

HISTORY

JULY, 1918.

AMERICA'S ENTRY INTO THE WAR : AN HISTORICAL STATEMENT.¹

AN audience of intelligent and well-read British people is well aware of the fact that America long held aloof from the complications of European politics, but it is not altogether easy to comprehend how remote were the diplomatic controversies of this side of the ocean. Even the intellectual classes discussed such questions seldom, and when the subject was discussed the matter appeared distant and devoid of immediate interest; it was impersonal and bookish. Only those that had travelled in Europe had much notion of the tension existing on the Continent, and only keen observers discovered that, for it was not to be seen on a hurried holiday trip through the art galleries of the Old World. We had little or no knowledge of the ever-vexed Balkans, and had cyclopædic ignorance of the Eastern question. Individually we may have had our sympathies and our mild antipathies, but as a people we were unsuspicious, guileless, and unsophisticated. Some of these attributes may appear to be inapplicable, for you may know that in Governmental matters we have sometimes been sharp, perhaps I should say aggressive, but, on the whole, as a people we live in an air of toleration.

I trust that the Italian historian was in part wrong when he contrasted Europe with America, saying that Europe was clouded with hate and America brightened by friendliness; but I am confident that we as a nation were free from mean suspicions and lived in an atmosphere of good nature. This good nature is not necessarily temperamental. We are not good-natured now—we are ugly. Our good-naturedness was in large measure the

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product of ignorance, of absorption in our own affairs, and of intense interest in the game of business, in the task of social betterment, and in political controversy. Foreign affairs touched us only slightly. Moreover, we were a composite people, priding ourselves on our capacity to accept and to make our own the peoples of many nations. We watched, those of us that had intellectual interest in national development, the steady stream of immigrants pouring into the land, and though we often had misgivings we were generally carried along by characteristic optimism, and by a wholesome faith in the power of American ideals to make over the newcomers into citizens feeling and thinking as the rest of us did. Prejudices and dislikes and suspicions of alien peoples were, therefore, foreign to us; we did not reason about it, or ponder the problem particularly, we simply moved along unaware of danger and without feeling. Many of you will say to yourselves: "Much of this is also true of Britain; we have not nursed hatred or encouraged suspicion of other nations; we, too, have been friendly and open-minded." If you are saying so, you are doubtless speaking the truth. Certainly in America we were quite unprepared for an appreciation of the psychology of Germany, for any understanding of that mean jealousy, the petty and gross intolerance, the suspicions and sly intrigue which we have at last come to know so well,

For a hundred years and more America has been free from the entanglements of European politics. We appeared to have but one principle of foreign politics, and that was to mind our own business and to let Europe alone. Occasionally we were reminded that America had become a world-Power, but most of us smiled at the expression, thinking we had been a world-Power for a century or more, and not believing that we were called upon to abandon our old policy of isolation or be caught up in the tangled skein of Europe. We had one fixed policy, the Monroe doctrine, which meant what it might mean—for it was a perfect chameleon among doctrines—but, conveniently adaptable to exigencies of international affairs in the Western hemisphere, it was rigid in its application to Europe. America, for her own safety, for her own interest, was to lead her own life, and follow her own courses. This policy, if policy it may be called, for it is, after all, rather a feeling, a sentiment, and a tradition than a policy, may appear to you narrow and provincial, the child of selfishness and of ignorance. Well, I am not here to defend or apologise; I can only say that conditions are much as I have described them; and, again, you may possibly say that

you, too, in the care of your vast Empire, would have been quite content to be left alone; you would have been more than satisfied, most of you, if you could have believed that you could go on quite freely to do your best with your own problems without fear of molestation or interference from some jealous outsider.

