

EXHIBITION NUMBER

**BRITAIN AND AMERICA**

AN  
ELOQUENT SPEECH

BY

MR. PAGE

AMERICAN AMBASSADOR IN ENGLAND

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The noble words spoken by the American Ambassador on the third anniversary of the War, in reminding the people on the two sides of the Atlantic of their common past, and the single purpose which has drawn them together, also did something to unfold the promise of the future.

Lofty in sentiment, and suggestive of the trust laid upon us as citizens of this Nation and Empire, at an hour more "tremendous" than any that we, or our forefathers have ever known. It marks the opening of a new chapter of one of the greatest and most eloquent stories of human progress to be found in the annals of the human race.

# BRITAIN AND AMERICA

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## MR. PAGE'S SPEECH

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### "GUARDIANS OF CIVILISATION"

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Mr. Page, the United States Ambassador, delivered a notable speech at Plymouth on Saturday, August 4th, on the relations and war aims of the two nations. There was a brilliant spectacle on the Hoe, when the Ambassador, who, with a distinguished party, had been entertained to lunch by the Mayor, reviewed soldiers and sailors. Thousands of people were present, and the greeting extended to Mr. Page was characterised by great enthusiasm and sincerity, his eloquent speech moving the audience to great enthusiasm.

Mr. Page said: I am glad to stand in this town and, at the beginning of this new era in the life of our race to pledge the unwavering fellowship of free men across the sea—the sea that once separated us, but that now unites us. I pay homage here to the immortal memory of those sturdy men who sailed from this harbour nearly 300 years ago and carried to the making of our New World that love of freedom which now impels us to come to the defence of the imperilled freedom of the world. The idealism of the Republic rests on their unconquerable spirit, which we keep yet, thank God, when a high duty calls us. In memory of them, and in the comradeship of this righteous war, whose awful shadow will darken the world till we win it, I greet you as kinsmen.

We are met on the most tragic anniversary in history. It is not a day to celebrate for its own sake. What we shall be glad to celebrate will be the day of victory, and its anniversary ever afterwards. But, before we achieve victory, it is fit that we meet on this dire anniversary to fortify our purpose, if it needs fortifying, and to pledge ourselves that the brave men who have died shall not have died in vain; and to reassert our purpose to finish the task, even if it exhaust the vast resources and take all the valiant lives of the Allies in Europe and of the Republic across the sea. For what would the future of the human race be worth if the deliberate and calculated barbarism of our enemies over-

run the earth? The supreme gift of free government, which this brave island gave to the world, and to which all free lands chiefly owe their freedom, would be swept away. Let the darkness of death overtake us now rather than that the darkness of tyranny should sweep over the whole world of free men. No American can come to Plymouth without thinking of the going of the English from these shores to the new land where they set up a new freedom and laid the foundations of the most prosperous and hopeful community on the earth. In the course of time those New World communities fell apart from political allegiance to the Old Land. But they fell apart from the Old Land only in political allegiance. If we had need to discuss this political divergence, I should maintain that political separation was as well for you as it was necessary for us, and that by reason of it human freedom has been further advanced, and a new chapter in free men's growth opened throughout the English-speaking world.

#### **Race Which Endured**

The American Revolution was a civil war fought on each side by men of the same race. And this civil war was fought in the Colonial Assemblies, and in Parliament as well as on the battlefields in America, and it was won in the Colonial Assemblies and in Parliament as well as on the battlefields in America, for from that day on you have regarded Colonies as free and equal communities with the Mother Country. This civil war naturally left a trail of distrust, the greater because of the long distance between us by sail. But, when the first steamship came over the ocean, and still more when the cable bound us together, a new union began to come about. But in the meantime the American community had developed in its own way, and we had become so fixed and different in our conventions and ways of life that we could not easily come back to your conventions and ways of life if we would. In fact, there is no other test that the British people have had—no test that any people has ever had—which proved its great qualities so well as the British settlement and management of America. Here were men in a new land, cut off from close contact with their kinsmen at home, who took their political affairs in their own management, and thereafter were without guidance or support from their more numerous kinsmen left behind.

How did the race stand such a test? No other migrating race has stood such a test so well; and these first English Colonists have now grown, by natural increase and by numerous adoptions, into a people which to-day include more English-speaking white

men than the whole British Empire. They have not only outgrown in numbers all the British elsewhere, but they have kept what may be called the faith of the race. They have kept the racial and national characteristics. They have kept British law, British freedom, British Parliaments, British character.

I am not boasting of my own land; I am only reciting how your race has endured and survived separation from you and your land.

