

UNCLE SAM'S ONLY FRIEND IS UNCLE SAM

OVER forty years ago Charles Dickens wrote as follows of the United States:

"In these times in which I write it is honorably remarkable for protecting its subjects wherever they may travel with a dignity and a determination which is a model for England." Ulysses Grant was then President of the United States.

Like Washington and Lincoln and Andrew Jackson, he was an American who was not too proud to fight. Those of my countrymen who are still faithful to the old American tradition cannot but feel with bitter shame the bitter contrast between the conditions Charles Dickens thus described and the conditions at the present moment.

The policy of watchful waiting, a policy popular among governmental chiefs of a certain type ever since the days of Ethelred the Unready and for thousands of years anterior to that not wholly fortunate rule, has failed, as of course it always does fail in the presence of serious difficulty and of a resolute and ruthless foe. We have tried every possible expedient save only the application of wisdom and resolution. It has been said that we have not tried war; but this statement can be made only by those who are inexact in their terminology. Of course, if any one's feelings are soothed by saying that when we took Vera Cruz, suffered a loss of a hundred and twenty men killed and wounded and in return killed and wounded several hundred Mexicans, we were waging peace and not waging war, why there is no particular objection to this individual gaining whatever comfort is afforded by using words which misdescribe facts. But this is all the comfort he can gain. As a natural result of the impression created on foreigners by our conduct in Mexico, we were forced to hostile action in Haiti and a number of our men and our opponents were killed and wounded. Apparently we "waged peace" in Haiti, much as we "waged peace" in Mexico — and in Mexico the end of the war or peace or whatever it was that we waged was that we withdrew without getting

the result which our Government had announced that it would get when it took Vera Cruz.

We of the United States have had a twofold duty imposed on us during the last year. We have owed a duty to ourselves. We have owed a duty to others. We have failed in both. Primarily both failures are due to the mischievous effects of the professional pacifist agitation which became governmental nearly five years ago when the then Administration at Washington sought to negotiate various all-inclusive arbitration treaties under which we abandoned the right to stand up for our own vital interest and national honor. Very reluctantly we who believe in peace, but in the peace of righteousness, have been forced to the conclusion that the most prominent leaders of the peace agitation of the past ten years in this country, so far as they have accomplished anything that was not purely fatuous, have accomplished nothing but mischief. This result of the activities of these professional pacifist agitators has been due mainly to the fact that they have consistently placed peace ahead of righteousness, and have absolutely refused to look facts in the face if they thought the facts were unpleasant.

It is as foolish to ignore common sense in this matter as in any other matter. It is as wicked to exalt peace at the expense of morality as it is to exalt war at the expense of morality. The greatest service that Lincoln rendered to the cause of permanent peace to the greater cause of justice and of righteousness was rendered by him when, with unshaken firmness, he accepted four years of grinding warfare rather than yield to the professional pacifists of his day — the Copperheads. Washington's greatest serv-

ice to peace was rendered by similar action on his part. And be it remembered that never in history have two men rendered greater service to the only kind of peace worth having for honorable men and women than was rendered by these two heroes who did not shrink from righteous war.

Failure to perform duty to others is merely aggravated by failure to perform duty to ourselves. To pay twenty-five million dollars blackmail to Colombia does not atone for our timid refusal to do our duty by Belgium. It merely aggravates it. Moreover, it should always be remembered that in these matters the weak cannot be helped by the weak; that the brutal wrongdoer cannot be checked by the coward or by the fat, boastful, soft creature who does not take the trouble to make himself fit to enforce his words by his deeds. Preparedness means forethought, effort, trouble, labor. Therefore soft men, selfish, indolent men, men absorbed in money-getting, and the great mass of well-meaning men who shrink from performing the new duties created by new needs, eagerly welcome a political leader who will comfort them, and relieve their secret sense of shame, by using high-sounding names to describe their shortcomings.