The Monroe doctrine is defended by practically all American students of history for what it has accomplished, but, right or wrong, it was popularly held and supported; it is practically the only policy of State which we have ever had, and which through the whole of our national existence has maintained itself and strangely persisted despite the developments of modern history, despite the fact that the ocean had become a highway and not a barrier, despite the strength of commercial and intellectual bonds connecting us with Europe, despite the growth of democracy over here and the extension of those principles of popular government which at one time we justly thought were our peculiar possession. But deeper, more far-reaching than a policy of State embalmed in a phrase was the strength of tradition, our one tradition, and deeper still a sentiment, a feeling, an attitude of mind, a sense that we were to move along fulfilling as best we might our own destiny, and carrying our burdens as steadily as our own strength permitted.

To-day America is stirred as it never has been before; not even in the days of our own Civil War, I think, was feeling more intense or thought more bitter. We know that America has been called to its own, called to give proof on the field of battle that it values honour and liberty and truth and fair dealing more than life. We are not ignobly striving for profit or territorial aggrandisement; we have no hidden purpose in our detestation of the forces which have plunged the world into the misery of unspeakable sorrow and desolation. But this I must say—and I believe I speak truthfully and with some slight knowledge—you and I should err if we did not see how difficult it was to reach the conviction that a European struggle was ours also; how difficult, how extremely difficult, to uproot those habits of thought which I believe I have not described too strongly. No one can be sure how thoroughly hereafter we shall participate in world affairs. I know not what to say, or how to express the contradictory impressions that come to me. I am confident of intense earnestness, of a profound feeling of duty, of pride in the leadership of a great American, whose vision is wide and whose love of humanity is strong. I am confident of deep and vivid sympathy for the unhappy Belgians to whom we have given food and care

and money. We have admiration for brave, sorrow-stricken France and for the quiet, masterful strength of Britain, by whose side we gladly fight. But I cannot be sure that we have altogether cast aside old supports or barriers, or that we have reached a stage where we can think internationally. It may be, we do not know, it may be that the old days of isolation are gone; it may be that we are henceforth to play a conspicuous rôle in the affairs of the world. To me that appears inevitable. Isolation conflicts with realities of modern life too strongly, our duty is too clear, your hopes for civilisation and peace are too nearly identical with ours, the world is too nearly one organic whole, the needs of humanity are too pressing to allow a nation like America to live its own life heedless and unmindful of responsibility for affairs beyond its borders; and so we may expect intelligent and, I hope, high-minded and generous participation of America in world affairs; but no one can be sure just how thoroughly we have cast aside our old habits.

From describing American attitude towards foreign affairs before the war I have passed on to a consideration of the present and the future, for already the past seems long past, and the present holds us in its grasp. I must endeavour, however, for the time, at least, to keep my mind within those early trying and soul-harrowing years when we were amazed, distracted, doubtful, full of newly awakened interest and newly aroused foreboding, stirred with sympathy and with hitherto unfelt passions, groping amid new scenes, learning new enmities, finding that we were in the presence of a dark, unseemly force that most of us had not dreamed of, holding fast, over-stubbornly, it may be, but holding still to what we were or had been, believing or trying to believe, or struggling out of the belief, that this war was not our war, turning over in our minds the responsibility involved in calling 100,000,000 peaceful people to arms, obtaining ourselves or hoping that the man on the street was getting a wider outlook on the world wherein he might see that patriotism is not enough—see narrow-souled patriotism exalting its own *Kultur* and beating down the life and hope of a wider humanity. From what I have already said it will be plain that a mental change and a sentimental change had to come before this wider outlook could be had; knowledge had to be gathered and new interests had to be created.

If I have been rightly informed, British notions of the American population are in danger of falling into one of two opposite errors. On the one side is the belief that we are a British people

