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THE PRESIDENT'S PLEA

TOWARD the close of his great opening plea for the league of nations, President Wilson spoke a sentence which he had seen everywhere on the streets of Paris. He explained that the men who wore them came to France after our purpose in the war had been proclaimed to all the world. And then he uttered these great words: "They came not merely to win a war but to win a cause."

He implied unmistakably to that audience of diplomats, shrewd and wary men gathered from every corner of the civilized world, that if the cause were lost the war might as well not have been won, for all its blood and sorrow would have been spent in vain.

What is that cause which stands supreme above all military victory and all diplomatic advantage as the prime end for mankind to gain? Mr. Wilson did not leave his hearers in doubt about it. "It is the cause," he said, "of justice and liberty for men of every rank and every place."

Those are mighty words. They bear us in the spirit back to the days of our own revolution. They wake memories of Patrick Henry. They resound with the courage of the seers and prophets who have piloted mankind through the stormy seas of other days into safe havens. The peoples of Europe were listening for just that sentence. It roused new hope in their souls. It swept away their doubts for it demonstrated a man who had burned behind him all the ships of compromising diplomacy and set out on a march to the promised land.

Never was the iron hand better hidden under a velvet glove than by President Wilson in his plea for the league of nations, but never was the grip of the iron hand relaxed. He reminded the assembled diplomats of the reason why the United States entered the war, not for gain, not for conquest, not because it was afraid, not because it wanted to meddle with the politics of Europe or Asia, but only because the American people desired the triumph of ideal justice.

It was the people's war and they must not be disappointed in the peace that follows it. They entered it for a cause and that cause must not be sacrificed, it must not be slighted. But it will be slighted, it may be sacrificed, unless the terms of the final settlement are such that the war never can be repeated. We went to war to end war. Nothing short of that immense gain will satisfy the American nation. Nothing less will satisfy the world.

Mr. Wilson left no doubt in his hearers' minds that he knew the wishes of the war-weary peoples. Without parading it, he nevertheless reminded them that he was fresh from immediate contact with the masses of England, France and Italy. He had addressed them in their countless multitudes. He had received their representatives who, in the pathetic verbiage of the soldiers and workers, told him face to face of their despair and their hope.

The diplomats represented the governments, some of which were stained with the intrigues that brought on the war. President Wilson came with a mandate from the peoples who had fought the war and who now must toil to pay its bills. Their wish is the same as the wish of the millions here, across the sea from Versailles—no more war, forever and forever an end to its hate and slaughter, its waste and woe.

And the president warned the diplomats that the people's wishes must be respected. The old days when a few gentlemen assembled at a shining table could parcel out the countries of the earth as they pleased and erect thrones to suit their will are gone. "The select classes of mankind," said Mr. Wilson with ominous incisiveness, "are no longer the governors of mankind. The fortunes of mankind are now in the hands of the plain people of the whole world."

He might have added in plain words, what he only delicately suggested, that those plain people draw nearer together every day, forming a united mass of humanity before which rulers must bow or perish.

To fulfill the people's mandate one supreme act must be done. The minor arrangements of the peace settlement may be temporary. In all likelihood many of them will be. Mr. Wilson does not assume infallible wisdom for himself and his colleagues. But whatever may become of the minor arrangements one major, all-important thing must endure. "We may not be able," said he, "to set up permanent decisions but we can set up permanent processes," by which our erring decisions of today may be made inerrant and lasting tomorrow.

Those "permanent processes" must be embodied in the constitution of the league of nations, which through all future ages shall, like a cord of gold, unite the destinies of the peoples. Mr. Wilson described his concept of the league of nations. It is to be "an association of nations" formed for the "continuous superintendence of the peace of the world." It is not something to be called into existence only spasmodically and in emergencies but something "always functioning in watchful attendance upon the interest of the nations." The league is to have "vital continuity" such as permits "no intermission of its watchfulness and labor." It is to be "the nations' eye" and "an eye that does not slumber but is everywhere watchful and attentive."

President Wilson outlines in these words something that is manifestly more and greater than any bunch of judges. He depicts a social organ of energetic beneficence, functioning not in the seclusion of a court room but over the whole expanse of the globe.

in the twinkling of an eye nor by the passing of a resolution. English might easily become the world's language for all international business but it never will until its spelling is made less shocking to the intelligence.

Letters From the People

Normal Schools
Albany, Jan. 23.—To the Editor of The Journal—I have noticed several letters in the Journal of late in which Mr. Armstrong advocates the certification of students in the university level college to teach in the elementary schools of the state.

It is interesting to note how the leaders in education are planning for improvements. I find in the Journal of the 10th of this month an article by one of our writers, Mr. C. A., instead of setting up a new system of schools, would do much more good by fixing in the improvement of the existing system.

To Improve School System
Schoolhouse, District No. 18, Jan. 18.—To the Editor of the Journal—I offer the following solution in answer to several items read in your paper. It is interesting to note how the leaders in education are planning for improvements.

Urges Vigorous Fight on "Flu"
Portland, Jan. 21.—To the Editor of The Journal—In a previous letter to the Journal on the influenza epidemic, I called attention to the fact that in a serious matter of public nature where the health, safety and general good of the public are at stake; and where business interests come in conflict and may momentarily suffer, it is the duty of the government to act with the inauguration of ways and means designed to ameliorate the sufferings or combat the situation are to be found on the side of business.

No Room for Doubts
Nobody seemed to care a whoop when it was first proposed to attempt recovery of the Hyde-Benson school lands.

An Ex-Housemaid Testifies
Portland, Jan. 24.—To the Editor of The Journal—I answer to "Sufferer" in the Bureau of January 23rd. I will say that I am one of the girls who last summer quit housework and took a man's job where I am getting \$3 a day.

Italy and the Jugo-Slavs
President Wilson has discussed with the Italians the aspirations of Italy, and has expressed sympathy therewith, but further, has wisely declined to commit himself to any definite statement.

Olden Oregon
Business on the Columbia river in 1863 was something enormous. Hardly ever did a steamer make a trip with less than 200 passengers.

Widows of Presidents
PENSION of \$5000 a year and free use of the postal system for all her personal mail are provided for the widow of the late ex-President Roosevelt in a bill which has passed both houses of congress and now awaits the president's signature.

Think It Over; Then Buy War Savings Stamps
The Swiss daily bread ration will be increased from 150 to 200 grammes February 1.

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living. But when we were discharged a fellow gave us a fine talk. He said we were going to see that we would be treated all right, and that we would be looked after and given jobs."

COMMENT AND NEWS IN BRIEF
SMALL CHANGE
Let's see, when is straw hat day? Baseball chatter in the waffle palace: "Batter up."

JOURNAL MAN AT HOME
By Fred Lockley
"An' we taught 'em to respect the British soldier," says a Tommy Jaeger of the 1st Battalion of the 10th Canadian Infantry.

WAR HOSPITALS EMPTYING FAST
Special Correspondence of The Journal and The Chicago Daily News
London—Soldiers wounded in England are being moved to the United States so rapidly that it has become impossible to maintain a sufficient number of hospitals almost immediately.

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