

WHY THE UNITED STATES IS AT WAR WITH GERMANY.

(Editor's Note:—The following article was written by Miss Frances Summerrall in response to the offer of \$25 by J. C. Sales for the best essay from a public school teacher on the reasons why the United States is at war.)

The outbreak of war in 1914 caught this nation by surprise. The people of Europe had had at least some warnings of the coming storm, but to us such a blind, savage, onslaught on the ideals of civilization had appeared impossible. We were unable to comprehend the meaning of its occurrence, and since either side was championed here in America by millions living among us who were of European birth, many contradictory accusations threw our thoughts into disarray.

At first, we were unable to see how our national policy might be affected. Later on, however, when we read the President's different proclamations, the nucleus of which was the preservation of a strict neutrality, in order that we might be of great use in the task of mediation, it began to dawn upon us that there was a plausible possibility of a future infringement upon our rights.

Before the swift events of the mid-summer of 1914, three influences, operative in American Consciousness had controlled our foreign policy and anyone of these influences had seemed potent enough to keep us permanently aloof from all European conflicts. First, we were a peace-loving nation; secondly, we adhered firmly to the Monroe Doctrine, and thirdly, we were in a perfect mental neutrality as regards the great European powers.

As a peace loving nation, we played a role in the endeavor to substitute the rule of reason for the rule of the bayonet in international relations. We were rather looking forward to a time when war would have become obsolete as a method for settling disputes among civilized nations. By the Monroe Doctrine, we had for nearly a century been able to guarantee the independence of the weaker republics of America, and for this reason, we had steadfastly refrained from interfering with any European disputes, although our nation's sympathies had repeatedly been harrowed by the outrages of the Turks against the Armenians. But, as had been said, we were mentally neutral toward the various members of the present contending allies.

However, this spirit of neutrality was not easy to maintain, since we were a heterogeneous mass of people, and soon the American pendulum of sentiment began to swing unevenly. During the first few weeks of the war American sympathies began to range themselves somewhat on the side of the allies. Yet the nation as a whole felt that this was no conflict of theirs. Our newspapers and magazines were full of accounts and often allusions were made by writers, of our not discerning the difference between the aggressors and those suffering aggression. No statesman, however magnetic, and influential, could have led America into the war during its first six months. Our national impulse to war was the result of the slow growth of more than two years.

But, let us remember that during the time that we were pondering the question with commendable patience, it is well for us to keep before us the fact that we did not determine upon war merely to vindicate our national rights. The simple motives of the assertion of national rights and the revenge for national injuries stand alone as our reason for entering the conflict.

Our own wrongs have come to seem to us insignificant by comparison with the unutterable woes of all other nations engulfed in war. Infringement upon our own rights brought home to us the sufferings of other nations at the hands of Germany and furnished the precise occasion needed to convince the most idealistic advocates of peace that a continuance of our neutrality was a moral impossibility. The conviction of the American people, which is responsible for our participation in the world conflict is at stake; that civilization is incompatible with a victory of the Prussian regime. It is upon this belief that we entered the war.

The clash between Germany and the United States rose out of a conflict of Germany's conduct of her submarine warfare and it is just here that the principle of military necessity as applied by the general staff reached its climax. For, the sea is the highway of all nations and the violation of the laws of sea warfare strikes all the liberties of all nations alike. And in this relation let us remember that aside from the destruction of millions of dollars worth of goods on the high seas, nearly four thousand Americans succumbed to watery graves at the mercy of Germany's submarines, while pursuing her policy of ruthless submarine warfare.

Whatever may be said against the sort of blockade which England enforced against Germany, two things may be said in its favor: It was legal according to precedent and its enforcement did not cause the sinking of a single ship or the sacrifice of a single life. Thus we see that our part in the war is that of the defensive; we are doing our part in attempting "to make the world safe for democracy."

Some speak of peace, but what would a peace do now? A hasty peace would only give Germany time to build another vast navy, to equip another army and evoke upon us a second conflict. We will be ready to submit to peace when Germany is willing to rule her own people and no other, to abide by "mere scraps of paper," and to enter in a league organized strong enough to enforce the human demand for peace.