who a hundred years or more ago broke away from Britain, and are still in all essentials British to the core. On the other side is the belief that British stock has been entirely submerged and that the land is filled with a myriad of men of different races but slightly affected by the culture and mental habits of the Mother Country. No one can with perfect precision describe the American people, certainly not in a few words, but it can be said with considerable positiveness that we are neither one thing nor the other. Even of the eighteenth century it could truthfully be said that not England but Europe was the Mother of America. The flood of emigrants that have come in the past fifty years in constantly increasing numbers has filled our land with millions of persons whose traditions are not British. A considerable portion of these persons have become Americanised, their children have learned the English language, and have been absorbed into our life. In 1910 the foreign white stock amounted to about one-third of the total population, 32,000,000 people. By foreign white stock I mean persons born in Europe or the children of foreign born. Of these 8,000,000 were German, though these figures do not include Austrian Germans; 2,500,000 were German born. In recent years there has been an influx of Russians, mostly Russian Jews, and also many Italians, with not a few Greeks. How far had these people, even those that had been in the land a decade or two, been actually absorbed? I cannot answer, but there are one or two things I can say with some assurance. Most of these people were proud of American citizenship, most of them felt that they had cast the past aside, many of them showed an appreciation for the elemental ideals of American life. And this leads me to a consideration of the other belief that some of you may hold, that this flood has submerged the old British stock. Here, again, the whole truth is illusive, but the main outstanding fact is, in my judgment, the astonishing vigour of Anglo-Saxon life. Nothing is to me, as I study American history and American conditions, more impressive than the force of the essentials of Anglo-American civilisation. The influences of language, of literature, of law have exerted and will continue to exert steady pressure, and the resulting civilisation will be largely identical with your own. After all, there is something compelling in the principles of individual liberty, in those principles of political thought and action which America inherited from Britain.

We have no conscious desire to counteract the qualities brought to our shores by the men from the European Continent. When in the past we have spoken of the immigration problem, and

realised the difficulties, we have not said : " Can these people be inoculated with the qualities of Anglo-Saxonism, can they be brought under the sway of the old British stock?" We have said : " Can we be sure that these people will become American, patriotic, and law-abiding? Will they accept what even in these latter days we call the ideals of American citizenship?" And it must be remembered that one of those ideals was hospitality, opportunity for the man of the Old World to start over again on our shores, and to go on and up with us. We have had no desire, and we have now no desire, to influence these people to any fixed standards of racial life.

I am discussing this subject only to show you certain elementary factors in a complicated situation. My intention is not to impugn the patriotism or the civic virtues of the recent immigrants ; but it must be plain that among them sympathy for Britain would play no part, there would be no instinctive response to the needs of any foreign country, save the one or the other with which they were racially connected, and perhaps not with that. Many of these persons left the Old World to escape its military burdens. My object, let me repeat, is not to complain of the attitude of these millions, nor, on the other hand, to praise or defend them. To me the striking fact is this, that the vast majority were prepared, when the time came, to follow the flag of the United States, quietly to take up the load of war, and to walk forward with no other thought than patriotic devotion to the country of their adoption and the principles which they knew you as well as we are fighting for.

There is one other thought which I must offer, a simple one, but of real significance. The war was far away. I have emphasised our detachment and our seclusion from the political affairs of Europe, but I am speaking now only of the difficulty with which incidents are made real by the imagination, if those incidents are three or four thousand miles distant. You will say, perchance, that distance did not cloud the mind of the Australian or the South African. All the more honour to them. But, again, and I speak solely of facts as I see them, it was hard, very hard, for the average man in a prairie town of the Mississippi Valley to feel the actuality of the stories told him in his weekly paper. Such men as I have in mind are not unintelligent, they are not hopelessly narrow and dull. But they did not instinctively realise that this was their war. The reason will be given by any tyro in psychology : the war lacked immediateness.

If any considerable portion of what I have said is true, then

time was necessary to awaken new ideas and to get new points of view. Passions, I know, for which there has been emotional preparation, can quickly sweep across the Continent, but, while we are a sensitive people, and react quickly to certain elements, it is just impossible for a wave of impulse to pass from one side of the land to the other, unless by our previous history the brain-tracts have been developed through thought and experience. Of course, that is true of all peoples. The Germans flew to arms, flung themselves into war, because their minds had been dwelling on war, and because of the psychological effects of militarism. But America was in its essence a country of peace; men's minds needed to be wrenched from their moorings, or shunted on to new lines altogether, before they could even conceive of the barbarity of war.

