CHAPTER XV

A NEW PROFESSION

It was not until my signed contract to speak for forty nine consecutive days in forty nine different places was laid before me that I realized I had agreed to do what I did not know how to do. I had never in my life stood on my feet and made a professional speech. To begin with - could I make people hear? I felt convinced that I had something to say and so did my sponsors, but to what good if I could not be heard? What was this thing they called "placing the voice?" I went to my friend Franklin Sargent, the head of the Sargent Dramatic School, told him of my predicament. After a first test he agreed with me that I did not know how to use my voice and that unless I could learn I was letting myself in for a bad failure.

Mr. Sargent was good enough to take me on as a pupil, uninteresting a one as I must have been. He began by putting me on the simplest exercises but with severe instructions about keeping them up. I went about my apartment day and night shouting "Ma, Me, Mi, Mo" - "Ba, Be Bi, Bo." I learned that the voice must come from the diaphragm and that the diaphragm must be strong to throw it out for an hour at a time. Regularly every morning and every night lying on my back with books on my stomach I breathed deeply until I could lift four or five volumes.

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By the time the Circuit opened in July I knew theoretically how to use my voice, but I soon found that to do it without now and then getting it into my throat, making horrible noises and throwing myself into nervous panics, I must be more conscious of it than was good for my method of handling my material. Indeed, it was not until my second year of speaking that I could count on my voice for the half hour of the performance. I never came to a point where I did not have to ask that a glass of water be put within reach - just in case. I found a glass of water a safety device if my attention was distracted for a moment and I lost my line of argument. I could pick it up, pretend to drink, change my position, regain poise.

So much for my voice. I knew how to make people hear what I was saying. Now as to material. I was to talk on the same subject day after day. That is, I was supposed to make daily the same speech. I was afraid of a memorized speech. A lecture experience of my old friend George Kernan was largely responsible for that. After he had published his classic work on Siberia Mr. Kennan took his story to the lecture platform. He wrote his lecture with characteristic care - memorized it and repeated it night after night on the long tours he made. It was an admirable lecture, one of the most moving I ever heard.

In telling me of his platform experiences Mr. Kennan dropped this warning, "In giving a memorized lecture one must be very careful that no two sentences end with the same

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words. In my lecture on Siberia I unwittingly used five or six identical words to end different sentences - one near the opening, the other near the closing of my talk. One night when perhaps I was unusually tired instead of picking up what followed the first sentence I picked up the words that followed the second. That is, I was ending my lecture when I had only just begun it. I saved myself, but after that I always took care that there were no two sentences in my talk with identical, even similar endings.

My memory is a tricky and unreliable organ - never properly trained - never held resolutely to its job. I would have been afraid to trust it on a lecture platform. Moreover, I realized that since I was no orator and never would be my only hope was to give the appearance of talking naturally, spontaneously. I put together what seemed to me a logical frame work and decided to drape it afresh every day, never to begin with the same words, to use fresh illustrations, to think aloud, experimenting. I soon discovered a fresh beginning every day was too much to ask of myself under the conditions of travel. I found it foolish, too, for if I had struck an opening that arrested attention why change it for one that might not? I soon found that illustrations which were all right in an article did not serve with an audience. The line of argument which I would have followed in an article became more effective on a platform if switched. That is, as it turned out, although I was giving the same lecture every day, it was never quite the same.

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I worked on it constantly and that is what kept my interest. I think, because always I found however tired I might be, however much I despised myself for undertaking to do what I more and more realized I did not know how to do, I always was interested in my subject, talking as if it was something of which I had never talked before. It was that personal interest in my material which carried me through.

I had not given a thought in advance to the physical aspect of my undertaking. I had known that every day for forty nine days I was to speak in a different place; I knew that meant daily travelling but that had not disturbed me. I had always prided myself that I was superior to physical surroundings. I had not been long on the Chautauqua Circuit before I was realizing that they played an enormous part in my day. I found I was inquiring about the town to which we were headed. "How about the hotel? Were their bathrooms? If so, was I to get one?"

I was uneasy about the table - the ideas of cooking and serving and at night about the noises, the drafts and other unmentionable worries. To my amazement the bed in which I was to sleep soon was taking an altogether disproportionate place in my mind. It is a fact that when the Circuit was over and I came to tell its story I found to my astonishment that I could draw a diagram of any one of the rooms in which I slept, giving the exact location of the bed in relation to windows and doors and bathroom. I remembered these beds when I did not remember the hotel.

To my surprise I found myself deeply interested in the physical life of the Circuit, so like the life of the Circus. We performed in tents and our outfit was as gay as ever you saw - khaki/tents bound in red, with a great khaki fence about, pennants floating up and down the streets, and within, order, cleanliness, and the smartest kind of little platform and side dressing-rooms.

