

Maddened by Scent of Blood

It is now about a year since the St. Louis Republic in a leading editorial proposed that the 13th day of August be celebrated in this country as Peace Day. Why? Because on that day 18 peace treaties were ratified by the United States senate. These were 18 of the treaties, now numbering 30, which provide for investigating all disputes of every kind and description. Four of these are made with the belligerent nations: Great Britain, Italy, France, and Russia. Germany, Austria, and Belgium have approved of the plan outlined in these treaties, but the treaties with them have not yet been completed. The plan was offered to all nations and has not yet been withdrawn. This plan furnishes the machinery by which this government can preserve peace with honor, and the treaties had no more enthusiastic supporters a year ago than the St. Louis Republic. But a change has come over the spirit of the Republic. It is now shouting for blood,—for war against Germany— as lustily as any of the members of the pro-ally press. It scouts at the idea that an American ought to avoid the danger zone and, by so doing, keep this country out of war. It puts the legal right of the American to consult his own convenience above his obligation to consider his country's welfare.

Why this change? Is it maddened by the scent of blood? Is it an aroused brute instinct that leads its editor to bellow at the sight of red, or is he so much more interested in the success of one of the belligerents than in his own country's welfare that he is willing to plunge this country into war, and sacrifice hundreds of thousands of brave men to establish the right of an American to be indifferent to the interests of his own country and countrymen?

If a distant war can cause such a transformation in the Republic in one year, what could be expected of it if we had a year of fighting in our own country?

W. J. BRYAN.

PRESENT PREPAREDNESS

The following appropriations have been made for the army and navy during the past ten years:

ARMY		NAVY	
1905—	\$ 77,070,300.88	1905—	\$ 97,505,140.94
1906—	70,396,631.64	1906—	100,336,679.94
1907—	71,817,165.08	1907—	102,071,670.27
1908—	78,634,582.75	1908—	98,958,507.50
1909—	95,382,247.61	1909—	122,662,485.47
1910—	101,195,883.34	1910—	136,935,199.05
1911—	95,440,567.55	1911—	131,410,568.30
1912—	93,374,755.97	1912—	126,405,509.24
1913—	90,958,712.98	1913—	123,151,538.76
1914—	94,266,145.51	1914—	140,718,434.53
1915—	101,019,212.50	1915—	144,868,716.61
1916—	101,959,195.87	1916—	149,661,864.88

From this it will be seen that we are now spending two-hundred and fifty millions a year on preparedness — ten times as much as we spend on the agricultural department that looks after the interests of the farmers—the largest group in this, the greatest agricultural nation in the world. Why should the expenditure for preparedness be doubled as the jingoes now demand? Is it too quiet for the nerves of a few people who have become excited by the war in Europe? Or is it to give employment to ship builders and the manufacturers of arms? No matter what the excuse, the country can not afford to lose its head and the people can not afford to tax themselves unnecessarily to get ready for war—especially when the spirit of hatred engendered by the policy of preparedness will inevitably lead to war. If we have any money to spare there are any number of USEFUL objects for which it may be spent. The preparedness now being preached is not only needless, but dangerous.

WHAT IF—?

Did you ever stop to think what would happen IF every depositor demanded his money the same day, or IF everybody ordered the same kind of food at the same time, or IF everybody went to sleep at once, or IF everybody committed suicide the same moment. No, you know these things, while POSSIBLE, are not PROBABLE, and therefore you go on about your work. But these things are just about as probable as the imaginary dangers that the jingoes are conjuring up as an excuse for frenzied preparedness.

Then and Now—Why This Change?

"AUGUST 13, PEACE DAY"

On August 13 eighteen peace treaties were ratified by the United States senate. The Republic has suggested that this date be celebrated in the future as "Peace Day" in commemoration of the ratification. In discussing this suggestion Secretary of State Bryan points out that "we have no particular day set apart for the consideration of matters connected with the growing subject of peace."

Is there any reason why the American Peace society should not fix upon August 13 as an annual "Peace Day" to be observed by its members in all parts of the country? On no other date so far as is known has world peace taken a greater step forward. The treaties are epoch-making in spirit and in terms. They make war a remoter possibility than ever before so far as the United States is concerned.

The American Peace society has been in existence for well-nigh a century. In all that time there has been no one act on the part of the United States that had more significance as making for national and universal peace than the ratification of these treaties.

