The Battle of Dorking* (1871), written under the impression of the Franco-Prussian war. As we have seen, Pemberton himself had contributed considerably to this genre by writing the 'magnum opus' of tunnel invasion literature,¹⁰⁴ his novel *Pro Patria* (1901), in which French armies tried to invade via a tunnel underneath the English Channel, supported by a fifth column of spies at home, as well as *The Giant's Gate* in the same year, the French this time attacking with submarines. Not in Pemberton's novels but in the genre in general, Germany had gradually started to replace France as the future enemy since the turn of the century, with Headon Hill's (Francis Edward Granger's) *Spies of the Wight* (1899) and T. W. Offins's *How the Germans took London* (1900) being the first representatives of this new trend; and Erskine Childers' *The Riddle of the Sands* (1903), set

102 John G. Slater, "Lady Constance Malleison, 'Collette O'Niel'", *russell. The Journal of Bertrand Russell Studies*, 20 (1975): 4–15, here: 5; The Dowager Lady Waechter (Hon. Secretary, The International Arbitration League), "Alfred Nobel. Founder of the Peace Prize," in *The Arbitrator. Journal of the International Arbitration League*, 82, no. 3 (Winter 1954–55): 8–10.

103 Anon., "World Peace is His Theme. But Love Stories in 'Swords Reluctant' Relieves Pemberton's Book of Any Suspicion of Dryness," *Boston Daily Globe*, 3 August 1912, p. 7.

104 Cecil D. Eby, *The Road to Armageddon. The Martial Spirit in English Popular Literature, 1870–1914* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1988), p. 21.

on the Frisian islands off the German coast, generally considered to be the best.¹⁰⁵ In 1906, William Le Queux's bestselling *The Invasion of 1910: With a full account of the siege of London* appeared, commissioned by Lord Northcliffe and serialised in the *Daily Mail*, with a foreword by Lord Roberts, originating from Pemberton's direct circle. Three years later the same author also published *Spies of the Kaiser: Plotting the Downfall of England* (1909). By then the genre had become distinctive enough to even elicit a satirical persiflage in form of P. G. Wodehouse's *Swoop! Or how Clarence Saved England* (1909), in which not only the French and Germans but also the Russians invaded the British homeland simultaneously.¹⁰⁶

In *War and the Woman*, Pemberton varied the theme of his earlier invasion novels, instead of tunnels or submarines, this time, as a consequence of the extremely harsh winter, the Channel was frozen over, giving rise to fears of

War and its menace: the chimera of fabled foes crossing the black ice in endless columns; cannon rumbling where ships had sailed; England no longer an island, her ramparts of blue waters gathered up; her gates thrown open to any who would affront her – if the West End discussed all this covertly and as though afraid, the East knew nothing of it. Here the danger was not of to-morrow, but of to-night!¹⁰⁷

But there is only talk and fear of an invasion rather than an actual foreign attack. The playing with the tropes of an invasion novel here serves to underline the desirability of an arrangement with Germany to end “the foolish old scares”¹⁰⁸ once and for all. As Faber tells an American journalist in the novel: “The Germans are not madmen. They’ve got the sanest man in Europe at their head, and he is not likely to do stunts with the Gulf Stream holding the stakes. What the Britisher has got to fear is the consequence of war without its actuality. He’s had that to fear any time these ten years”.¹⁰⁹

While in many ways *Swords Reluctant* can be considered part of the genre, it really is an atypical representative, for here the invasion scare serves the opposite purpose than the classic invasion novels listed above. It is an invasion novel turned inside out, a cunning way of playing to the readers' expectations but also to get the author's message across.

105 Ignatius F. Clarke, *The Great War with Germany* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1997), p. 101.

106 Cecil D. Eby, *The Road to Armageddon*; Ignatius Frederick Clarke, *The Great War with Germany, 1890–1914*; Cecil D. Eby, *Voices Prophesying War, 1763–1984* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2nd ed. 1992).