Our foundations were British; our political structure is British, with variations; our social structure is British—also with important variations; more important still, our standards of character and of honour and of duty are your standards; and life and freedom have the same meaning to us that they have to you. These are the essential things, and in these we have always been one.

And now the day of our supreme test and of the heroic mood is come. There is now a race reason why we should have a complete understanding; and such a complete understanding has come. You will, I hope, pardon me for even alluding to our old differences; for they are now long-forgotten far-off things. I allude to them only to clear the way. It is not the going of the Pilgrims nor the falling away of the Colonies that we now celebrate, but rather the coming of American warships, which symbolise the new union of the two peoples that this fierce assault on our civilisation has revealed afresh. Politically two peoples, in all high aims and in the love of freedom we are one, and must now remain at one for ever.

### Differences Swept Away

This war has swept away incidental differences between us as a harrow smooths a field. Not only are our warships come. Our troopships, too, have landed an army on the soil of our brave Ally, where the enemy yet keeps the wavering line of an invader, and more warships will come and more troopships, million-laden, if need be, till that line is for ever broken and till the submarines are withdrawn or are for ever submerged. There is coming the greatest victory for free government that was ever won, and the day of this victory which we are both fighting for may turn out to be the most important date in our history, or perhaps in all history. And the necessity to win it has cleared the air as no other event in modern times has cleared it; and but for the millions of brave lives it has cost, this clearing of the air would richly repay all that the war will cost. It has revealed the future of the world to us not as conquerors, but as preservers of its peace. The free, peace-loving nations will have no more of this colossal,

armed, and ordered pillage; and no combination of the peace-loving nations can be made effective without both branches of the English-speaking peoples. This Empire and the Great Republic must then be the main guardians of civilisation hereafter, the conscious and leagued guardians of the world.

It is this that the war has revealed to us. It is not a task of our seeking. But it is a task that we will, with the other free peoples of the world, gladly undertake. To undertake it, our comradeship must become perpetual, and our task is to see to it that it be not broken nor even strained—our task and our children's task after us. It is, of course, the function of Governments to keep friendly nations in proper relations to one another; and both our nations\* fortunately can and do trust both our Governments to do that. Through all the difficulties and differences that arose between our two Governments during the early stages of the war, there was no rupture of friendly dealing. When the full story of these years of delicate relations comes to be told it will be seen that mutual tolerations and forbearance played a far larger part than a rigid insistence on disputed points. Such differences as we had were differences between friends. I am sure that I may say with propriety that the two distinguished British statesmen who were his Majesty's Chief Foreign Secretaries during this period showed a spirit in their dealings with the United States Government that put the whole English-speaking world in their debt; and I am sure that they would say the same for the Government of the United States.

### Mutual Knowledge

But while, fortunately, our two Governments may be fully trusted to bind us together, Governments come and Governments go. Far more important than any particular Government is the temper and action of public opinion in free countries such as ours. The complete and permanent union in all large aims of our two nations, generation after generation, must, therefore, rest on the broad base of a friendly and informed public opinion in both countries. If this argument be sound it leads us—every one of us—to a high duty. The lasting friendship of two democratic nations must rest on the sympathetic knowledge that the people of each nation have of the other—even upon the personal friendships of large numbers of people one with another. Personal friendships make a friendly public opinion. It is, therefore, the highest political duty that Britons and Americans can have to build up personal knowledge of one another and personal friendships.

I venture to put together a few definite suggestions. Put in

your schools an elementary book about the United States—not a dull text-book, but a book written by a sympathetic man of accurate knowledge, which shall tell every child in Britain about the country, about the people. A perfunctory book will fail. Have a hundred books written, if necessary, till the right one be written. There is, as you know, one great book written by an Englishman about the United States—Lord Bryce's "American Commonwealth." I wish it were read by as many persons here as in America. But this is not a book for children. On the American side, too, I hope to see a modern elementary book about Great Britain put into schools—a book that shall tell children of the present Great Britain and point in the right spirit to the future. Then encourage the giving of popular lectures by well-informed Americans about our country and our people. There is at this moment a large and well-informed group of your countrymen each lecturing in the United States on some phase of British life or activity, and a large and well-informed group of my countrymen in this kingdom, each lecturing on some phase of American life or activity. I heartily hope this form of popular instruction will continue and will grow long after the war is ended. We ought, too, to welcome and encourage the moving pictures of each country that are shown in the other—pictures of characteristic and instructive scenes and activities.

