

Paragraphs from Chapter XV

REACTIONS TO EFFORTS IN 1915 AND 1916 TO ENDING THE GREAT WAR.

I was befogged to hate or to take part in the organizations looking to ending the War which sprang up all about and which I felt so despairingly were all futile.

There was Mr. Ford's Peace Ship. Mr. Ford had startled me one day in the Spring of 1915 when in Detroit I was observing his methods for making men by saying suddenly, "You know I am rather coming to the conclusion that we ought to join the Allies. If we go in we can finish the thing quickly. And that is what should be done. As it is now they will fight to a finish. It ought some way to be stopped and I see no other way."

Six months later Mr. Ford called me up at my home in New York and asked if I would not come up to his Hotel. He and Miss Addams wanted to talk with me. Of course I went at once.

It is curious how sometimes when one steps inside a door without knowing what is behind it you sense caution. The door was open to Mr. Ford's suite - nobody in sight - no answer to my ring, but I could hear voices and followed them to a room at the end of the hall. Mr. Ford was standing in the corner facing me. Before him were two rows of men - reporters, I knew.

"Here boys is Miss Tarbell, she will go with us," he called.

"Go where Mr. Ford?" I asked.

"Oh," he said, "we are chartering a Peace Ship. We are going to Europe and get the boys out of the trenches by Christmas."

I had a terrible sinking of heart. "Oh, Mr. Ford, I don't think I could go on such an expedition."

"Come with me and we will convince you."

And he led me into a room where Madame Rosika Schrimmer and my old friend Fred Howe were talking - Jane Addams was not there.

"Tell Miss Tarbell what we are going to do. We want her to go along." And he went back to the reporters.

I put in one of the most difficult hours of my life. Madame Schrimmer argued ably, so did Mr. Howe and all that I could say was, feeling like a poor worm as I said it, "I can't see it."

When Mr. Ford came back and they told him, "She can't see it," I tried to explain my doubts. He listened intently and then very gently said, "Don't bother her, she'll come."

On top of this interview came a long telegram followed by a longer letter both signed by Henry Ford. I doubt now if he ever saw either of them. Certainly the signature at the foot of the letter is not his. I am putting them in here, long as they are, because they are important in the history of the Peace Ship, and so far as I know have never

been printed.

Here they are:-

(Here are inserted telegram and letter of which you have photostats.)

I have no copies of my replies, but I know the gist of them must have been a heavy-hearted, "I can't do it, Mr. Ford."

The night after my visit to the Hotel Miss Addams called me up and for a half hour we argued the matter on the telephone. All I could say was, "If you see it you must go Miss Addams, I don't see it and I can't. It is possible that standing on the street corner and crying, Peace, Peace, may do good. I do not say that it will not, but I cannot see it for myself."

We were to talk it over in the morning but that night they took her to Chicago, hurried her into a hospital. She was very ill. Jane Addams did not go on the Peace Ship.

Years after I asked her, "Would you have gone if you had not been ill?"

"I certainly should," she said. "There was a chance and I was for taking every chance."

She always took every chance when it was a matter of human relief. And if she had gone things would have been different on the Peace Ship for she and not Madame Schrimmer would have been in command. She saw quite clearly the exploiting tendencies of Madame Schrimmer, but she saw also her abilities. She was not willing because of doubts

to throw over a chance to strengthen the demand for peace, and she undoubtedly trusted to her own long experience of handling people to handle Madame Schrimmer. But she did not go.

It was a tragedy of hasty action, of attempting a great and without proper preparation. Mr. Ford would never have attempted to build a new type of automobile engine as he attempted to handle the most powerful thing in the world - the unbridled passions of men organized to come to a conclusion by killing one another.