107 Eby, *The Road to Armageddon*, p. 256.

108 Eby, *The Road to Armageddon*, p. 249.

109 Eby, *The Road to Armageddon*, p. 257.

The characterisation of the Kaiser as the “sanest man in Europe”, or “the one big man in Europe, unless you care to name Kitchener”,¹¹⁰ would of course prove to be an assessment that after 1914–18 would come to haunt Pemberton, even if it was only put into one of his characters’ mouth, and helps to explain his peace novel’s obscurity ever since. Pemberton will have adopted that judgement from Waechter, who regarded the Emperor as holding the key to peace, personally not disinclined to it, but under the influence of the war party in his country (which is why he needed to be lobbied), and Trippel who, his close association with Northcliffe notwithstanding,¹¹¹ in October 1913 had even published a portrayal of William II as *Friedensfürst* (‘Prince of Peace’) in *Nord und Süd: Eine deutsche Monatsschrift*. After the outbreak of war, his article would provide an opportunity too good to be missed by the journal’s editor Ludwig Stein who reprinted it in January 1915 as a “proof from England” that the German monarch would not be to blame for the war.¹¹²

Strange as the two Anglo-Germans’ impression of William II may read with hindsight, it is important to point out that many pre-war pacifists had high hopes in the Kaiser who, according to a report by the Parisian *Le Matin* from May 1910, had enthusiastically proposed the idea of a European Federation to the French Minister of Foreign Affairs Stéphane Pichon, while in London for Edward VII’s funeral, causing outcry in the nationalistic German press.¹¹³ In the same year, the Kaiser’s government had also subsidised the Interparliamentary Union,¹¹⁴ the first permanent forum for multilateral political negotiations. Similar assessments

110 Pemberton, *Swords Reluctant*, p. 168, similarly on p. 40.

111 Dutifully reporting an invitation onto the board of the Imperial yacht Hohenzollern during a sailing turn to Norway with Max Waechter in 1911 to Harmsworth, his employer responded sardonically that he did not “regard an invitation to luncheon on board the ‘Hohenzollern’ as a particular honour, in view of the amount of leg pulling that takes place on board that vessel”, which according to Trippel’s answer made the Anglo-German smile but assure that he was not suffering from extended limbs; Trippel to Northcliffe, 27 July 1911 (on a letterhead of the S. Y. Rovenska); Northcliffe to Trippel, 31 July 1911; Trippel to Northcliffe, 1 Aug. 1911. British Library. Western Manuscripts, Northcliffe papers, vol. XV, Add MS 62167, f. 32, f. 33 and f. 34.

112 Sir Francis Trippel (London), Ehrensekretär der “European Unity League”, “Wilhelm II. als Friedensfürst,” *Nord und Süd. Eine deutsche Monatsschrift*, 147.469 (October 1913): 17–20, and 152.484 (January 1915): 39–42. According to *Die Friedens-Warte*, XV (1913): 359, the article was first published in the *Weser-Zeitung* of 4. August 1913.

113 Anon., “Kaiser Wilhelm über den Zusammenschluß der europäischen Staaten,” *Die Friedens-Warte*, vol. 12, no. 6 (June 1910), p. 113; anon., “Pazifistische Chronik”, *Die Friedens-Warte*, p. 112.

114 Roger Chickering, *Imperial Germany and a World Without War. The Peace Movement and German Society, 1892–1914* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), p. 235.

of William II can be found *inter alia* by Alfred Hermann Fried and Andrew Carnegie.¹¹⁵

The theme of rationalism and anti-sentimentalism, for which ‘sanity’ and ‘brains’ are frequently being used as synonyms, plays a large role throughout the novel, symbolising the superiority of new over old pacifism. Achon’s indifference to the traditional anti-war movement’s forms of expression is left in no doubt:

For the common peace projects, beating of pacific drums and waving of fraternal flags, Sir Jules cared not at all. He believed that international peace could come only upon a basis of common European interests. His scheme would have established free trade between the kingdoms. Wars arise chiefly from commercial disputes; commercial disputes are the first fruit of tariffs. Let the commercial incentive be wanting and disarmament may begin. A gradual process needed many years for full attainment but it would begin to-morrow if the conditions were fulfilled [...].¹¹⁶

