

THE PRESIDENT NEXT DOOR

(Continued from page 6.)

George's statement contained no statistics of shipping losses. It confined itself to the assertion, a grave assertion, that some way must be found to curtail those losses and that in the meantime there must be no importation of anything but necessities. But Lloyd George's statement must be read in conjunction with another statement, equally authoritative, that was issued by the British Embassy in Washington on February 20th, that is to say, only three days before the speech in the House of Commons.

THE embassy statement reviews the situation as it existed from February 1st to February 14th. During those two weeks a total of 4,777 vessels arrived in British ports, and 4,514 vessels sailed from British ports. The daily average of arrivals was 341 vessels, and the daily average of sailings was 322. It should be remembered, however, says the statement, that these totals do not include fishing vessels, coastwise and local coastwise traffic, nor craft of under 100 tons burden. Omitting these, we find that the submarine campaign has resulted in a loss of less than one ship for every 100 which arrived at or left British ports during the period mentioned. Now of course it is open to us to believe that the British authorities have mis-stated the facts. German officials assert that they have done so, and they name some few vessels which they claim to have sunk, but that can not be found in any shipping list. And of course it must often be impossible for a submarine to ascertain the name of its victims, and especially of those that sink quickly. All that can be done is to examine the statistics that are presented to us and to form our own judgment of their reliability. On February 24th, that is to say, four days from the end of the month, the total shipping destroyed by submarines during February, Allied as well as neutral, was about 308,000 tons, which hardly looks as though the German expectation of 1,000,000 tons a month could be attained, or even half that. And at least a certain amount of this shipping thus destroyed consisted of neutral vessels not even bound for British ports and whose loss leaves Great Britain unaffected. This was the case with some at least of the Dutch vessels sunk on February 23rd. They were laden with grain and bound for Dutch ports, and unless they were unintentionally sunk or sunk in ignorance of their nature and destination, we can only suppose that Germany must wish to pick a quarrel with Holland. The incident, if the first reports are correct, becomes still more inexplicable when we remember that supplies are constantly passing into Germany from Holland and that a part of this grain may have been intended for German consumption. But, however that may be, it still remains evident from the statistics that enormous numbers of vessels—the embassy statement says 99 per cent. of the total—are passing safely through the prohibited area and that no radical change in the situation has been produced by the "new" submarine campaign.

THE diary of a submarine trip that has just been published under the title of "The Adventures of the U-202," gives us a curious account of the dangers that must be encountered by the underwater craft. The author enumerates some of the more familiar expedients for their capture, and then he speaks of a device of nets and mines that he seems particularly to have dreaded. He gives no mechanical details, but it appears that any interference with the net has the effect of drawing a mine underneath the intruder and exploding it. His own boat was nearly caught in such a trap, but through some failure of the mechanism the mine exploded above him instead of beneath him. On another occasion he found on rising to the surface that he had been caught in a net without knowing it and had broken his way through it. His craft from stem to stern was covered with steel mesh made apparently of stout piano wire. He speaks also of the tell-tale cork floats which enable the vigilant gunboat or motor-boat to trace the underwater course of the submarine that is tranquilly unaware of the broad trail that it is leaving on the surface. The newer type of German submarine of the Deutschland pattern is said to be strong enough to break its way through the steel net, but this would avail it only in the case of the nets that are moored. The floating or cork-buoyed net would be just as dangerous to a large submarine as to a small one.

heart and soul of the world. You find this ethicalism in every quoted word of Woodrow Wilson. When he became President he was imbued with a collegiate evangelism. A blase and unenlightened world was to be led into a new path; the United States, most of all the regenerate Democrat party, was to be the way out.

No moral reformer was ever more earnest.

To Bryan there was to be another way of getting heaven on earth. His method was not education of the masses and regulation of the classes, but peace among the nations. The world cannot live by war. America was to show other nations how a great democracy could see the rest of mankind groaning under war burdens and itself refuse to go to war. So he got a large number of small nations to sign documents in a sort of keep-the-peace league, whatever happens. Thus there would be no foreign complications: these would adjust themselves through the abolition of diplomacy. The world should have the sublime spectacle of a great free nation, utterly disdainful of mailed fist and shining armour. And the vast contemplation of this apocalyptic dream was quite sufficient to keep the Secretary of State from being worried about his ordinary duties. Through his window in the State Army and Navy building Bryan kept a watchful eye on the White House just across the lawn. Yes, Woodrow Wilson would make an apt apostle. With one such purpose in two first citizens of the United States there could be no trouble in working out the dream.