Our population also lacked homogeneity, and you cannot by a single spark send a fire of passion through 100,000,000 men not in psychological contact. Plainly, then, the American people required time to learn, time to become homogeneous in their attitude towards the great question of the war. I am not contending reasons that we ought to have gone to war earlier; I am trying to be detached, unargumentative.

If you still ask why the common man did not more quickly grasp the complexities of the European conflict, I ask you in turn to let your mind wander from New York, with its million of foreign-born citizens, its great wealth, and its vast material splendour, prosperity, and poverty, onward across the Continent, over the Appalachians, across the prairies dotted with innumerable farm-houses and villages and populous towns, onwards to California and the Pacific, three thousand miles away, or down through the cotton-raising South and up to the wheat regions of Minnesota and the Dakotas, then over the iron and copper regions of Michigan. Face the difficulty of actually reproducing in your own mind the conditions of life, the spirit and the temper of that vast region, and, if you do, you will appreciate the task we had in visualising Europe, and you will possibly be astonished, as I sometimes am, not that we moved slowly, but that finally, little by little, step by step, we came to feel as a nation and as a single whole to see the thing in all its naked and vulgar ugliness, this thing with which we had to fight, in defence of civilisation, and the elementary principles of decency and manly justice.

What were the American sympathies in the earlier months of the war? You can probably answer that yourselves. In many quarters there was intuition and instantaneous sympathy for the

Allied cause. Many of us, ignorant as we were, had learned something of German military ambition. Some of us had knowledge of German arrogance. Some of us realised that a War Lord reigned in Berlin, and we had long believed that his great military establishment menaced the peace of Europe. Such persons reacted to the side of Britain and France almost at the very beginning—strongly, as soon as they saw the facts—but I venture to say that if there was hesitation in reaching definite conclusions no one who has read the history of modern diplomacy will altogether blame the hesitant. But soon came the British Blue Book, with the despatches of your Foreign Office; the thing we wanted to know was: Who began this war? We wanted to know authoritatively, documentarily, unequivocally—and we found out. We discovered the truth we were seeking, in part from the British Blue Book; and its revelations were considerably confirmed by the German White Book. This German volume is the most important document of the war; a revelation of military arrogance, of haughty intolerance. It was convincing even more by what it omitted than by what it contained; for if the old adage was ever true it was true of this particular volume: The suppression of the truth is the confession of falsehood.

What I am now saying must appear to you like lines from ancient history, and for that matter so does it to me. But I need to recall for historical accuracy the painful interest with which we turned the leaves of the Blue and White and Grey Books as they came to hand, and how those of us having access to their pages were enlightened in our sympathies and steeled in our repugnance to the methods of autocratic militarism. The story of the scrap of paper set America to thinking hard. Never did the carrying power of a phrase more clearly manifest itself. Then for some months we studied and discussed the invasion of Belgium, and began to gather in the tales of German atrocities, at first with incredulity, but with steadily growing amazement and indignation. Doubtless you passed through the same mental experiences yourselves. Can one be ashamed of his unwillingness to believe that a nation calling itself civilised could be guilty of the cruelty practised by the German Army in Belgium? In our case, as perhaps in yours, it was only after the publication of the Bryce Report with the accompanying documents that we saw the reality and believed the unbelievable. We discovered, then, what militarism meant in its final qualities—militarism which inculcated devastation and terrorism as a portion of definite military policy. Belgium settled the sympathies of the great mass of the people of America. We saw

the whole horrible thing was premeditated, planned with cold, calculating, repulsive German efficiency. We realised that mobilisation plans are not formed in a moment, or strategic railways laid down in a night; we realised that *Realpolitik*—the very word a reproach—included deceit as well as barbarity. Even in these days of misgiving and distress we may take some comfort possibly in believing that international bullying, *Machtpolitik*, was shattered when it shocked the conscience of the world. John Bright, I believe it was, said that the only value of war is to teach geography; but this war taught a language. We learned what *Schrecklichkeit* means; and we discovered that terrorism is involved in the whole philosophy of war when it is carried out with relentless thoroughness and with logical disregard for the ordinary promptings of compassion.