Naturally I had no little curiosity about my traveling companions. Scoffing Eastern friends told me that there would be bell-ringers, trained dogs and Tyrolese yodelers. I found no such entertainment, but I could hardly have fallen in with pleasanter company. A quintette of young people whose business it was to sing for three quarters of an hour before my afternoon lecture and for a like period before the evening entertainment, proved to be the gayest, kindest, healthiest of companions. They were hard workers, seriously interested in pleasing their audiences. They knew not only how to work, but how to live on the kind of a junket that I had undertaken. In other words, here was a group of five young people who were doing what to me was very unusual, in a thoroughly professional way. The seventh member of our party, the evening entertainer, Mr. Sydney Landon, had had long experience on the circuit. He was doing his work exactly as a good writer or a good lawyer would do his. I saw at once that what I had joined was not, as I had hastily imagined, a haphazard semi-business, semi-philanthropic, happy-go-lucky new kind of barn-storming. It was serious work.

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In starting the Chautauqua work I was not conscious that there was a large percentage of condescension in my attitude. My first audience revealed my mind to me with painful definiteness, and humbled me beyond expression. It was all so unlike anything that I had had in my mind. I was to speak ~~in this town~~ in the evening and arrived at my destination late and after a rather hard day. It was a steel town - one which I had known long years before. The picturesqueness of the thing struck me with amazement. Planted on an open space in the straggling, dimly lighted streets, where the heavy panting of the blast-furnaces could be clearly heard I saw the tent ablaze with electric lights, for, if you please, we carried our own electric equipment. From all directions men, women, and children were flocking - white shirt-waists in profusion, few coats and still fewer hats. And there were so many of them! I felt a queer sensation of alarm. Here in the high-banked tiers, were scores upon scores of serious faces of hard-working men. I had come to talk about the hopeful and optimistic things that I had seen in the industrial life of the country; but face to face with these men, - within sound of the heavy panting of great furnaces, within sight of the unpainted, undrained rows of company houses which I had noticed as I came in on the train, - the memory of many a long and bitter labor struggle that I had known of in that valley came to life, and all my pretty tales seemed now terribly flimsy. They were so serious, they listened so intently to get something, and the tragedy was that I had not more to give them. This was my first audience.

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I never had another that made so deep an impression upon me.

I had not been long on the Circuit before I realized that my audience had only a languid interest in my subject, that what they were really interested in, wanted to hear and talk about was the War, then ending its second year. But I could not talk about the War. Nothing had ever so engulfed me as in a black fog, closed my mouth, confused my mind. Chiefly this was because of the apparent collapse of organized efforts to persuade or to force peaceful settlements of inter-national quarrels. These had taken so large a place in the thinking and agitating of the liberal-minded with whom I lived, that I had begun to delude myself that they were actually strong enough to prevent future wars. Largely these efforts were the result of the revulsion the conflicts of the '90's had caused; the Boer War, the Turco-Greek War, the Spanish War. People who wanted to live in peace wrote books, talked, organized societies - national and international. Jane Addams stirred the English speaking world by her "Ideals of Peace." William H. Taft, Elihu Root, leading public men, educators, combined in one or another society advocating this or that form of machinery.

And while this was going on Theodore Roosevelt was doing his best to counter-act it by his bold talk of war as a maker of men, the only adequate machine for preparing human beings for the beneficient strenuous life he advocated.

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What was The American Magazine to do about it? It seemed to us that we ought to find some answer to Theodore Roosevelt. Certainly we could not do it by promoting organized efforts; certainly not by preaching. We must prove him wrong.

In 1910 our attention was turned to what seemed a possibly useful educational effort against war, inaugurated at Stanford University by the President David S. Jordan. I knew Dr. Jordan slightly. His argument for opening the channels of world trade in the interest of peace had helped keep up my spirits when laboring against the Tariff lobbies so effectively closing them. What were they doing in Stanford? It was decided that I go out and see, at least there might be material for an article or two. Early in 1911 Dr. Jordan arranged that I spend a few weeks at the University. He was very cordial meeting me at Los Angeles where I arrived, low in mind and body from an attack of influenza.

There was to be a peace meeting that night - Dr. Jordan was to speak. They had announced me and when I refused to get out of my bed they took it as proof of indifference to the cause. The truth was that the idea of apeaking extemporaneously was at that time so terrifying to me that coupled with my illness I could not, or perhaps would not rally my forces. I would rather be regarded as a sneak than attempt it.

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But Dr. Jordan understood and laughed off my apology and together we made a leisurely trip to Palo Alto. He was a delightful companion when he felt like talking, as he often did! There was nothing which did not interest him. Looking out of the car window he talked not of peace at all but of birds and trees and fishes and Roosevelt and the recent earthquake.

