

The Commoner

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The Duty of a Friend

Among the many wise utterances of President Wilson, none are stronger or more beautiful than the following:

"True friendship is of royal lineage. It is of the same kith and breeding as loyalty and self-forgetting devotion, and proceeds upon a higher principle even than they. For loyalty may be blind and friendship must not be; devotion may sacrifice principles of right choice which friendship must guard with an excellent and watchful care. You must act in your friend's interest whether it please him or not. The object of love is to serve, not to win."

Who will say that this is not a true definition of friendship? And, if true, who are the friends of the President? Those who encourage him in an unwise course or those who warn him against the rocks ahead?

The President's preparedness program is revolutionary—it is an abandonment of the historic policy of his party and the traditions of the country. He has departed from the safe path of experience and is following the devious ways pointed out by the big papers which voice the wishes of the manufacturers of munitions. He is joy-riding with the jingoes and is applauded by grand-standers whose voices are unfamiliar to democratic ears. He is being praised by militarists who seldom, if ever, vote the ticket of his party, and he is grieving those to whom democracy is a religion.

What is the cause of this change of attitude? He has recently declared that WE ARE NOT THREATENED FROM ANY QUARTER, that we ARE AT PEACE WITH ALL THE WORLD and that THERE IS NO FEAR AMONG US. What, then, is the cause of the change? Is he diplomatically so close to the European war that its uproars prevent his hearing "the still, small voice" of the people? Has he gazed upon the floor of the trans-Atlantic slaughter house until the soil of his country looks red?

In an address to the consulting experts he declared himself CONVINCED THAT THE PEOPLE WANT PREPAREDNESS; where did he obtain this information? Not from senators and representatives, for congress was not in session and he had not consulted them. Not from the people themselves, because he had not heard from any considerable number. His only sources of information were a metropolitan press, subservient to big business; and "Navy" leagues, "Defense" leagues and "Security" leagues, officered by representatives of big business. He had not heard from those disinterested citizens who produce the nation's wealth in time of peace and fight the nation's battles in time of war.

He had heard the "murmuring" of the "shallows," but the "depths" had been "dumb." The "depths" speak on election day, why not consult them NOW? And the masses—is it not better for them to advise beforehand than to punish afterwards? Every friend of the President—not those mercenary friends who flock around

DIFFERENCES NOT PERSONAL
For the benefit of those who seem unable to understand disagreements as to principle, I venture to bring down to date the personal relations between the President and myself. The letters that passed between us at the time of my resignation ought to be accepted by friends of both as sufficient proof that there were no personal differences between us at that time. No personal differences have arisen since. The President is doing his duty as he sees it. Acting under the responsibility of a citizen and under a sense of obligation to those who have trusted me I am doing my duty as I see it. I am opposing the plan to increase the appropriations for the army and navy, just as I would expect the President to do if our positions were reversed and he looked upon the subject as I do.
W. J. BRYAN.

him for pecuniary favors—but his real friends who gave him their votes in 1912 and who have loyally supported him in every effort he has made to fulfill the pledges of his platform—these should write to him; they should write now and write often.

Remember, "you must act in your friend's interest whether it pleases him or not. The object of love is to serve, not to win."
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PHILIPPINE PROMISE KEPT
Four times—in 1900, 1904, 1908 and 1912—the democratic national platform pledged the party to the policy of giving to the Filipinos a promise of ultimate independence. The house passed a bill in 1914 embodying this promise, but it was not reached in the senate. The senate has just passed a similar bill, and the house will soon pass it. This will give effect to another plank, do justice to the Filipinos and add a new star to the nation's crown of honor.

Do You Want War?

The President's speeches in the west indicate a complete change of base on his part, or else they show that he has all along entertained a purpose not revealed in his previous utterances. He is now asking the people to furnish him with a larger army and navy with which to enforce American rights. At Des Moines he said:

"Do you want the situation to be such that all the President can do is to write messages; to utter words of protest? If these breaches of international law, which are in daily danger of occurring, should touch the very vital interests and honor of the United States, do you wish me to do nothing?"

If this language means anything at all it means that the preparedness for which he asks is not for the purpose of preventing future wars, BUT IS FOR USE IN THE PRESENT WAR, if he thinks it necessary.

He therefore brings the country face to face with a new proposition: Do you want war? If the people give a favorable response to the President's request for an increase in the army and navy, will he not construe their support as a command from them to proceed to the use of force? He does not tell us which side he is likely to take, but we can not wage war against a belligerent without taking one side as against the other.

Do the American people desire to enter into this war? And if so, are they willing to allow accident or chance to determine the side on which they will enter? Are they willing to take part in the settlement of the European quarrels, rivalries and ambitions which are at the root of the present war?

The President's recent speeches have raised a much more serious question than that raised by the manufacturers of munitions. These traffickers in war supplies simply want the money that can be made out of "getting ready"; they expect to coin a profit out of the policy of keeping the country in fighting trim. But the President's speeches indicate that he is actually considering a state of war in which the United States will be the aggressor; THAT IS, WILL GO TO WAR FOR THE ENFORCEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RIGHTS.

If support of the President's position means that WAR IS TO BE MADE MORE PROBABLE, it is time for the people to protest with an earnestness which can not be misunderstood—time for them to notify their congressmen and senators that THE COUNTRY DOES NOT WANT TO ENTER THIS WAR. If we have disputes which can not be settled by diplomacy we have the treaty plan which was offered to all the nations and endorsed by three-fourths of the world. Why not use it? Why does the President fail to refer to these treaties? If this treaty plan fails we have our choice between entering the present war and the postponement of the final settlement of the dispute until after

CONTENTS
THE DUTY OF A FRIEND
DO YOU WANT WAR?
INCOME TAX SUSTAINED
AMERICANS ON BELLIGERENT SHIPS
QUESTIONS RAISED BY THE PRESIDENT
SECRETARY GARRISON'S RESIGNATION
EXPERTS
PROHIBITION IN NEBRASKA
WHY NOT A REFERENDUM?
THE YOUNG MAN'S OPPORTUNITY
LET THE PEOPLE RULE
AMERICANISM
CHRISTIAN PREPAREDNESS
CONGRESSMAN BAILEY'S LOGIC
DUNN AGAINST MILITARISM
CIVILIZATION AT THE CROSS-ROADS