The superiority of the new approach is also demonstrated metaphorically in a dramatic scene, in which Gabrielle’s father’s poor mission in the East End (the “temple in Stepney”), is destroyed in riots caused by food shortages in consequence of strikes and the severe frost. Faber, being romantically attracted to Gabrielle, offers to rebuild the temple, which she declines but to which Faber responds:

“Why, as to that, if it’s a Temple for brains, I don’t know that we mightn’t build it after all. That’s what your country needs, Miss Gabrielle. All the brains at work to educate the people. Sentiment will carry you very little way upon that road. Let your Temple go up to the men with brains.” – “Ah!” she said, “I think we are all beginning to understand that. Even my father says that universal peace will be won by the intellect not by the heart of the nation.”¹¹⁷

In a private conversation with her father, Gabrielle who, as it turns out, “at heart, had no great love for poor people”,¹¹⁸ continues the train of thought:

“Think of all that good men might do in the world if they had brains such as his [Faber’s] behind them. He preaches all his sermons from that text. Brains will save the people, the

115 [Andrew Carnegie], *Autobiography of Andrew Carnegie* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1920), 369f.: “I never met a man who enjoyed stories more keenly than the Emperor. He is fine company, and I believe an earnest man, anxious for the peace and progress of the world. Suffice it to say that he insists he is, and has always been, for peace. He cherishes the fact that he has reigned for twenty-four years and has never shed human blood.”

116 Pemberton, *Swords Reluctant*, p. 82. *The Bookman*, vol. 42, no. 249 (June 1912): 139.

117 Pemberton, *Swords Reluctant*, p. 261.

118 Pemberton, *Swords Reluctant*, p. 219.

country, even religion. I am sick of sentiment; it accomplishes nothing. [...] He [Gabrielle's father] was much taken aback by her outburst, and a little at a loss. A man of high ideals, he knew how hopeless was the task of uplifting the people, and yet hope and endeavour were the breath of life to him."¹¹⁹

The implications are clear, rational large-scale decisions by leaders, like those proposed by Achon's scheme, are what the country needs, rather than largely symbolic activism or locally confined charity, which may be driven by human conscience but more often than not only has little effect in the grand scheme of things, an assessment that towards the end of the novel, when Faber had relieved the national crisis by shipping in grain reserves from America, becomes universally accepted: "All England spoke now of the fact and not of theory. The demand for brains to save the nation from another panic was universal. Men said that arbitration had become as much a necessity as vaccination."¹²⁰

Of course, we are not dealing with high literature here. The allegories and metaphors used were anything but overly subtle. After all *War and the Woman* was also a popular romance published in Cassell's *Sixpence Novel* series, printed on rotating presses in large print runs and sold popularly at railway stations. And yet, Pemberton's using the tropes of an invasion novel, a genre he was well familiar with, and quite cleverly composing an anti-war novel in the guise of an invasion novel (wrapped into a popular romance) makes *Swords Reluctant* an extraordinary artefact, a piece of literary propaganda for Waechter's scheme with at least potentially a wide reach in British society. The fact that the novel underwent a second edition in 1914 points to its pre-war popularity, although I could not trace Cassell & Co.'s sales and print run figures, which would have allowed to quantify that reach precisely.¹²¹

Part of the historical background for *Swords Reluctant* is also provided by the unrest in the Balkans preceding World War I. Only a few months after the novel was published (April 1912), the First Balkan War broke out (October 1912) and its narrative draws on the steady flow of negative news from the peninsula, as well as on Pemberton's familiarity with and affection for the area. He had visited the troubled region in the 1890s and the experience clearly had left a deep impression on him:¹²²

119 Pemberton: *Swords Reluctant*, p. 269.

120 Pemberton: *Swords Reluctant*, p. 292.

121 I am also not aware of any translation of *War and the Woman*.

122 Pemberton, *Sixty Years Ago and After*, pp. 176–91.

“I have visited many beautiful countries since those distant days,” he wrote four and a half decades later, “but I would say with emphasis that a more beautiful land than Bosnia as I first knew it, I have never seen. Every variety of scenery that could enchant stood about us.”¹²³