At the present time the American people are far from actualizing that doctrine we hold so dear, for all men, "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." To many of our people we

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(winner of prize)
America is a peaceful nation. We respect other nations' rights, wish them prosperity and envy them nothing. We have vast territory and undeveloped resources to occupy our minds and our hands for generations without meddling with other peoples' concerns. We believe that the peace and happiness of mankind will best be promoted by self-government, for which we have stood through almost our whole history. We protected China from robbery and war on the part of more greedy nations, and have stood the strongest friend of the new Chinese republic. In 1896, we stood the friend of Venezuela in her controversy with Great Britain; for years we have even allowed our own citizens to be wronged in Mexico rather than make war on our neighbor republic. When we departed from our peace policy in 1898 and made war on Spain, it was in order to stop intolerable oppression at our very door in Cuba; and only took the Philippine Islands that we might save them from falling to some less disinterested nation, and that we might educate their people for independence later.

We did not wish to fight Germany; she made the attack on us—on our ships, our lives, our rights, our future. We are in the war because we could not keep out. It is a war of self-defense, a war to save America, to preserve self-respect, to justify our rights. Germany has dared to tell us what oceans our ships may sail on, the kind and amount of the cargo to be carried, and the paths they must travel. We will not choose the path of submission, and suffer the most sacred rights of our nation and our people to be ignored or violated. And in the name of freedom we accept the challenge with ships, with money, with men and with our undaunted spirit.

Germany forced us into war by her unlimited submarine warfare which she started Feb. 1, 1917. Before this many American ships had been sunk by German submarines, and hundreds of lives had been lost on these and other ships. This was contrary to all human and even to all law. The most horrible outrage was the sinking of the Lusitania in May, 1915, when 1154 lives were lost, 114 being Americans. The Kaiser had struck in advance a medal for him who committed the treacherous deed; the German school children were given a holiday celebration of the event; in a public address, a German pastor said: "Whoever cannot approve from the bottom of his heart the sinking of the Lusitania, and give himself up to honest delight at this victorious exploit of German defensive power, him we judge to be no true German." We saw the Sussex sunk, crowded with the sons and daughters of neutral nations. Where these ships went down, we still hear coming up from the sea the piteous cries of mothers and children. And Germany has never asked the forgiveness of the world. We see ship after ship sent to the bottom—ships of mercy bound out of America for the Belgium starving; ships carrying the Red Cross, and laden with the wounded of all nations; ships carrying food and clothing to friendly, harmless, terrorized peoples; ships flying the Stars and Stripes—sent to the bottom hundreds of miles from shore, manned by American seamen, murdered against all law, without warning and without mercy.

We fight because of Belgium—invaded, outraged, enslaved, impoverished Belgium. We cannot forget Liege, Lovain, Cardinal Mercier. Translated into American history, these names stand for Bunker Hill, Lexington, Patrick Henry. Our sense of human justice was horrified by the German invasion of Belgium, a weak and innocent nation which stood in the road which the German armies wished to take into France. We were horrified still more by their conduct in Belgium—by their vile and filthy treatment of Belgians—by their robberies and murders; by their dishonoring of mothers, wives, daughters and sisters; by their stabbing of little babies with bayonets and carrying them along the streets singing; by their destruction of precious and sacred things, and the transporting of valuable material and machinery to Germany; by their deporting of hundreds of Belgians to work in the mines and munition factories of Germany; by their herding together young married women and girls, and in stock cars carrying them away to destinies unknown and by the complete annihilation of towns and cities by burning alive the inhabitants in their homes. Then we hear a German officer say: "The blood of the entire population of Louvain is of less worth than one drop of the blood of a German soldier, and the ugliest stone placed to mark his burial is more glorious than all the monuments and all the cathedrals of Europe." We fight to redeem Belgium, lest we be made another Belgium, lest we see the statue of Liberty mangled into German cannon, and the city of Washington be reduced to ashes.