German propagandists early began to cultivate American opinion. I do not know what effect missionaries of *Kultur* like Herr Dernburg made on the popular mind. On the whole I imagine Herr Dernburg himself believes to-day that he did more harm than good. Certainly more harm if he succeeded in arousing the passion and increasing the prejudices of German-Americans, and certainly harm for the German cause if he awakened resentment in the hearts of such simple-minded Americans as were aware of his purposes. The great body of the American people were not hoodwinked by the German propagandists. A famous American said early in the war that he had been asked by British friends whether it would be well to send material to America to win the people to the cause of the Allies, and he replied: "I do not think it is at all necessary; the American people at large have a good deal of sense, when all is said, and, if their good sense fail, the German Ambassador will help them to appreciate the rectitude of the Allied position."

The attempts of German propagandists to justify the invasion showed an astonishing inability or unwillingness to make frank use of public documentary material. Documents found in the Belgian archives showed that some years ago an English military officer and a Belgian official had consulted together as to what steps England should take in case Germany invaded Belgium. After Germany had done the very thing which England and Belgium had feared German propagandists tried to justify her by declaring that Belgium was considering means of preventing it. The use made of the documents actually affronted our intelligence and added to our distrust.

You are about to ask me why America did not plunge into

the war or immediately prepare for the conflict, just as soon as the enormity of Prussian deceit and cruelty was realised. Again, I cannot tell you, and again I refrain from speaking apologetically or in condemnation. I can only say that a very few, a very limited number, in my judgment, believed by the early spring of 1915 that this war was our war in the sense that we should enter. After all, did a nation ever before in the world's history enter a conflict only because it loathed the principles and despised the conduct of another nation, solely because of moral indignation, or have nations been led into war by ministers or rulers, or for some evident material gain? My historical information may be insufficient, but, as I see it, the nearest approach to such altruistic conduct was when you yourselves entered this war and sent over your famous little army to win imperishable glory and to die on the field of honour at Mons. Pray do not accuse me of dealing in smart retort. You are no stronger defender of British honour, courage, and high-mindedness than I am. I claim at such a time as this and in this presence no indulgence as an ignorant outsider. But am I not right in thinking that your interests in some respects coincided or appeared to coincide with your duty and your honour? If you answer no, that you offered all for humanity, I shall not deny you. I am not wrong, however, I think, in attributing to Mr. Balfour himself the remark, when we did enter the war, that it was the most magnanimous and generous act in history.

May I give one more answer to why we did not enter the war as soon as *Machtpolitik* was revealed in all its hideousness—an answer, I mean, not already suggested by the earlier portions of my remarks in which I attempted to portray American psychological condition? The answer is this: a great many persons were strengthened in their antipathy to war. Instead of making men more warlike the struggle in Europe made them more determined to keep the peace. We clung to an ideal not totally foolish, though time proved it to be vain. We believed that the stricken world might actually be benefited if one great nation should keep out of the struggle. We thought, not stupidly, though wrongly, that the spectacle of a nation's standing almost unarmed and totally unafraid might be of some service in ushering in the day of peace and of reconciliation.

Of one thing I can speak with much confidence—and in such a complicated matter it is comforting to have one sure piece of solid ground to stand upon—the financial gain from neutrality entered into our calculations not with the weight of a farthing. Profits from munition-making or from trade influenced the general

sense of the country not one iota. At no time did we measure our duty or our interest in dollars and cents or scan with mean avidity the pages of our ledgers. Occasionally, it is true, one heard of the advantages offered by the war for increasing our trade with South America; but here again in no appreciable degree did this enter into our calculations or sear our consciences.

