

possible. A cry had gone out from every home in every stricken land from which sons and brothers and fathers had gone forth to the great sacrifice that such a sacrifice should never again be exacted. It was manifest why it had been exacted. It had been exacted because one nation desired dominion and other nations had known no means of defence except armaments and alliance. We had lain at the heart of every arrangement of the Europe—of every arrangement of the world—that preceded the war. Restive peoples had been told that fleets and armies, which they toiled to sustain, meant peace; and they now know that they had been lied to; that fleets and armies had been maintained to promote national ambitions and meant war. They know that no old policy meant anything else but force, force—always force. And they knew that it was intolerable. Every true heart in the world and every enlightened judgment demanded that, at whatever cost of independent action every government that took thought for its people or for justice or for ordered freedom should lend itself to a new purpose and utterly destroy the old order of international politics. Statesmen might see difficulties, but the people could see none and could brook no denial. A war in which they had been bled white to beat the terror that lay concealed in every balance of power must not end in a mere victory of arms and a new balance. The monster that had resorted to arms must be put in chains that could not be broken.

DO WE REGRET IT?

The united power of free nations must put a stop to aggression, and the world must be given peace. If there was not the will or the intelligence to accomplish that now, there must be another and a final war and the world must be swept clean of every power that could renew the terror. The League of Nations was not merely an instrument to adjust and remedy old wrongs under a new rule of peace. It was the only hope for mankind again and again had the demon of war been cast out of the house of the peoples and the house swept clean by a treaty of peace; only to prepare a time when he would enter it again with spirits worse than himself. The house must now be given a tenant who could hold it against all such. Convenient, indeed indispensable as statesmen found the newly planned League of Nations, to be for the execution of present plans of peace and reparations, they saw it in a new aspect before their work was finished. They saw it as the main object of the peace, as the only thing that could complete it or make it worth while. They saw it as the hope of the world and that hope they did not dare to disappoint. Shall we or any other free people hesitate to accept this great duty? Dare we reject it and break the heart of the world.

CONFERENCE STANDS COMPLETE

And so the result of the conference of peace, so far as Germany is concerned, stands complete. The difficulties encountered were very many. Sometimes they seemed insuperable. It was impossible to accommodate the interests of so great a body of nations—interests which directly or indirectly affected almost every nation in the world—without many minor compromises. The treaty as a result, is not exactly what we would have written. It is probably not what any one of the national delegations would have written. But results were worked out which on the whole bear test. I think that it will be found that the compromises which were accepted as inevitable nowhere

cut to the heart of any principle. The work of the conference squares, as a whole, with the principles agreed upon as the basis of the peace as well as with the practical possibilities of the international situations which had to be faced and dealt with as facts.

AMERICA'S ROLE

I shall presently have occasion to lay before you a special treaty with France, whose object is the temporary protection of France from unprovoked aggression by the power with whom this treaty of peace has been negotiated. Its terms link it with this treaty. I take the liberty, however, of reserving it for special explication on another occasion.

The role which America was to

play in the conference, seemed determined, as I have said, before my colleagues and I got to Paris—determined by the universal expectations of the nations whose representatives, drawn from all quarters of the globe, we were to deal with. It was universally recognized that America had entered the war to promote no private or peculiar interest of her own, but only as the champion of rights which she was glad to share with free men and lovers of justice everywhere. We had formulated the principles upon which the settlement was to be made—the principles upon which the armistice had been agreed to and the parleys of peace undertaken—and no one doubted that our desire was to see the treaty of peace formulated

along the actual lines of those principles—and desired nothing else. We were welcomed as disinterested friends. We were resorted to as arbiters in many a difficult matter. It was recognized that our material aid would be indispensable in the days to come, when industry and credit would have to be brought back to their normal operation again and communities beaten to the ground assisted to their feet once more and it was taken for granted, I am proud to say, that we would play the helpful friend in these things as in all others without prejudice or favor. We were generously accepted as the unaffected champions of what was right. It was a very responsible role to play; but I am happy to report that the fine group of Americans

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