We fight Germany because of France—invaded, desecrated France, millions of whose sons have died to save the land of Lafayette—France, the preserver of the arts, and the first

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have insured, at best, only life, without liberty and with no chance whatever for the pursuit of happiness. For many others we have not even insured life itself. Our hope now is that at the close of the war, a league for peace may be formed so as to debar all tides of war, and thus, that there may develop in every citizen a true freedom and, at length, a true union of hearts will exist for all people.

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"In vain the Dove of Peace has tried To end the cruel strife:
The Vulture of the East seeks naught Save blood and human life.

The Tyrant, from his far off seat, Has flung his challenge wild,
His armies, merciless, have spared Nor man, nor beast, nor child.

From over head his human birds Drop bombs (where none resist)
To still the breast of harmless ones, (But why should they be missed?)

Beneath the waters of the sea, His fish of metal hide,
And strew with wreckage ev'ry where The ocean's bosom, wide.

And now and then in peaceful guise, His grey hounds scent their prey,
And loose their masked fangs of steel, And shoot, and sink, and slay.

And now the Tyrant grows more rash, The whole wide world defies;
Nor Justice, Mercy, Peace nor Right Can move him by their cries.

Aroused, the Dove no longer mourns; It thrills from toe to crest,
And lo, the Dove of Peace is now The Eagle of the West.

The Dove (that's now an eagle free) Soars screaming in the air,
And bids the nation, great and strong, Prepare! Prepare! Prepare!

Hurrah! Hurrah! The work goes off! Nor shall it ever rest,
Till low the Vulture lies beneath The Eagle of the West."

Why do we fight Germany? "We have no selfish ends to serve. We desire no conquests, no dominion. We seek no indemnities for ourselves, no material compensation." Then, why are we ready to sink billions of dollars without one dollar of return, when not one foot of territory will be added to our domain? Why are we ready to sacrifice thousands of our young men, the very flower of our young manhood?

The answer is easily given. An answer which gives us our highest warrant of war by every law of nations, even the most narrow, and by every natural law, for self defense is Nature's first law. We are fighting in self defense, we are resisting invasion. We are fighting now in France, that we may not have to fight later in America. We are fighting with help now, that we may not fight without later. "Plans have been formed and printed, by men of military rank, for an invasion of America."

"Can we doubt it when Germany stands self confessed? America had better look out after the war!" "Three weeks to Paris, three months to London, three years to New York." Out of her own mouth she stands condemned, and by her confession do we stand justified. Our liberty is in peril, our democracy is in danger, our nation is threatened, our flag, Old Glory, is insulted, our honor is affronted.

The evidence of Germany's bad faith and hostile intent is piled up on every hand. Her quibbles, misrepresentations and counter accusations, to our protests against her methods of warfare and disregard of rights of neutrals. No friendly nation fills another with spies, subsidizes newspapers to stir up internal discord, nor while protesting friendship, plots and conspires to make war. Yet, "the Imperial German Government" "filled our unsuspecting communities with vicious spies and conspirators." Her agents spread sedition amongst our people, and, by violence, sought to destroy our industries and arrest our commerce. Insurrection was stirred up in Cuba, Haiti, and San Domingo; hatred and distrust was incited in Latin America; Mexico was incited to attack us; and German intrigue sought to embroil us in war with Japan. Our hospitality was abused and violated, our trust betrayed, our honor insulted. "The flag under which we serve would have been dishonored had we held our hand."

Then, came the attacks of submarines upon the lives and property of American citizens. Ship after ship was sent to the bottom. "Ships of mercy bound out of America for the Belgium starving—carrying food and clothing to friendly, harmless, terrorized people; ships flying the Stars and Stripes, sent to the bottom hundreds of miles from shore, manned by American seamen, murdered against all law, without warning." In May, 1915, the Lusitania was sunk with one hundred and fourteen American lives lost. On August 19, 1915, the Arabia was sunk, three American lives lost. September 4, 1915, the Hesperian, one American lost; October, 1916, The Marina, eight Americans lost; December 14, 1916, Russian, seventeen Americans lost; February 26, 1917, Laconia, eight Americans lost; March 16, 1917, Vigilancia, five Americans lost; March 21, 1917, Healdten, seven Americans lost; April 1, 1917, Aztec, twenty-eight Americans lost. In all, before our declaration of war, some two hundred and twenty-six American citizens, many of them helpless women and children, were the victims of a warfare as ruthless as ever a barbarous nation waged, a war opposed to every law of God and man.