Shall I say a word about the *Lusitania*, about that shameful, premeditated, advertised, and dastardly crime? It is difficult even now to speak about it with calmness, and there is no reason why one should. You know, of course, of President Wilson's messages, and you know that here and in America as well there was some sharp criticism because he did not follow his words with immediate and energetic action. There are many to-day who believe that, if he had then spoken the word, America would have sprung to arms, that the masses of the people were waiting for the word. Well, who can tell? I think myself that even then, in the spring of 1915, the people were not ready. Some believed, or strove to believe, that we had no right to furnish munitions to the Allies; many had not yet fully realised the enormity of Germany's criminality. Only, I repeat, only by a partial understanding of the America I have sought to describe to you can one see the difficulty of arousing the people to war. America is a democratic country; the people do not blindly follow leadership or accept opinions from others. If the President had taken a false step, he would have lost his powers of guidance, and, moreover, though many were bitter and all were unhappy, the masses of sensible, sober people, unlearned in matters of international law, did not readily see how totally illegal and totally brutal was the attack on unoffending travellers and non-combatants. Moreover—and here is the most crucial but more illusive and intangible thing—the nation, in its very reluctance to act, in its readiness to wait, in its willingness to accept affront and injury, showed certain qualities of intelligent patience, a certain obstinate love of peace, a certain over-indulgence in the desire to be fair-minded. It was one of those maddening and inhibiting contradictions such as illuminate and darken the course of history—idealism and rectitude of purpose standing in some measure in their own light.

All through those years we hoped, as probably the President did, that we could save the shattered fabric of international law by protest and expostulation. That appeared the chiefest duty of a neutral nation; that duty might justify the retention of neutrality even when we ourselves were suffering injury at the hands of the

belligerents. That duty possibly justified even our complaints of the British blockade, which, I think it must be confessed, constituted at least an unexpected expansion of the legal privileges of a belligerent. Of course, as we now see, words could have no effect on a German Government, bent on beating down all opposition and on setting up its appetite as the central principle of international law; but I cannot help thinking there was at least some evidence of character and considerable right-mindedness in our hope that argument and stern rebuke would save something from the wreckage.

After the *Sussex* affair, in the summer of 1916, our relations with the German Government were again greatly strained, but President Wilson succeeded in getting a promise that merchantmen should not be sunk without warning and without saving lives, unless the vessel should resist or attempt to escape. This promise was coupled with a condition that we should compel Great Britain to surrender what Berlin asserted to be an illegal blockade. Remembering, possibly, the net into which Napoleon enticed James Madison about 107 years ago, our Government did not accept the condition, but warned Germany that her obligations were "individual, not joint, absolute, and not relative." We rested easier; but we now realise that this willingness to forgo the sinking of peaceful vessels and the taking of lives can be accounted for by the fact that the old U-boats were being destroyed and the Teutonic Powers did not then have in readiness the large and improved monsters of the deep with which to carry on the work of destruction. Conditions were bad enough during the latter half of 1916, but with the beginning of the new year ruthless warfare was openly and brazenly instituted. With the announcement that no warning would be given when ships were sunk within a war zone (1917), cutting off nearly the whole coast of Western Europe, President Wilson sent the German Ambassador home, and war seemed inevitable. One of the astounding revelations of the political methods of the German Foreign Office was the announcement, made by the Chancellor to the Reichstag and the German people, that President Wilson had broken off diplomatic relations abruptly, although the step was taken eighteen months or more after the exchange of dispatches on the *Lusitania* crime, and half a year after the exchange of Notes about the *Sussex*.

Why did President Wilson, after long effort to maintain neutrality and even to hasten the coming of peace, finally advocate war? Before attempting to answer this question let us recall the

President's efforts to bring the conflicting nations to a statement of their terms, and to hold out to the world the conception of the establishment of permanent peace. The President's message on this subject came out almost simultaneously with Germany's proposal in which she suggested peace on the basis of an assumed victory for her army. Such a peace the Allied nations could not accept without accepting militarism, without losing the all-important objects for which millions of men had already given their lives; and probably most of us in America believed that such proposals were put forth chiefly to make the German people think that the Allies were the aggressors, and must bear the odium of further conflict. When the President called on the warring nations to state their terms, possibly he still cherished the hope that, if terms were frankly stated, negotiations might actually be begun; almost certainly he desired such open statement as would show to the world at large the real essence of the conflict, and also show that we were not ready to enter the struggle until we had made every possible effort to bring peace. The President's appeal produced no very tangible results, although the Allied Powers stated their desires and purposes with considerable definiteness, and these terms did not appear to us unreasonable or unworthy.