The world will not soon forget the tumultuous days of August, 1914. That month will loom redly in the annals of strife. All the more reason then that we should celebrate August 13 as the anniversary of our longest step away from the horrors of battle. That date and deed will stand out vividly against the red background of the Old World's wars.—St. Louis Republic, 1914.

REPLY TO ROOSEVELT'S INTERVIEW

Attention having been called to ex-President Roosevelt's interview published in Sunday morning's papers, Mr. Bryan, in an interview given to Minneapolis papers, August 23rd, said:

"Yes, I have read Mr. Roosevelt's interview. He insists that the breaking off of diplomatic relations would not be harsh enough. He wants deeds, by which I presume he means war. Well, fortunately he does not now act for the American people. If he were president, we would have been in this war long ago. The country has reason to be grateful that we have as president a man who loves peace and who is trying to find a peaceful way out of our disputes with both Germany and Great Britain.

"The breaking off of diplomatic relations would not help the situation; it would simply give the jingoes an excuse to say and do things that might make it more difficult to prevent war. It is much easier to get into a fight than to get out of it, and the people do not want war. They do not believe that a cause of war exists. We can not afford to send hundreds of thousands of soldiers to death to avenge the death of a few who took unnecessary risks. The obligations of citizenship are reciprocal and our people should have more regard for the country's welfare than to travel on belligerent ships going through the war zone, especially while the president is dealing with these diplomatic questions.

"If they have no regard for the country, they should be restrained. A mayor orders people to keep off the streets while he is suppressing a riot; surely the president would be justified in

MR. BRYAN'S CRAVEN GOSPEL

Mr. Bryan, as expected, has seized the occasion of the sinking of the Arabic to urge on the American public those peculiar views which led to his resignation from the cabinet. He begins by admitting all of the contentions of the administration as to the rights of American citizens in transit on the high seas and ends by urging the passing of laws to keep Americans off the ships of belligerents and restrain the exportation of munitions of war.

In short, Mr. Bryan's policy is a policy of "scuttle." He would advise that we avoid fighting for our rights by renouncing them whenever a bullying foreign power threatens them. Shades of Warren and Putnam, of Washington and Marion and John Paul Jones! Think of the bumptious folly, according to this view, of the embattled farmers who fired the shot heard round the world! Why did not they pay those taxes to his Majesty George III, and save their powder and their travail tracks over it in a certain long, hard winter, instead of the footsteps of men whose feet were done up in blood-encrusted rags. And the heroes of Marathon and Thermopylae. Just a few thousands in tribute to Persia—and there would have been no war!

The Union soldiers in the civil war sang:
"John Brown's body lies moldering in the grave,
But his soul goes marching on!"

The new gospel of Mr. Bryan ought also to break into song:

"Uncle Sam's rights have been trampled in the dirt,
But his precious skin is whole!"

There is no more un-American utterance of an American public man on record than this craven counsel that we forget the traditions of the great days of this republic, forget the example of the fathers, forget the history of patriots and patriotism and submit to any abridgment of our rights which Germany may insist upon in order to save our own skins. If American security should be maintained at such a price as that, American citizenship would be no distinction, but a disgrace. We thank God that the resolute man in the White house for whose word the nation waits, harbors no such view of the easy surrender of national rights to avoid the trouble of defending them.—St. Louis Republic, Aug. 24, 1915.

requiring Americans to keep out of the danger zone while he is restoring respect for international law."

CAMPAIGN EXPENSES

As the campaign of 1916 approaches is it not worth while to consider the advisability of providing by appropriation for the legitimate expenses of the campaign? The public is interested in the proper presentation of the claims of the various parties; why not set apart a sum, say ten cents for each voter, for educational work and divide it among the party organizations according to the vote cast at the last general election? This would give all a fair chance to be heard and would lessen the influence of large contributors.

Mr. Roosevelt recommended this some years ago—it is about the only good thing advocated by him that was not taken from a democratic platform. The plan is worth trying and The Commoner commends the idea to the attention of congress.
W. J. BRYAN.

A SUGGESTION

If you want to enlist two powerful interests against preparedness, just propose that the increase in revenue demanded by the jingoes be met by an additional tax on whiskey and beer; or will congress dare to lay it on the masses?

Not much satisfaction in sitting in a hole in the ground watching for a chance to "snipe" a fellow mortal before he "snipes" you.