An adroit politician can unquestionably gain many votes in such fashion, if he exalts unpreparedness as a duty, if he praises peace and advocates neutrality, as both in themselves moral — even although the "peace" and "neutrality" may be conditioned on the failure to do our duty either to others or to ourselves. Such a politician, if he excels in the use of high-sounding words, may win votes and gain office by thus pandering to men who wish to hear their selfish-

ness, their short-sightedness or their timidity exalted into virtues. But he is sapping the moral vitality of the people whom he misleads.

It has been an evil thing that this nation, which for five years has been strutting as the champion of peace and holding conferences to denounce war and praising its wealthy citizens for founding peace leagues, has contented itself with these futile activities and has not dared to strike a blow, has not dared even to say a word for righteousness in the concrete, while wrong has been at least temporarily triumphant during the past eighteen months. It is an even worse thing that during this last eighteen months we have wholly failed to prepare to defend our own homes from disaster.

Nor can we, the people of the United States, escape blame for ourselves by putting it upon our public servants. Unquestionably the Administration has been guilty of culpable indifference to the honor and the interest of the nation during the last year and a half; but it has been guilty in this fashion precisely because it could count upon popular support; and therefore the ultimate blame rests on the people, that is, on us. It may well be that political gain will come to the politicians who appeal to what is selfish and timid in the hearts of our people, and who comfort soft self-indulgence by praising it as virtuous.

The events of the last year have shown that all who believed that the most frightful wrongdoing by warlike nations could be averted by the opinion of civilized mankind as a whole have been utterly in error. What is happening in this year 1916 shows that not the slightest particle

of advance in international morality has been made during the century that has elapsed since the close of the Napoleonic wars. This failure is quite as much due to the misconduct of the pacifists as to the misconduct of the militarists. The milk-and-water statesmanship of the American Government during the past year has been a direct aid to the statesmanship of blood-and-iron across the water; it may not be as wicked, but it is far more contemptible. The United States has signally and culpably failed to keep its promises made in the Hague Conventions, and to stand for the right. Instead, it has taken refuge in the world-old neutrality between right and wrong which is always so debasing for the man practicing it. As has been well said, such a neutral is the ignoblest work of God.

There was much excuse for a general failure of Americans to understand the danger to America prior to what happened in this world war. But now there is no excuse whatever. Now, thanks to our own feeble shirking of duty, we know that if any great nation menaces us, no matter how innocent of offense we may be, we have absolutely nothing to expect from other nations.

The United States has — and deserves to have — only one friend in the world. This is the United States. We have ourselves treated the Hague Conventions as scraps of paper; and we cannot expect any one else to show the respect for such treaties which we have lacked. Our safety and therefore the safety of democratic institutions rests on our own strength and only on our own strength. If we are a true democracy, if we really believe in government of the people

by the people and for the people, if we believe in social and industrial justice to be achieved through the people, and therefore in the right of the people to demand the service of all the people, let us make the Army fundamentally an army of the whole people.

This will be carrying out the democratic ideal. The policy advocated for Britain by Lord Roberts was really the necessary complement to the policy advocated for Britain by Lloyd-George. In a democracy service should be required of every man, in peace and in war; we should guarantee to every man his rights, and require from each man the full performance of his duties. It may well be that in the end we shall find it worth while to insist that all our young men, at their entrance to manhood, perform a year's industrial service — in the harvest fields, in city sanitation, on the roads, anywhere. Such service would be equally beneficial to the son of the millionaire and to the boy who grows up in the crowded quarters of our great cities or out on lonely farms in the back country.

This is for the future. As for the present, it is certain that a half year's military service would be a priceless boon to these young men themselves as well as to the nation. It would tend to social cohesion. We would gain a genuine citizens' army, and we would gain a far higher type of citizenship. Our young men, at the outset of their lives, would be trained — not merely to shoot and to drill, which are only small parts of military training — but to habits of bodily endurance and moral self-mastery, to command and to obey, to act on their own initiative and to understand and promptly execute

orders, to respect themselves and to respect others, and to understand that they are to serve their country with deeds and not words only. Under such conditions the young American would enter manhood accustomed to take pride in that disciplined spirit of orderly self-reliance combined with ability to work with others, which is the most essential element in the success of a great, free, modern democracy.