Throughout this time the President and all thinking Americans were interested chiefly in the maintenance of civilisation, and they looked forward not merely to victory or to the acquisition of territory by one or another nation, but to the foundation of a lasting peace by the establishment of principles of justice and reason. We found that we could not paint in too dark colours the future of the world if we are all to remain under the pall of fear and suspicion, and under the overwhelming burden of armament; and thus we came to see that without America's entrance into this war there was little hope for relief from the crushing weight of war and the almost equally burdensome weight of ever-increasing armed preparation. Never, it appeared, in the long history of mankind was there such a fearful alternative, never a louder call to duty. America, without the hope of profit, with no mean or hidden purpose, must herself fight to maintain the principles of civilisation and for the hope of lasting peace and propriety between nations.

Many of us came to realise the incredible fact that Germany menaced our safety, that if the war lords of Prussia were successful we were in actual and immediate danger. I know nothing more magnificent and imperial in its effrontery than the remark made by the Kaiser to the American Ambassador that he would stand

no more nonsense from America after this war! Still, we could scarcely credit what appears to be the truth, that—if I may attribute to the Kaiser the offensive words of Napoleon—America was within the scope of his policy. Possibly it was shameful in us to wait and to rely on the Allied Powers when we began to feel that their defeat imperilled our own safety. But something more than fear was needed to force us into the fight; not until the issues were clear to the nations of the world, not until there was hope for a constructive peace, not till we heard the call of humanity, were we prepared to fling in our power and resources.

Doubtless our final entrance into the conflict was brought about by cumulative irritation at German methods and policies. Our conviction of their unworthiness grew gradually day by day. This conviction was the result of experience of having actually lived through a great crisis. Among these irritations, which opened our eyes and hardened our hearts, none was more powerful than the machinations of the German spies. We were more than irritated, we were enlightened; we discovered what *Weltpolitik* and *Realpolitik* really were—German espionage helped us to grasp the nature of a principle which is essentially criminal and which, if it continues, must make decent international relationships quite impossible. And so this fact began to stand out strongly: Democracy cannot survive in an atmosphere of indecent intrigue—Democracy is comparatively helpless in a game of secret skill and of stealthy manipulation.

America came to see, by April, 1917, that she must enter the struggle, and sacrifice, if need be, all but honour to put down arrogant militarism and strutting autocracy, the remnants of an outworn practice of life and mode of thought. The world was too small to contain two fundamentally hostile principles of life. It took the devastation of this horrible calamity, the death of millions, the crippling of tens of millions, the semi-starvation of a continent, the drowning of our own people, the slimy intrigue in our own nation, the practice of studied cruelty in Belgium and Poland—it needed all this to open our blind eyes; but at last we saw. There was no use in arguing about it; the world was too small, too organically united; it could not encompass two warring principles of life—warring, that is to say, and deadly in their antagonisms even in times of so-called peace; for the deadliest of enemies are ideas and ideals that in, of, and through themselves lead to differing goals. There was no use in talking about it; the world cannot permanently exist or longer live half slave and half free. We have to make the world safe for Democracy.

President Wilson has not, as some people think, asserted that Prussia must adopt a democratic Government. He has simply said that German rulers cannot be trusted; any arrangement with them for peace, unbacked by the people of Germany, would be a bauble. Does anybody doubt that the German Government is not trusted? The question is not whether it ought to be trusted; as to that, some ignorant person might break into an argument. The question is not whether we may ultimately have to sign a peace with the gilded and brazen rulers of Germany; on that point some faint-hearted person might start a discussion. The question is: Does anybody trust the Government? The President has also pointed out that a peace which is really vital must be a peace of peoples. Anybody doubting that has not got very far into the meaning of this horrible catastrophe. We are not, let us hope, giving up the lives of our boys for a "peace" hanging on the shaky word of a Berlin Government. And nothing but the righteous sense and serene judgment of everyday people who have seen light and love the sunshine of friendliness—nothing else can give us hope for humanity.

