

Preparedness and Peace

[From The New York Sun, November 9, 1915.]

To the Editor of The Sun—Sir: I read in last Friday's Sun the statement made by the lamented William Jennings Bryan about President Wilson's national defence programme. I do not mean to imply that Mr. Bryan is dead, for if he were dead I should not refer to him as the lamented.

Some years ago in one of its admirable editorial articles the Sun spoke of the ostentatious reticence of Mr. Bryan. That paradoxical expression exactly applies to the peerless puerilizer. Not only is Mr. Bryan ostentatiously reticent but he is also pugnaciously meek, malevolently mild and arrogantly unassuming. Even his silence is noisy.

Mr. Bryan is of so retiring a disposition that in order to advance himself in any way he finds it necessary to go backward. His whole public career has been a recession.

Mr. Bryan refers to the national defence programme of President Wilson as a challenge to the spirit of Christianity. He says that the philosophy of national defence is a false philosophy. Then he turns upon the President with another "God bless you" in the shape of a hope that the President will not be deceived by the atmosphere of the Manhattan club, as he puts it.

What or who is this spirit of Christianity to which or whom Mr. Bryan refers? He can not refer to the Christianity of the Nazarene, because Christ never taught Bryanism. Christ was for defence, for He said: "And he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one." Luke, xxii., 36.

Christ never taught non-resistance to wrong; on the contrary His doctrine was one of constant resistance to wrong. Not only that, but also He taught His disciples to gird up their loins with a sword belt and go forth and wage a never yielding warfare of justice against injustice, of right against wrong.

Christ taught strength, not weakness; taught courage, not cowardice; taught progress, not retrogression; taught push, not passiveness; and when He said "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." He did not refer to Mr. Bryan, but to St. Peter, and He had in mind adequate defences against any prevailing of hell, whether in the shape of war or in other guise.

Mr. Bryan's conception of the spirit of Christianity is that of a smug faced specialization of Providence which materialized out of the infinite nascency at Salem, Ill., on March 19, 1860, and which or who, after it had fledged itself, went to Nebraska and built a tower of Babel known as The Commoner, and made a tongued confusion known as the speech of the Cross of Gold, and which (pardon my metaphors) was used as a Jacob's ladder to make a balloon ascension into the sunshine of publicity and national political prominence.

Mr. Bryan hopes "that the President will not be deceived by the atmosphere of the Manhattan club." That is a metaphor no prettier than those I have just used. Perhaps Mr. Bryan's meaning is literal. But Mr. Bryan's chief medium for the effusive effervescence of his ideas and their transmission to others is a caloric atmosphere, therefore it is natural for him to refer to the atmosphere as a deceiver.

In Mr. Bryan's eyes the Manhattan club is made the unholy of unholies

by the worshippers of Mammon. Mr. Bryan himself is not noted for his detestation of the sight of money. I never heard of any one flipping a coin in his presence without his hat being under the coin before it touched the floor. When he is paid \$500 a night for a Chautauqua speech he does not cry, "Out of sight, damned five spot," but his worshipful regards would put an overstrain on the elastic limit of the First and Second Commandments, and he palms it and pockets it with as pleased and as clinging a sense as that with which the most exquisite connoisseur of Virginian colonelcy sips a mint julep.

I have unhappily been fortunate enough to hear Mr. Bryan speak several times. The most notable speech that I ever heard him make was two years ago at a banquet of the Authors league, New York, and he spoke somewhat after the manner that the humble servant of Balaam might have spoken. Captain Jack Crawford says of an imitation of the braying of an ass, which he sometimes gives at his admirable recitations, that it is not given as an imitation at all, but as the real thing. Likewise, Mr. Bryan's effusion of assinities which he delivered on that occasion was no imitation of donkey talk. It was the real thing. Now in his talk about preparedness he is "Bryan" again.

"We are," he says, "without an enemy, and our preparedness is increasing while other nations exhaust themselves," and he continues, "the nations of Europe brought on the present war because of their preparedness for it, hence, why should we prepare?"

It has been said of Mr. Bryan that he never argues; he merely declaims. The best argument can do is to carry conviction and win converts. Florid declamation can win ten converts, without argument or reason, to every one that can be won by logic. Mr. Bryan knows this. He knows that merely for the purpose of convincing most of his hearers it is not necessary either to be logical or to adhere to facts.

The European war was not brought on because of preparedness, but because of the lack of preparedness on the part of the entente powers. England was pathetically unprepared; so was Russia. Had the entente powers been prepared there would have been no war.

The European powers are not exhausting themselves with respect to what most concerns us, and that is war potentiality; they are becoming stronger every day. They may be poorer after the war, but they will be stronger. At the end of the Civil war the north was much poorer, but infinitely stronger. Financial exhaustion or economic exhaustion does not necessarily mean military exhaustion. Economic weakness constitutes a very strong inducement to utilize military prowess. The poverty of the European nations makes their military powers all the more dangerous to us.