His journey to Bosnia and Herzegovina, in the company of a group of British journalists invited by the Austrian government, included Henri de Blowitz¹²⁴ of *The Times* and Clement Shorter, the editor of the *Illustrated London News*, during which they were treated to “hospitality truly imperial”, was of course part of the Habsburg Empire’s propaganda for its coming annexation of the area, which sparked the First Balkan Crisis, one of the many European crises that preceded World War I (1908/09):

The real fact was, I have always supposed, that this was an advertising affair pure and simple. That very cunning old gentleman, the Emperor Franz Joseph, was about to add the provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina to his empire; but in order to prepare Europe for that daring surprise, he desired first that the other nations should know what Austria had done for the peoples in question and how wonderful was the civilization they had introduced. So the newspaper men came in and the liars. Had I realized the rôle in which I was expected to appear, it is probable that I might have declined the invitation. Yet how much should I have missed.¹²⁵

Waechter had also toured the region, setting off from Fiume (today’s Rijeka) in March 1910, accompanied by the “dean of Austrian writers and essayists”¹²⁶ Sigmund Münz, to whom Waechter had been introduced by Bertha von Suttner and who was chosen because of his access to the leading statesmen of Europe.¹²⁷ Münz, who published a travel account of the journey in the same year as Pemberton’s peace novel,¹²⁸ reports how they were received at the Sublime Porte in Con-

123 Pemberton, *Sixty Years Ago and After*, p. 182.

124 De Blowitz was famous for his 1878 scoop when he published the Treaty of Berlin before it was concluded.

125 Max Pemberton, *Sixty Years Ago and After*, pp. 173f.

126 Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA), “Dr. Sigmund Muenz Dies in Budapest,” 13 September 1934 <https://www.jta.org/1934/09/13/archive/dr-sigmund-muenz-dies-in-budapest>, accessed 14 July 2019.

127 Sigmund Münz, *Moderne Staatsmänner: Biographien und Begegnungen* (Berlin: Allgemeiner Verlag für deutsche Litteratur, 1901). C. E. Lebensaft, “Münz, Sigmund”, *Österreichisches Biographisches Lexikon und biographische Dokumentation* 6/30 (1975), p. 437.

128 Sigmund Münz, *Balkan-Herrscher und -Staatsmänner: Erinnerungen und Begegnungen. Aufzeichnung über eine Reise auf Sir Max Waechter’s Yacht “Rovenska”* (Wien: Deutsch-Österreichischer Verlag, 1912).

stantinople as well as by the monarchs and governments of Montenegro, Romania, Bulgaria and Greece. Other noteworthy encounters they had on the journey including Robert Seton-Watson, the Scottish scholar campaigning for the dissolution of the Habsburg Empire, then studying South-Slavonic languages in Spalato (Split), and Heinrich Coudenhove-Kalergi, Austrian diplomat and father of the founding president of the Paneuropean Union, Richard, in Athens. Sir Max considered his Balkan tour to be one of his most successful missions, which in the novel is rendered as: “The Tsar, [Achon] said, was still unwilling to come in; but he had obtained much encouragement at the minor courts, especially those of the south-east of Europe”.¹²⁹

A new piece of information that *Swords Reluctant* gives us is that Waechter’s Adriatic itinerary seems to have been planned around the Kaiser’s (expected) stay on the island of Corfu, William II’s favourite vacation spot for many years, and timed so as to meet him there. In the novel, Pemberton uses the plot device of letting Achon’s and Faber compete for a Royal audience: “There were two yachts on the Adriatic Sea waiting for an emperor. One lay in the harbour of Fiume; the other at Trieste. The emperor himself was still at Potsdam, and none of the newspapers seemed to know when he would sail.”¹³⁰ In real life, the encounter does not seem to have taken place on this occasion though, as Münz does not report any.