#### Value of the Press

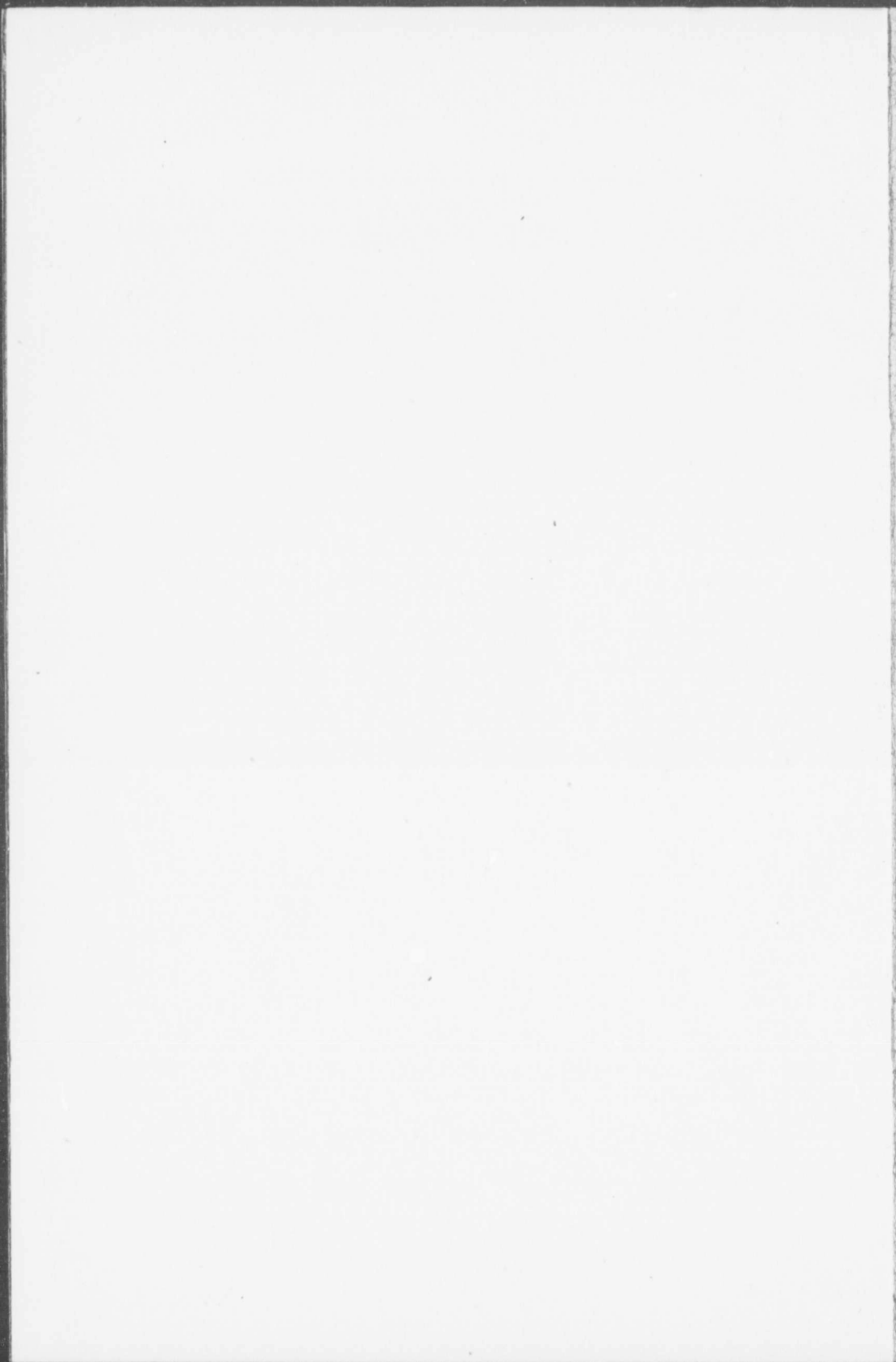
Another useful piece of the machinery of popular education—perhaps the most useful piece—is the Press. Many of the most energetic editors in either country have visited the other. But if visits of groups of them were frequently arranged, and if definite programmes were made for them to touch the real spirit of the other country, better results would follow than follow casual visits.