And this leads me to say, what you will know, that the whole fate of democracy is involved in this war, and that out of it, to use the words of Lincoln, must come a new birth of freedom. It is not merely that the hosts of Germany have turned under regal leadership against the democratic nations of the West and hoped to crush them by weight of arms and barbaric fury. It is not alone our territorial integrity or even our forms of government which are imperilled; the spirit and breadth of open-minded, cheerful, hopeful and trustful democracy are in danger. Democracy is and must be sociable, friendly, and helpful, or it belies its own character and denies its own philosophy. It cannot breathe the fetid air of intrigue, espionage, and hidden malice. Democracy is built on faith, faith in the elementary rectitude, the substantial validity of human life and purposes. If it is not trustful and open-hearted and hopeful it falsifies its own being. The time has come when once for all it must be decided on which philosophy of life humanity will rest.

In all its aspects democracy is purely a matter of human relations. The time was when we thought only of individual freedom or of social and political equality. But by processes of natural inevitable growth we have passed on to a fuller relation of democratic obligation. Democracy involves helpfulness and friendly companionship; there can be no such thing as an insulated democratic individual, and there can be no such thing as an insulated

democratic nation ; the spirit of companionableness and co-operation must express itself in international relations and manifest itself in ordinary intercourse between Governments and people. That we shall always act in highest accord with the essential ideals of this philosophy of life one dare not prophesy ; but such, I maintain, is the logical and necessary product of a developing spirit. Democracy is in its essence essentially human, not merely political or governmental ; and the inmost significance of this struggle consists in this : we are menaced by a force and a philosophy hideously at variance with the primary and heartfelt instincts of democratic life. This very force has compelled democracy to expand itself beyond the confines of national boundaries, and to demand the recognition of its principles as the foundation of peace and of a hopeful progressive human and humane world-order.

The passing years have shown, then, that self-contained, purely national democracy is not enough. We cannot be inwardly democratic, outwardly autocratic. We may not demand that Prussia adopt the forms of popular government—though these must come to her, unless she stand aside free from the currents of modern civilisation—but we can and will demand that she abide by the code of democratic fair-play and fair-mindedness. If she is unable or unwilling to think as the outside world is thinking, she must be made incompetent. The distinguished gentleman who so kindly introduced me this evening used these words some months ago : “ Prussia must be powerless or free.” It would be sheerest folly now not to see the whole fact clearly. The world cannot remain half free and half Prussian ; and the essential ethics of Democracy must be boldly adopted as the guiding principle of international intercourse and human progress. Those ethical principles, we may remind ourselves again, are not so much intellectual as spiritual, not so much political as human and social—they rest on faith, on responsibility, on helpfulness, and companionable co-operation.

That this war will bring in a revived and enlarged sense of social obligation and develop within each of the nations now fighting for democratic ideals a new appreciation of duties as well as rights, we now see is inevitable ; but it must, I repeat, do more than this. It must extend those ideals beyond the limits of individual conduct or internal policy. Unless these ideals permeate the philosophy of the world, domestic democracy is endangered. Even for our own salvation we must strive, then, for international democracy—I mean, of course, tolerance, frankness, forbearance, open-mindedness, faith, and companionship.

That, you will say, is a big programme. Well, this is a big war. It will bring big, inconceivably big, psychological results. A new world is before us. To some extent we can make it what we will; and what it will be depends, so far as conscious effort can bring things to pass, on the purpose and desire of the English-speaking peoples. We must not fail, we simply must not fail. Let us not lose ourselves, our inherent character, and let us highly resolve to carry forward into the days of peace that feeling of mutual respect, that sense of friendly co-operation by which we are now possessed. This we must do for our own welfare and for the welfare of the outside world.

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