

the beginning of the great victory for which we have been fighting during the last thirty months. What are the reasons for this hope? Sir, there are not a few evidences that the vital forces of the enemy are commencing to give way. Though at this moment, the beginning of the year 1917, Germany is still in possession of Belgium and a sixth part of France, of Serbia, and a large part of Rumania, evidences are percolating through the severe German censorship that Germany is being invaded by two foes more formidable and more dangerous even than soldiers and guns: these foes are famine and exhaustion. The attempt, made only some weeks ago, by the German Government to enter into peace negotiations goes far to justify this expectation. The language of the German Chancellor when he made these overtures of peace was not the same language that we heard in 1914. Arrogant it was, but not the same kind of arrogance that characterized his tone in 1914. To-day we do not hear that the Germans are fighting to dominate the world. To-day their appeal to the people of Germany is that they are fighting for their fatherland; that they are fighting to maintain their existence as a country. Far different language this from that which we heard only thirty months ago. It is evident, however, from the tone of the German Chancellor's overtures, that he still poses as a conqueror. Sir, it is not usual for the victor to be the one to offer peace or to talk peace. Instances, however, have occurred where he who claimed to be the victor saw approaching a new danger perhaps more formidable than the one which he had just overcome. Napoleon is the most striking example of them all. In 1812 Napoleon had invaded Russia. He had carried everything before him. He had reached Moscow, the old capital, the holy city of all the Russias, and from the Kremlin, the palace of the old Czars, he offered a peace to his opponent. What was it that prompted Napoleon, himself an insatiable conqueror, to adopt that course? Was it magnanimity? Was it a sudden horror of shedding blood? No; we know that nothing of that kind ever interfered with Napoleon's plans. The reason was that he saw fast approaching another enemy far more formidable to him than those whom he had just overcome, and that enemy was the Russian winter. The Emperor of Russia refused all overtures. Events proved that Napoleon had been right in his fear, because the Russian winter did what Russian armies

had failed to do—indeed, could not have done. The Russian winter simply annihilated the army of Napoleon. Though he continued the great struggle, he never recovered from that blow, which was his first step towards St. Helena.

There is a similarity between the position of Napoleon in 1812 and that of Germany in 1917, in that another enemy has to be faced whose presence has not been anticipated. Last year, speaking upon this subject, I ventured to say that in my humble judgment the only complete victory which had been won up to that time had been won by the British Navy. After the passing of a year I think I can repeat that the only complete victory which is being won in this war is the victory which is being achieved by the British Navy.

When I said so last year, I did not refer to the engagements which had taken place from time to time, and in which the British navy had participated so successfully. Neither do I refer this year to the battle of Jutland when the German navy dared to come out from cover, soon again to seek cover in order to avoid the victorious pounding of the fleet of Sir David Beatty. No, what I refer to is the unseen, silent, relentless pressure of the British navy upon the trade and commerce and resources of the enemy. I refer to the silent pressure of the British navy, whose powerful grip is slowly, surely, effectively strangling the vitality of the enemy; and there is every reason to believe that with further efforts on our part, whatever may be its success on land, undoubtedly the German nation must come to her knees because of that silent, unseen pressure of the British navy.

The speech from the Throne refers to the offers of peace on the part of the German Government. The Allies have met the offer in the only way it could be met. They have refused to go into conference until they know the terms upon which Germany would negotiate. They went further: They even placed upon the table the terms upon which they are ready to have peace, and by their answer they have shown that they are ready this day, any day, to negotiate for peace, which shall not be simply a truce to be broken again at the option, will, caprice, or ambition of any party, but a peace which shall be founded upon the rights of mankind, upon freedom and justice, and which shall lift humanity and civilization to a still higher level than before the war.

His Excellency in his speech states: