

to represent them anywhere. And I believe that, if we will set this example to the world, the people across the sea who have been dragged into wars about which they were not consulted, who have simply been told to meet on the firing line because someone has ordered war, will find in our example an inspiration and they will learn from what we do, how to protect themselves from ambitious monarchs, from greedy merchants and from the excitement of representatives who act without deliberation.

The President has also suggested that peace to be enduring should include the freedom of the seas. That is not so strange a thing as some suppose. Why, even duelists, when duelling was in flower, had consideration enough for the public to retire to some quiet place where they could shoot each other without disturbing the general public.

OCEANS GOD'S HIGHWAYS

Why should we not regard the oceans as God's highways, and tell nations at war that, when they want to shoot at each other, they must get off the seas and fight somewhere else? These are some plain, simple, reasonable propositions which we present to the world in the hope that the world will recognize their force and I am glad—oh, I am more than glad—I am happy—that the President sent this message to the world before this new situation arose.

I have read in the morning papers, and in the evening papers, how impossible it was for us to avoid very dangerous situations, and how likely it was that we were going to get into trouble, and then I turned back to the language of the President's message and I found solace and comfort and assurance.

If we can ask the nations at war to forget the hatreds aroused by the killing of six millions of people, and come together and confer on terms of peace—if we can ask them to stop in their excitement and reason together—who will say that this nation should rush into war?

What a spectacle we would present asking them to be patient and forbearing while their hearts bleed for their relatives in the grave, and then not be able to be patient and forbearing ourselves with these questions. And remember that those nations are stirred to animosity by the fact that the enemy nation is trying its best to injure them, aye, the nations are in a death grapple, each one trying to take the other's life.

Not an injury that has come to us has been intended against us. Every injury that we have suffered has been incidental to an injury that was intended against someone else. And none of these parties, not one of them, has been our enemy or has wanted to injure us. It would be bad enough to go to war with a nation that hated us and wanted war with us. God forbid that we shall ever compel any nation to go to war with us if it is not an enemy, and does not want war.

Whenever we are asked to enter upon a course it is the part of wisdom to count the cost thereof, to count what we have to gain and what we have to lose. It is also the part of wisdom to count our obligations to the world. This is the greatest of the neutral nations. It is the one to which the world is looking to act as mediator when the time for mediation comes. But if we go into this war, no matter what the cause or excuse or pretext, the moment we go into this war we step down from that high position of the world's greatest neutral nation and turn over to some other nation an opportunity that never came before to any nation since time began.

And more than that, we are the next of kin to all the nations that are at war. They are blood of our blood; they are bone of our bone, and not a soldier boy falls on any battlefield over yonder but what the wall of sorrow in his home finds an echo at some American fireside, and these people coming to us from all the lands have a right to expect that we will remain the friend of all.

Some nation must lift the world out of the black night of war into the light of that day when peace can be made enduring by being built on love and brotherhood, and ours is the nation to perform the task.

Yes, and more glorious than any page of history that has yet been written will be that page that will record our nation's claim to the promise made to the peacemaker. Our nation is less hampered by precedent than the nations of the

Old World, and we are the greatest of the Christian nations, spending more money every year to carry the Bible to those who know it not than any other nation living or that has lived, and the world looks to us to lead the way from the bloodstained precedents of the past out into the larger and brighter future. I believe that God, in His providence, has reserved for this nation the lifting of the moral code that is now used between man and man up to the level of nations. That is what we can do, but we can not do it if we go into this war.

We used to have dueling in this country, and when it was supported by public sentiment men had to fight duels. Because of public sentiment they would be called cowards if they declined, and in that time a great man like Alexander Hamilton fought a duel and fell. The last thing he did before he went out to that fatal field was to write out a protest against the entire system of dueling, and he left the protest to posterity, while he left his body upon the field. Why? Because he thought that, as for himself, it was necessary to conform to the custom in order to be useful in crises that he thought he saw approaching.

What was the duelist's standard of honor? It was this: If a man had a wife and she needed him, he had no right to think of his wife; if he had children and they needed him, he had no right to think of his children, and no matter how much his country needed him, he had no right to think of his country. If a man received a challenge to fight a duel he could not reply: "I would be glad to accommodate you but my wife needs me," or "My children need me," or "My country needs me." No, he only had a right to think of one thing—that he must kill somebody or be killed by somebody. It took moral courage to lead the crusade that has resulted in the change, but we have it today, and in every state in the union there is a law against dueling and it is supported by public sentiment.