Of course there was the Mexican hornets' nest. But Mexico never could remain anarchist with a great nation next door, so all lighted up with inward reform and outward peace.

Meanwhile business declined. There must be a reason. It would never do to blame Democratism. And even if the seven-year slump was to follow a period of over-expansion why should not Democratism discover the mental cause and apply the cure? Hence the successive interviews with business and finance captains at the White house to discover if business depression was not after all "psychological," curable by the fourth dimension.

Secretary of State indites another manifesto to the Peace League of nations. After all there is something in having two great minds working on different angles of the same problem. Europe must be—

Bang! what was that? A whole wicked world at bloody war without even consulting the Secretary of State. Wilson must be counselled at once; neutrality proclaimed and defined. War must never come to the U. S. Bryan decreed that. What had war to do with the new world—and a new earth—anyway?

In justice to President Wilson it must be admitted that the great war came somewhat too soon. Under the shadow of the peace-tree Bryan, he had not yet made up his mind. There was, indeed, a great deal of mind to make up. The whole nation must be re-traversed in the light of the new democracy—government of, for and by the people—somehow. But something was rotten in the state of Denmark. Hamlet must think again.

Since Lincoln's day no President had ever thought so hard, with so much to think about.

We can imagine the broad, benign face of the evangel Bryan in the President's study—come to talk over the crimson brutalities in Belgium. What, as the two first citizens of the world's greatest republic, would these two transcendentalists have to say to each other about this blow at civilization?

We shall never know. Perhaps the soul of the President, commander-in-chief of the United States army and navy, burned within him. He may have said flaming words. But—as a man only. As a President, with the weight of a vast ethical message to humanity, he must have agreed with the Pacifier, that it were better to turn the other cheek. Such mental reservation, such public self-effacement has not been common in our time. Contemplating the dispassionate frame of Woodrow Wilson at such a time we conveniently forget the Baltimore convention, the triumph of Wilson with Bryan in the saddle.

Soon afterwards came the Kaiser's birthday. Usual felicitations from the President. Matter of

historic form. In majestic passivity the Secretary of State reviewed his doctrine of non-resistance and universal peace. The millennial dawn might not be far off. Woodrow Wilson stifled his private emotions and stoically determined to be—above all the President.

When, in New York, he gave utterance to that epoch-marking sentence, "There is such a thing as a country being too proud to fight"—what was it but the outward echo of the Pacifier in the Secretary's office? Woodrow Wilson never originated that. Neither did he mean that America would never fight. What did it matter what he meant? The phrase was everything. It rang round the world like Gen. Grant's "We'll fight it out on that line if it takes all summer" and Ambassador Gerard's "I'll stay here till hell freezes over."

Still there is a difference. The nationality of Grant's and Gerard's sayings could be told by a Hottentot. It would take an international alienist to decide that Wilson's speech was American. And it would take an ethnological Lombroso to prove that the author of it is either an American or anything else. Put him against Lord Morley, one with his crisp English accent, the other with his soft Southern, each with his keen-eyed culture and refining ethical process of thought—one might say that it is not so much English or American as the universal



STAMPING OUT THE FUSE.

—Kirby in New York World.

gentleman. Still, there are but three dimensions to the Morley intellect. Wilson, as we have remarked, has four. Which is why he is so baffling a personality even to his followers. That explains the extraordinary character of his notes to Germany, masterpieces of oblique analysis and dispassionate alignment; his self-contradictory speeches afterwards and some of his actions; his dismissal of Bryan; the resignation of Garrison, Secretary of War, on the preparedness issue; the subsequent pre-election speech of the President booming preparedness and his statement, "Never again in a world war can America be neutral."

Oh, the Democratic party and the American nation thought they had a man of obvious dimensions such as Roosevelt and Taft. They discovered otherwise. Nobody ever could tell what Mr. Wilson might say next, what previous party doctrine he might upset, what self-counsel he might indulge in to the detriment of the party. But what was—party? To Woodrow Wilson the better of two optimisms. He was what we call a Liberal and therefore entitled to change his mind according to the way the ground listened—hearing the throb of unorganized, unethicalized millions. He has said:

"When I fail to change my mind with changing conditions of the world I shall have ceased to be in harmony with the world."

Note the almost cosmic character of that confession. Not merely the party, nor the country, nor the new world as such—from the great lakes south

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