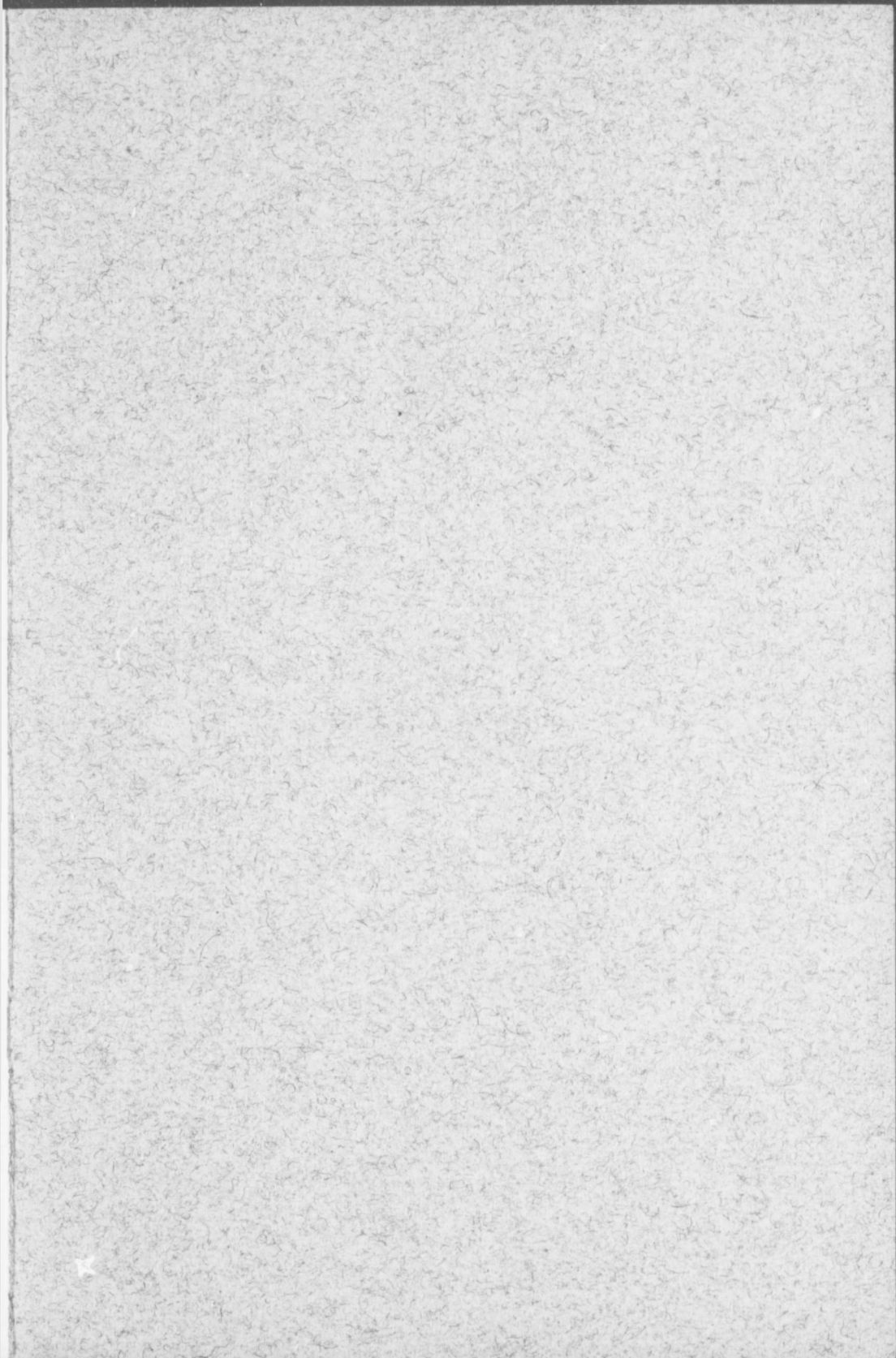
Most valuable of all the activities that lead to a permanent sympathy is our present fellowship in war. American fighting units are come and very many more will come. They all work side by side with your men and with the French. And most of these, of course, are young men, and, like your young men, the flower of our race. Now these are forming companionships that nothing can sever. Men who go forth to die together, if fate so will it, understand one another as long as they survive. Beside the comradeship of arms, formed where death comes swift and frequently, other companionships seem weak. For men's naked souls are then bared to one another. In this extremest trial that man ever underwent anywhere at any time the high emotions and the

guns are at work ; everything else of life is still or pushed out of consciousness. And men who come together then are forever inseparable. Already there's many a corner of a foreign land that is forever England ; and presently there'll be many a corner of a foreign land that is an American grave also. Those that die and those that live will hereafter alike so bind our two peoples in mutual understanding that any disturber of that understanding will but play the poor part of a sacrilegious fool. (Loud cheers.)









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