Fifty years ago a great statesman of Georgia received a challenge from another great statesman of that state. Had a challenge passed between two such men a hundred years ago instead of fifty, it is not likely that it would have been declined; but fifty years ago the sentiment was changing, and so instead of accepting the challenge this man sent an answer that has found a place in history. He said: "No, I have a family to take care of and I have a soul to save, and as you have neither we would not fight on equal terms."

No nation has challenged us and I do not think any nation will, but if in a moment of excitement one of these mad men in Europe should challenge us, I believe it would be the part of wisdom to answer in the spirit of the answer of the Georgia statesman and say: "No, we have the welfare of one hundred millions of people to guard and we have priceless ideals to preserve, and we will not get down and wallow with you in the mire of human blood to conform to a false standard of honor."

If civilization is to advance, the day must come when a nation will feel no more obligated to accept a challenge to war than an American citizen now feels obligated to accept a challenge to fight a duel, and if that time must come sometime, why not now? If some nation must lead the way, why not our nation?

A CRIME AGAINST NATION

I can not speak for you; I speak only for myself; but I believe that to go into this war would be a crime against our nation and the world. I have faith not only in our President's desire to keep us out of war, but in his ability to do so as expressed in these resolutions. We can lessen the chances of war by keeping American citizens off belligerent ships and off American and neutral ships carrying contraband, especially arms and ammunition. If diplomacy fails we can resort to the treaty plan, embodied in thirty treaties and endorsed by three-quarters of the world. If we come to a time when there is a dispute with any nation, I care not what nation it is, or on what side the nation fights, if we come to a time when we have a dispute that can not be settled by peaceful means and we are driven to the alternative of either going into this war, or postponing final settlement until after this war is over, I believe it will be the part of wisdom to postpone final settlement until this war is over. Why? First, because it is not fair to expect

nations fighting in a death struggle to deal with us calmly and with deliberation. If there ever was a time since man began to write the history of his fellowmen, when a nation was justified, aye, compelled to be patient and to exercise Christian forbearance, that time is now, and our nation is the nation.

And then, too, if we postpone settlement the chances are many to one that when the war is over we can settle all disputes without resort to war. The trouble is not that they do not want to settle with us, but it is fear of the effect the settlement may have on the war, and that fear will be removed when the war is over. But, more than that, if I knew that we could not avoid war, if I knew (what no man can know) that postponement would not prevent war, if I had to choose between going into this war and having a war of our own after this war is over, I would rather wait and have a war of our own than go into this war.

THIS IS NOT OUR WAR

Why? First, because it would enable us to play the part of a neutral nation and to help bring this war to an end before we started our own; and, second, it would be OUR war if we waited and we would have something to say about when to commence, when to get through and the terms of the treaty. But if we go into this war THIS is not OUR war; this is everybody's war, and they did not consult us about starting and they have not paid much attention to us about conducting it, and if we went in we would have to go in on one side or the other, and it would be determined not by our choice, but by whichever side we happened to have our trouble with when we went to war. And we would have to stay in until they came out, and while they were fighting for the things that they were fighting for, and God forbid that we shall ever entangle ourselves in the quarrels of the Old World.

If any nation ever attacks this nation, I do not care what nation it is, I believe we ought to fight until the last man is dead, but I am not willing that one single mother's son shall be carried across an ocean three thousand miles wide to march under the banner of any European monarch, or die on European soil, in the settlement of European quarrels.

If anybody tells you that it may become necessary to go into this war to preserve our honor let me answer him that there is no honor that we can preserve or secure by going into this war that is comparable with the honor which we can achieve if we can but persuade those nations to turn like prodigal sons from the husks on which they have fed. If we can but lift them out of the bloody mire in which they fight and help them to build a permanent peace on a foundation that will endure. That, my friends, is the greatest glory that this nation can achieve. If some say that we should now mingle our standards with the standards of Europe I answer that I would not exchange the moral prestige of this republic for the martial glory of all the empires that have risen and fallen since time began.

In his address to congress on December 8, 1914, President Wilson said: "What is meant by being prepared for war? Is it meant that we are not ready, upon brief notice, to put a nation in the field—a nation of men trained to arms? Of course we are not ready to do that, and we shall never be in time of peace so long as we retain our present political principles and institutions." This is worth recalling now that the President is being misrepresented by the militarists of this country as a man willing to overthrow what he has said are the political principles and institutions of the country.

Strange, isn't it, that men who were clamoring a little while ago for an embargo on the shipment of munitions from this country to Europe on the ground that this would sooner stop the war are clamoring now against those who would have this government put an embargo on the shipment of our boys to Europe to be devoured by the god of war.

The headline over a long article in one of The Commoner's exchanges reads: "The Facts About Mexico." One of the distressing things about the dailies is their tendency towards giving so much space in their columns to fiction.