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AN ARCH-MISCHIEFMAKER.

THE irrepressible Mr. Hearst, with his ten organs of wide circulation throughout America, is again to the fore with an international sensation. He has shown repeatedly that he is indifferent as to whence he obtains his material but is very conscious that his success is dependent on providing a sensation at all costs. He must present every day a louder bomb than anyone else and whether its explosion wrecks personal or international peace is a matter of no moment—people are very forgetful and the results of one day's thrill may be speedily obliterated by the thrill of to-morrow. At present he is beating the drums for war between the friendly nations of America and Japan. He has issued a solemnly-worded, personal manifesto assuring the world that a conflict between these nations is "inevitable" and has signed this document with his own signature. In some countries—in Korea, just now, for instance—such a document would be hailed with avidity by the protectors of national peace because it would furnish the best confession of responsibility for incitement to a disturbance of the peace, but it is doubtful whether any particular notice will be taken of the matter in the United States. As telegraphed to Japan as an isolated instance of sensationalism, it naturally assumes large proportions, but in America Mr. Hearst has rather spoilt his own market for sensationalism and also for credence. He has been and is still crying "Wolf!" so often that the people there, while accepting as a compliment the "enterprise" which seeks to provide them with a daily shock, are apt to discount the same with a smile of doubt. Moreover, to understand the situation, it must be remembered that the United States is on the eve of a presidential campaign, and that Mr. Hearst would not refuse the Democratic nomination if he could get it. The supply of Democratic timber, so far, is short and the would-be candidate who may be expected to command the best chance will be the one who can lead, or if necessary create, the most striking popular issue. It has been hinted that Mr. Roosevelt in advocating a great navy and promoting a dramatic transfer of warships from the Atlantic to the Pacific was not unconsciously appealing to a very responsive note in the popular character, and that Mr. Hearst has recognized the fact and determined to "go one better." A cruise for the pacific purposes of practice in defence is, therefore, twisted by this reckless sensationalist into a bellicose move-

ment, and the world is asked to note seriously that Mr. Hearst considers that war with Japan is "inevitable." The conservative thinkers in America will doubtless recognise all this and will look upon the Hearst manifesto as only another proof that Mr. Hearst is "doing politics." But the danger lies among the unthinking. If Mr. Hearst has deliberately assumed this policy and continues to beat it, day by day, into the *tympana* of his millions of readers, with all the ingenious variety and plausibility of harping upon the menace of Japanese competition and Japanese invasion, there can be no doubt that such tactics will have an effect on public opinion. It is a process that must be regarded as highly prejudicial to international peace, and to the extent that it may embarrass the Washington Government in their diplomatic intercourse abroad, must be set down as treasonable. The need of some measure in America answering to the British "Orders in Council" to prevent such international mischief-making is naturally suggested, and it is just such irresponsible action as this of Mr. Hearst which is insensibly bringing about some international regret in this important field. War-scares may not actually bring about war but their wild promulgation predisposes people towards entertaining the idea of war, and in proportion as that idea is entertained business and other relations of all kinds are injuriously affected. Already we know that a portion of the Pacific Coast is opposed to Japan on labour-union grounds, and it may be believed that the masses, on which Mr. Hearst chiefly relies for support and to which he chiefly caters in such sensations, will not allow the seed thus sown to go uncultivated. That for his personal temporary aggrandizement one man should be allowed to enjoy such unlimited license in influencing the people is surely monstrous and will certainly not be allowed to continue indefinitely. But so far as the conservative press of Japan is concerned, while it may naturally wonder at such ebullitions, not appreciating the license of politics thus exemplified, the best answer is the one they have consistently made of late—silence. In contradistinction to the self-seeking agitation of a mountebank like Mr. Hearst they have assurances of statesmen like Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Taft that war between the peoples would be a crime and is unthinkable. Nevertheless it is proper for the foreign press to protest against such mischievous tactics and so far as possible counteract them by explanation of their personal self-seeking character, as well as by indicating the result, if persisted in. So far as can be seen Mr. Hearst and his ilk are simply incendiaries on a large scale and measures of protection against them should be taken accordingly.