Disappointed by the outbreak of the First Balkan War, Waechter in early 1914 published an article on ‘The Principal Lessons of the Balkan wars’, in which he once again put his federation plan forward, as well as a letter to the editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, in which he argued that if Europe had been united, the war between Turkey and the Balkan states would not have occurred. Norman Angell also had to defend his *Great Illusion* theses as well as pacifism, old and new, in general, against Winston Churchill’s public accusation of having been made redundant by the outbreak of this conflict, in *Peace Theories and the Balkan War*.¹³¹

129 Pemberton, *Swords Reluctant*, p. 310.

130 Pemberton, *Swords Reluctant*, p. 81.

131 Max Waechter, “The Principal Lessons of the Balkan wars”, *The Nineteenth Century and After*, LXXVI (July–December 1914), no. 449 (July 1914): 59–75; Max Waechter, “‘Hands Off Albania’. Sir Max Waechter’s views,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 30 May 1914, p. 4; Norman Angell, *Peace Theories and the Balkan War* (London: Horace Marshall & Son, 1912). On the occasion of the Morocco crisis in the year before, the two had also published a memorandum together: Norman Angell and Max Waechter, “ Militarism. Its climax in the threat of universal war over Morocco, A. D. 1911,” in *The Great Events by Famous Historians*, vol. XXI, ed. by Charles F. Horne (London and New York: The National Alumni, 1912), pp. 186–98.

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AIMS AND OBJECTS OF THE EUROPEAN UNITY LEAGUE. 1. The object of the European Unity League is to bring about the union of the European States...

Fig. 9.: Full page advert on the cover page of the Daily Mail with the European Unity League's founding manifesto, 7 Feb. 1914. Source: Daily Mail Historical Archive, 1896–2004.

6 Conclusion

As we have seen, it is beyond doubt that *Swords Reluctant* was a piece of literary propaganda without losing its character as a popular romance. Different from his previous writing, Pemberton wrote as a convinced follower of Waechter's and Trippel's scheme as well as of the modern pacifist movement in general. He used his reputation to do what was in his capacity to further their cause and he did so without spoiling what he was known for and what his audience expected from him. It is possible to read *War and the Woman* as yet another romance, and doubtlessly many of his readers will have done so, but it is reasonable to assume, although impossible to measure, that it will have attracted more than a few readers to join the (new) pacifist cause and Waechter's organisation. Sir Max and Sir Francis must have been well-pleased with the popularisation of their work. The critical reviews also did not fail to notice the novel's purpose, for example the *Boston Daily Globe* when writing:

The novels of Max Pemberton are always readable, they are good fiction, some of them absorbing by the intricacy of plot and thrill of situation; but they are seldom of more than passing interest. His latest, entitled 'Swords Reluctant,' is a much more ambitious work.¹³²

Or *The Queenslander* (Brisbane) who commented:

Few writers of to-day command a bigger list of readers than Max Pemberton, for the reasons that he has always good material in his stories, and keeps it moving instead of moralising over pages. In this new volume he has written rather with a purpose – to illustrate certain phases of the questions of international peace; but though the work generally aims in that direction, it is none the less bright and full of movement.¹³³

In many ways Pemberton's popular romance can be regarded as the pinnacle of the public diplomacy ('education of the public') that the originators of the *European Unity League* scheme envisaged. If romance, after Northrop Frye, "is nearest of all literary forms to the wish-fulfillment dream,"¹³⁴ it is a huge pity that the desires expressed in this novel, the success of Sir Jules's (Max Waechter's) quest,

¹³² Anon., "World Peace is His Theme. But Love Stories in 'Swords Reluctant' Relieves Pemberton's Book of Any Suspicion of Dryness", *Boston Daily Globe*, 3 August 1912, p. 7.

¹³³ Anon., "'War and the Woman' by Max Pemberton," *The Queenslander*, Brisbane, 6 July 1912, p. 20.

¹³⁴ Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism. Four Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 186.

did not have more time available to develop before the outbreak of War put an abrupt end to the pacifists' hopes.