Mr. Bryan conceives it to be a folly for us to prepare to defend the country because he believes that our very preparation would anger the other nations and fret them into war with us, and then he concludes with the paradoxical statement, peculiarly Bryanish, "Why encourage the nations of Europe in their folly by imitating them?" In the matter of armaments? If our preparations for national defence would harass and anger the other nations, how can it at the same time be an encouragement to them? Can we encourage them by harassing and angering them, or harass and anger them by encouragement?

What a balm for tired souls it would be if Mr. William Jennings

Former Senator Bailey, of Texas, is Against Preparedness

The following letter states the position of Former Senator Bailey of Texas on the "preparedness" question:

Washington, D. C., Nov. 15.—Editor "Wow-Wow," Lorena, Texas: I am always glad to have friends like you write me at any time when they desire to know my opinion on any question, and I very freely declare to you that I am utterly opposed to the so-called "preparedness" which the President is now so earnestly advocating. If I thought that this country was in any immediate danger of coming to blows with any other country, I would insist upon making a suitable preparation for the conflict; but I am utterly unable to understand how any intelligent person can think that there is even a remote possibility of our country engaging in a war at this time or for many years to come. The only nations in the world with which a war would be anything like a serious matter to us are now involved in a struggle among themselves from which they will not recover for fifty years. With millions of their best men killed in battle, with other millions crippled, with other millions diseased as the result of exposure and with national debts which will aggregate \$40,000,000,000, neither England, nor France, nor Germany, nor Russia will be apt to give any country, and least of all our country, any just cause of quarrel during the present

century. All of this persuades me that there was never an hour in our history when there was less need of military preparation than there is today; and if we spend an additional sum of \$200,000,000 a year on our army and navy—and before we have gone very far we will be spending much more than that—we will have spent \$10,000,000,000 in the next fifty years in the face of a practical certainty that we will have no war, and, therefore, that vast sum, provided by the capital and labor of this country, will have simply been wasted.

I understand, of course, that there are men in this country who believe in a strong government, and who think that a great army and a great navy will make ours a strong one; but no real democrat entertains that view. We have been taught to believe that a military republic is an impossibility, because the spirit of an army and the spirit of a republic are irreconcilable. A republic can, it is true, maintain a small army in time of peace without serious injury to its institutions, but that can only be done by keeping the army so small that its spirit can not permeate the great mass of our people. This has always been the position of the democratic party, and this must continue to be the position of the democratic party, if it is to remain democratic. Very truly your friend, J. W. BAILEY.

Bryan would relegate himself to the infinite quiescence of innocuous desuetude.

HOBSON MAXIM.

Brooklyn, November 8.

PUTS BAN ON ADMIRALS

A Washington dispatch, dated Jan. 4, says: Officers of the navy hereafter will not be permitted to "talk in public." The rule by which Secretary of War Garrison prohibited army officers from making speeches has been made applicable to navy officers.

This fact became known today when Secretary Daniels wired John W. Scott of the Chicago Commercial club that he would not give Rear Admiral Austin M. Knight permission to speak before that organization on January 15.

The Commercial club had asked Rear Admiral Bradley A. Fiske to speak, but Fiske wired he would not be able to do so. President Scott then wired President Wilson as follows:

"The Commercial club of Chicago regrets your refusal to permit Rear Admiral Fiske to address us on the evening of January 15. Will you give your consent to our inviting Rear Admiral Austin M. Knight for the same date? There will be no newspaper publicity given the matter of the address. The courtesy of a telegraphic reply at once is requested."

Secretary Daniels replied:

"I had not heard that Admiral Fiske had been invited to address the Commercial club until your telegram to the President was referred to me. It is my conviction that the expert opinion of the navy department having been given to the public and congress and the President having outlined a policy for navy construction it is for civilians to lead the fight for enlargement while naval officers follow the unbroken policy of not attempting to influence legislation.

"Until I became secretary of the

navy the reports of the general board had been regarded as confidential. I publish all their recommendations for increases of the navy. The navy's experts will give their views to naval affairs committees in congress and hearings will be public. This gives to congress and the public the opinions of experts."

CLAIMS PAID IN 1915

Ida E. Sundeen, Waverly	\$1,000
Homer E. Aylsworth, Aurora	5,000
John G. Swanson, Osceola	1,000
Emma North, Lincoln	2,500
Thos. E. Bailey, Pleasant Dale	2,000
Thos. C. Swoboda, Plattsmouth	1,000
Robert E. Neitzel, Murphy, Idaho	1,000
George Falconer, Omaha	1,000
Corā B. Alexander, Lincoln	1,000
Samuel J. Boomer, Lawrence	1,000
Jay L. Pierce, Hartington	2,000
Clair A. Everett, Scottsbluff	1,000
James E. Lawthers, Rising City	1,000
E. Ross Hitchcock, Sterling	1,000
Delmer McCann, Arlington	10,000
Frences L. Wisner, Bayard	1,000

Total \$32,500

THE MIDWEST LIFE
OF LINCOLN, NEBRASKA
A STOCK COMPANY SELLING
GUARANTEED COST LIFE INSURANCE