Our protests met with evasions or false promises, until on January 1, 1917, Count Von Bernstein handed Secretary Lansing a note in which the German Government announced its purpose of ruthless and unrestricted submarine warfare; thus, the German Government threw down the gauntlet, and America accepted the challenge, flinging it back in those words which will "go sounding down the ages": "Whate'er the Imperial Ger-

man Government has committed repeated acts of war against the Government and people of the United States of America: Therefore be it Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the state of war between the United States and the Imperial German Government which has been thrust upon the United States is hereby formally declared; and that the President be, and he is hereby, authorized and directed to employ the entire naval and military forces of the United States and the resources of the Government to carry on the war against the Imperial German Government; and to bring the conflict to a successful termination all the resources of the country are hereby pledged by the Congress of the United States."

And so, we fight for freedom, freedom of the seas, whence the blood of murdered countrymen, like the blood of Abel, cries for vengeance, and in blood shall we blot out that word "Verboten" which German barbarism has written on land and sea. We fight for America, her safety, her honor. "A Prussianized Germany, triumphant in Europe, dominant on the seas, would find occasion to strike down America in her isolation and make of us the overseas tributary of a New Roman Empire."

What? This fair, free land of ours, America, child of Freedom, ground under a despot's heel? Free-born American citizens subjects of a conquering race, subservient to Prussian power, cringing to Prussian brutality? The Stars and Stripes trailed in the dust "while around it sounds the wailing of its people in their woe?" Nay, we will "fight till the last armed foe expires" or Old Glory shall wave over a land reddened by the blood of its sons and daughters, a land of the dead, but still "the Land of the Free and the home of the Brave!"

But this is not all we are fighting for. Purged of every selfish consideration, the cause for which we fight may be given in three words: Liberty, Humanity, and Christianity, these three embrace every ideal for which America stands.

We fight because Democracy, the synonym of Liberty, is imperiled, because Civilization and Christianity hang in the balance. It is Democracy against Autocracy, Civilization against Barbarism, Christianity against a Philosophy which is opposed to every teaching of the "Prince of Peace." The Powers of Darkness are arrayed against the Powers of Light.

We are fighting for Democracy, Liberty. "There can be no question that the future of democracy and of independent national life is hanging in the balance in this struggle." "With us are the democracies of the world, great and small; against us, the autocracies of the world are arrayed—warring against the principles and ideals on which our democracy

and all others are founded."

The freedom of the world is challenged, and we fight "that the smallest nation may equally with the greatest" have the right to "live its own life and to have that life determined by the will of its own people." We fight for freedom, "the freedom of the seas, so that all nations may have unmolested intercourse with each other in the peaceful pursuit of legitimate commerce." But more than this, we fight to preserve that vision of a great world Republic, a Democracy in which the innocent and helpless shall be protected, where honor shall be the reward of merit, not the haphazard of blood, where power does not come of "Divine Right," where might is not right, where honor is not an empty bubble, and solemn

pledges but "scraps of paper," where the flower of freedom, that fragile flower, first nurtured among the snows of the rugged New England hills, may grow into "a tall and stately lily with a golden heart," a radiant bloom "flashing its golden glory across the blue leagues of all the seven seas," where "the Common sense of most shall hold a fretful realm in awe. And the kindly earth shall slumber wrapt in universal law."

We fight for Humanity; for Belgium, invaded, desolated outraged Belgium; gallant, devoted Belgium, with her blackened, desecrated homes; for France, glorious, heroic France, the eldest born of American Liberty, "millions of whose heroic sons have

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PHONE NO. 7

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