What new insights does Pemberton's novel give us about the *European Unity League*? First of all the fact in itself that a *roman-à-clef* was written about the organisation, and by one of the leading popular writers of the time at that, shows that Waechter's initiative was not an obscure organisation or fringe circle of pro-European enthusiasts but a household name in the Britain of its time. When later assessments of the *European Unity League's* impact on British society tended to be dismissive, like for example Hans Wehberg's influential one in *Die Friedens-Warte* from 1941 (from where many more recent histories of the European idea and international organisation derive their information), this was probably due to his lack of access to British sources when writing in Switzerland during World War II.¹³⁵

One thing that stands out from the revelations Pemberton's *roman-à-clef* has given us about the *European Unity League*, that were not previously known, is the central role of Francis Trippel next to that of Max Waechter. Without Sir Francis's complementary organising skills, public appeal and links to the Northcliffe press, Waechter's vision would probably never have advanced beyond, however high-level, conversations and non-committal declarations of intent. Using his connections, Sir Francis brought the power of the mass media into the game, which proved vital for building up the organisation.

That both, Waechter and Trippel, were Anglo-Germans would ultimately prove not to work in the *European Unity League's* favour though, certainly not once War had broken out, when anti-German sentiment and hidden hand paranoia started to pervade British society and also did not spare naturalised citizens.¹³⁶ Élie Halévy in his *History of the English people*, points to the "disquietingly large proportion of German or German Jewish names" among the leaders of the "pacifist movement, and the movement inseparable from it in favour of a better understanding with Germany", referring apart from Max Waechter to Ernest Cassel, John Brunner, Alfred Mond, Edgar Speyer and Lord Rothschild, and questioning the depth of its roots in Britain: "All these men brought to the cause of

135 Hans Wehberg, „Ideen und Projekte betreffend die Vereinigten Staaten von Europa in den letzten hundert Jahren“, *Die Friedens-Warte. Blätter für internationale Verständigung und zwischenstaatliche Organisation* 46 (1941), no. 2/3: 49–122, here: 99: „Stärkeren Widerhall hat aber, so viel ich feststellen kann, seine Tätigkeit nicht gefunden.“

136 Panikos Panayi, *The Enemy in Our Midst. Germans in Britain during the First World War* (New York: Berg, 1991), pp. 61–66 and *passim*.

peace the far from negligible support of their influence and brains. But they can hardly be regarded as representative of English society.”¹³⁷

Sadly, Trippel had to bear the full brunt of this. He was actually denounced both in his adopted country *and* that of his origin. Northcliffe’s papers contain an anonymous three-page letter to the editor of *The Times* from November 1914 that, in vile terms, expressed the writer’s disgust at the fact that there was a ‘naturalized’ enemy employed among the *Times* staff, and explicitly referred to “this man’s very intimate terms with prominent naturalized Germans like [Cassel and Waechter]”, as well as a newspaper article from *The World* of 25 March 1915 that likewise referred to Trippel’s “unpatriotic” occupation with the *European Unity League* and demanded his immediate internment or deportation.¹³⁸

Trippel who, immediately after war had broken out, had started a fundraising campaign with *The Times* in support of the British Red Cross’ war effort, as well as a couple of months later a recruitment campaign for the British army, had to respond with an eight-page letter to Northcliffe, setting out his whole career and pointing out bitterly that it was “proof of my affection and love for the country of my adoption, and of my most loyal and persistent devotion to its national interests. I have only one regret and it hurts me to say it – that there should have been a necessity for me to write this letter.”¹³⁹

In Germany, the *Kölnischer Anzeiger* commented sardonically that without Germans in charge, the British seemed to be unable to organise their recruitment, a story that in a follow-up article (“From son of a German locksmith to English knight”) was widely reprinted, including in the German-language press of the United States, in which the paper also claimed that Trippel, during his military service in a Prussian garrison town, allegedly had been sentenced to degradation and a lengthy term of imprisonment.¹⁴⁰ The revelation, true or not, sparked seri-

137 Élie Halévy, *Histoire du peuple Anglais au XIXe siècle. Epilogue (1895–1914)*, vol. 2: *Vers la démocratie sociale et vers la guerre* (Paris: Hachette, 1932), p. 396 (in English: *A History of the English people in the nineteenth century*, vol. VI: *The rule of democracy 1905–1914* (Book II), trans. E. I. Watkin (London: Ernest Benn, 1934, second ed. 1952), pp. 409f.

