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History Repeats Itself.

(Newberry Observer.)

"History repeats itself." It is natural that it should; human nature is the same in all ages. "There's nothing new under the sun"; that is, nothing in the essential character of things. Only manifestations are different.

A century ago a man rose up in France and set about to conquer the world—deliberately. He thought that was his "destiny"; and it looked so. He did conquer the greater part of it—Prussia, Austria, Italy and so on. He put one brother on the throne of Spain; another on the throne of Holland; another on the throne of Westphalia and a brother-in-law on the throne of Naples. If there were not kingdoms enough, he made more, so that his royal family might have thrones.

Beaten for a time and sent to the

island of Elba, he escaped and put himself again at the head of another army. France rallied to a man to his standard. He was their idol.

But his time came; at the battle of Waterloo, Wellington and Blucher—English and Prussian—clipped his wings. He was sent to St. Helena, and the world had peace.

Is it necessary to draw the parallel? Another war god arose; with a personality as strong as that of Napoleon Bonaparte and an ambition as far-reaching, thirsting for world-power, which he called "expansion". The time came that seemed propitious—his armies drilled to the point of perfection, his war equipment the result of fifty years of preparation. The peaceful little country in his way was overrun and devastated. Its people made objects of charity or other nations. "In Paris in sixty days; in London in three months," was the war cry. The French government fled from Paris to Boulogne; and it looked like the program was going right through. But there was a halt when England, knowing her time would come next, sent reinforcements to France. Then came the tug of war, when everything depended on endurance and food and war supplies.

Here is where the United States comes in.

Citizens of this country had been exporting large portions of their products to European countries for many years; thousands of American-owned ships and American sailors were engaged in the ocean trade. The high seas belong to all nations, except a narrow limit of three miles of coast line. Americans still offered their goods to European nations, and sold them to whoever would buy. Germany bought, England bought, and Denmark and Holland and other countries bought as usual.

Then England blockaded the coast of Germany; stopped ships going there, took off their cargoes and appropriated them, but paying the owners for them, and letting the ships go. She never sank a merchant ship. Then Germany began to get her imports through nearby countries; Holland's imports went up in one year fifteen times what they had been. England, knowing of course where the bulk of these imports were going, made its blockade stronger. Germany retaliated with a blockade of England. She sank hundreds of merchant ships, including the Lusitania, with sixteen hundred passengers—men, women and children—numbers of them American citizens. The United States protested; Germany explained and promised indemnification. Then the Sussex, a ferry-boat plying the English channel, between France and England, was sunk by a submarine, and several Americans lost their lives. The United States repeated its protests with added emphasis, and Germany promised she would not sink another merchant ship without first giving warning and a chance for the passengers and crew to escape. She stuck to the promise awhile; but, finding that her blockade of England did not keep the ships from English ports, she inaugurated, two months ago, her new plan of sinking all ships that ventured within a certain specified "zone"—a zone extending from Spain to Norway and three hundred miles out to sea.

Germany has never claimed that this is lawful; she simply says it is necessary for her existence. Within this two months she has drowned numbers of American citizens, pursuing their lawful vocations on the high seas. At the hour the president was addressing the congress of the United States Monday night a German submarine sank an American vessel, and drowned a number of American citizens, off the coast of France.

The president of the United States and the congress of the United States declare that this is war; that Germany has begun war against the United States, and that a "state of war exists" between this country and Germany brought on by Germany.

Are the president and the congress of the United States right? Is there anything else they could do? Let every man decide for himself; we are not arguing the question—only giving an historical setting; which we believe proves that the ruling power in Germany—the government of Germany—is bent on world-power. We are not saying a word against the German people; they obey the orders

of their government.

When Napoleon was put down, in 1815, the war ended, and the world had peace. When the German Kaiser shall be put down, as we believe he will in 1917, there will be world peace again. We cannot but hope that that time is not far off; but we have no malice in our heart against the German people. This is an aside; but we want to say it anyhow.

Here is another historical parallel: One hears citizens of the United States abusing their own president and charging him with helping the allies. Whatever Wilson's private feelings and preference may be, he has shown on preference for the allies, but has treated all nations alike, and has abided strictly by international law. He has been extremely patient with Germany under great provocation. The United States government has not given or sold any European nation one dollar in money or munitions or provisions. It has only insisted, in as mild a way as possible, that American citizens shall be protected in their legal right to sell and carry or send their products to any foreign country that buys them. That England and France have bought more than other European countries is because of their more fortunate location; not by any partiality of this government.

One hears of Americans calling Wilson a "damned Englishman". President Washington was called a "damned Englishman". In fact, Washington was abused and plotted against by his own countrymen to a degree that has not yet happened to Wilson. There was a strong conspiracy, that never took definite shape, during the Revolutionary war, by Washington's enemies, to pin him out a commander-in-chief and put Gen. Gates in his place—Gates, who got the credit of winning the battle of Saratoga, which was really won by Benedict Arnold—and, by the way, it was what he regarded as injustice in giving credit to another for this great victory that drove him to treason against the government—the same Gates whose army fled like rabbits before the English at Camden when Cornwallis' army overran South Carolina and was sweeping everything before it on its march northward, until stopped and defeated at Yorktown—this defeat being due largely to the aid of the army that France had sent over freely and without pay to America's assistance.

Another parallel might be drawn between the Revolutionary war and the present time: There were Tories in those days, as there are Pro-Germans today. But the great mass of the Americans then, though they were only a few generations removed from the "Mother Country", were loyal and true to the land of their adoption; and today the great mass of German-Americans, with sentiments of love for the "Fatherland", are loyal and true to the country that has received them kindly and given them a freedom and opportunities the like of which no other people on earth enjoy.

These are broad and deep questions that confront our common country. They are not questions that can be decided by street-corner statesmen. The power and the duty to decide them belong to men "higher up"—men whom the people have put higher up and to whom they look to preserve the rights and the honor of the nation.

The president and the congress must decide these things. Can't we trust them to do it right?

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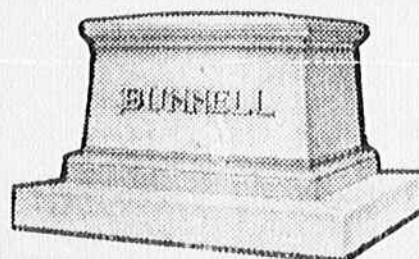
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