138 “A Soldier’s Daughter and a Unionist Worker” to the editor of *The Times*, 3 November 1914. British Library. Western Manuscripts. Northcliffe papers, vol. XV. Add MS 62167, ff. 83–85; ‘Sir Francis Trippell’ [sic!], *The World*, 25 March 1915. British Library. Western Manuscripts. Northcliffe papers, vol. XV. Add MS 62167, f. 103.

139 Trippel to Northcliffe, 26 October 1914. British Library. Western Manuscripts. Northcliffe papers, vol. XV. Add MS 62167, ff. 73–80.

140 Press cutting s. d., in British Library. Western Manuscripts. Northcliffe papers, vol. XV. Add MS 62167, f. 101; “Vom deutschen Schlossersohn zum englischen Ritter”, *Tägliches Cincinnatiatier*

ous trouble for Trippel. On 20 April 1915, his recruitment scheme and his commission as a major in the army were discussed in parliament.¹⁴¹ He had to withdraw from all offices and remain inactive during the war, which frustrated the energetic fundraiser enormously. On a personal level Northcliffe seems to have stood by his associate (“Personally, I have always regarded you as a strictly honest, but erratically impulsive individual”) and warned him that “You will get yourself interned if you are not careful. There is a growing movement for interning naturalized Germans”), although he also wrote to him “Your case is a very difficult one. All Germans are suspect now, and, in my opinion, it is the only attitude the public mind can take. Otherwise I should like to assist you to give vent to your energy.”¹⁴²

As for Pemberton, on 16 December 1914 the *Daily Mail* announced that “the well-known novelist and writer on military affairs, will begin a weekly review of the war, telling in his graphic style all that has happened since the previous issue of *The Weekly Dispatch*”. Pemberton had been chosen for that role because of his “special facilities for dealing with the campaign in that part of the theatre of war where the English Army is by reasons of the fact that two years ago he made a prolonged study of the Belgian and French frontiers.”¹⁴³ During his time in Belgium he composed four further novels and, according to Crewdson, also discussed the production of a war film.¹⁴⁴ The only later mention of pacifism by Pemberton that I am aware of, is a foreword that he contributed to Paul Murphy’s 1931 book *Armadas of the Sky: The Problems of Armaments*, which made the case for international limitation of aerial armaments. Whether this was primarily driven by his interest in aviation or by his (former) neo-pacifist convictions, I was unable to establish, but Pemberton’s foreword appears to have been carefully formulated, so as to avoid being able to be pinned down to one position.¹⁴⁵

Volksblatt, Cincinnati, OH, 24 May 1915, p. 3; “Translation from the “Cologne Gazette”, s. d., in British Library. Western Manuscripts. Northcliffe papers, vol. XV. Add MS 62167, f. 100.

141 Historic Hansard, 20 April 1915, https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1915/apr/20/sir-francis-trippel#S5CV0071P0_19150420_HOC_214, accessed 14 July 2019.

142 Northcliffe to Trippel, 31 May 1915. British Library. Western Manuscripts. Northcliffe Papers, vol. XV. Add MS 62167, f. 107; Northcliffe to Trippel, 28 July 1915, *ibid.*, f. 109; Northcliffe to Trippel, 10 August 1915, *ibid.*, f. 116.

143 Anon., “Mr. Max Pemberton and ‘the Weekly Dispatch.’ Forthcoming War Review,” *Daily Mail*, 16 December 1914, p. 3.

144 Crewdson, “Max Pemberton,” 15.

145 Max Pemberton, “Foreword”, in Paul Murphy, *Armadas of the Sky. The Problem of Armaments*. With a preface by Major Nelson C. Anderson (London: Houghton, 1931), p. 7.

At any rate, I agree with Panaghis' assessment that "[i]t is unfortunate that a virtuoso like Pemberton has fallen into oblivion"¹⁴⁶ and that his works have been underrated. Little has changed since her assessment from forty years ago that

[w]e know that he was widely read and appreciated in his lifetime, but in the years since his death the man and his writings have virtually dropped from sight. Moreover, nothing critical has been written on his works, and the major standard reference sources for English literature contain no data on him or his works.¹⁴⁷

He may have been unashamedly commercial and, for example in his detective novels, although far from shallow or "derivative", not quite on the same level as his friend and contemporary Arthur Conan Doyle, but he also masterfully managed to compose popular romances that occasionally went beyond mere mass entertainment, with especially historical fiction being his forte.¹⁴⁸

A source for his largely negative assessment in literary criticism might also have been his association with Northcliffe and the *Daily Mail*, especially after Lloyd George's excoriating public attack on the publisher in 1919 and the further history of the newspaper under Northcliffe's brother and successor Lord Rothermere, who tended to be close with fascists in both Britain and Germany. Northcliffe certainly had his part of responsibility to bear for the stoking of Germanophobia in pre-war Britain, even if one does not fully agree with A. G. Gardiner's dictum that no other individual apart from the Kaiser bears as much responsibility for the outbreak of World War I as Alfred Harmsworth.¹⁴⁹ Ironic as it is that the neo-pacifist movement had a firm basis within the press empire of a jingoistic publisher, the examples of Pemberton, Angell and Trippel show that Northcliffe was, in spite of his nationalistic conviction and limited intellectual horizon, more willing to accommodate dissenting voices in his papers than is usually assumed, if only they attracted enough attention. As Norman Angell attests in his memoirs:

As soon as I had demonstrated that a large public could be interested in the aspect of politics with which that book [*The Great Illusion*] dealt, he was as good as his word and the editorial page of the Mail did become at a later stage in our relations fully open to me,

146 Panaghis, *An Edition and Study of Max Pemberton's Short Stories*, p. 61.

147 Panaghis, *An Edition and Study of Max Pemberton's Short Stories*, p. 61.

148 Panaghis, *An Edition and Study of Max Pemberton's Short Stories*, p. 42.

149 Quoted after D. G. Boyce, 'Crusaders without chains: power and the press barons 1896–1951,' in *Impacts and Influences. Media Power in the Twentieth Century*, ed. by James Curren, Anthony Smith and Pauline Wingate (London: Methuen, 1987), pp. 77–112, here: p. 101.

though the ideas expressed and the politics defended were often in flat contradiction to the paper's editorial line.¹⁵⁰

While in historical judgement not always regarded as being 'properly' pacifist,¹⁵¹ most recently by Niall Ferguson in his *Pity of War* (1998), the new pacifists' self-conception certainly was such. As Angell wrote in the *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* in 1933, the year in which he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize:

In recent discussions [the term 'Pacifism'] has been limited to the doctrines of those who refuse to sanction war for any purpose, defensive or otherwise, in contradistinction to the views of internationalists who would secure peace by international organization, and who either take no stand on the question of military restraint or advocate placing it under the control of an international agency [...] The absolute pacifism of the religious sects is not characteristic of most modern pacifists, who while opposing war in any form do not object to the employment of the police for the maintenance of law within the state.¹⁵²

In the year of the (scheduled) British exit from the European Union, the rise of populists on both sides of the Atlantic, and elsewhere, beginning trade wars, the crises of international organisations and the cancellation of international arms limitation treaties, the new pacifists' ideas and Pemberton's popularisation of them may actually be more relevant for the present than first expected.

150 Norman Angell, *After all. The autobiography of Norman Angell* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1951), p. 129.

151 Niall Ferguson, *Pity of War* (London: Allan Lane, 1998), p. 22f.

152 Norman Angell, "Pacifism", in *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, ed. by Edwin R. A. Seligman, vol. 11 (London: Macmillan, 1933), pp. 527f.