At Palo Alto I found that the most exciting course then offered to the students was the six weeks on war and peace which I had come to study. The big assembly room was packed for all the public lectures. Among the students following the course were several who have since made names for themselves - Bruce Bliven - Robert L. Duffus - Maxwell Anderson.

There was considerable intensive work on special themes. On student was collecting war slogans; another making a comparison of declarations of war, each of which called God to witness that its cause was just. Another student was compiling tables showing the yearly increase in the costs of armament in the twenty years from 1890 on; another the economic losses through the devastations caused by war, and so on. All interesting and useful material.

But study the work as closely as I could I could not for the life of me lay my hands on that definite

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something which The American needed. Finally I took my discouragement to Dr. Jordan and together we planned collaboration on a series of articles to be called "The Case Against War." Dr. Jordan in his autobiography, "The Days of a Man," tells of our scheme and what became of it; "crowding events permitted war to frame its own case."

In August 1914 all of the machinery on which peace lovers had counted collapsed. The socialists in a body in every country took up arms, so did organized labor, so did the professional advocates of peace.

It was not only this collapse of effort that had stunned me. From the hour war was declared I had a sense of doom quite inexplicable in so matter-of-fact a person. We would go in, of that I felt certain. After we did go in John Siddall more than once recalled how in August of 1914 when a party of us were dining at the then popular Hungarian Restaurant on Houston Street I had said that before the thing was ended the United States, the World, would be in.

"You are a prophet," Siddall would laugh.

But I was not a prophet. It was the logic of my conviction that the world is one, that isolation of Nations is as fantastic as isolation of the earth from the solar system, the solar system from the universe.

All this made a species of Fabian pacifist of me. I was for anything that looked to peace, to neutrality, but it was always with the hopeless feeling that one simply must do what one

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can if the house is on fire.

I could not share the hate of Germany, in spite of my profound devotion to France, my conviction that Germany had believed a war of conquest essential to realize what she called her destiny, that she had been consciously preparing for it, that she thought the Day had come when she could venture it.

The awful thing seemed too big for hate by puny humans and I was amazed and no little shocked when soon after the outbreak visting my friend John Burroughs at Squirrel Lodge in the Catskills I found him whom I had always regarded as an apostle of peace and light in a continuous angry fever against all things German. Woodchucks were troubling his corn and every morning he went out with his gun. "Another damned Hun," he would cry savagely when he returned with his dead game.

Time did not cure John Burroughs' wrath for in December 1917 he pledged himself in an open letter published in The New York Tribune never to read a German book, never to buy an article of German make. But John Burroughs was not the only one of my supposedly gentle-souled friends who felt this serious necessity to punish not only now but forever.

I was too 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 in Detroit had startled me one day in the Spring of 1915 when I was observing

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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 ~~sometimes~~ without knowing what is behind it/~~you are going for~~ that 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./ I 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 Madam Rosika Schrimer and my old friend Fred Howe were talking - Jane Addams was not there.

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"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 Schrimer 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:-

"November 24, 1915

"Will you come as my guest aboard the Oscar Second of the Scandinavian American Line sailing from New York December fourth for Christiania, Stockholm and Copenhagen. I am cabling leading men and women of the European Nations to join us enroute and at some central point to be determined later establish an International Conference dedicated to negotiations leading to a just settlement of the War. A hundred representative Americans are being invited among whom Jane Addams, Thomas A. Edison and John Wanamaker have accepted today. Full letter follows. With twenty thousand men killed every twenty four hours, tens of thousands maimed, homes ruined, another winter begun, the time has come for a few men and women with courage and energy irrespective of the cost in personal inconvenience, money sacrifice and criticism to free the good will of Europe that it may assert itself for peace and justice with the strong probability that international disarmament can be accomplished. Please wire reply."

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"November 27, 1915

"Dear Miss Tarbell:-

"From the moment I realized that the world situation demands immediate action, if we do not want the war fire to spread any further, I joined those international forces which are working toward ending this unparalleled catastrophe. This I recognize as my human duty.

"There is full evidence that the carnage, which already has cost ten millions of lives, can and is expected to be stopped through the agency of a mediating conference of the six disinterested European nations, Holand, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, Spain, and the United States.

"Envoys to thirteen belligerent and neutral European governments have ascertained in forty visits that there is a universal peace desire. This peace desire, for the sake of diplomatic etiquette, never can be expressed openly, or publicly, until one side, or the other, is definitely defeated, or until both sides are entirely exhausted.

"For fifteen months the people of the world have waited for the governments to act; have waited for governments to lead Europe out of its unspeakable agony and suffering and to prevent Europe's entire destruction. As European neutral governments are unable to act without the cooperation of our government, and as our government, for unknown reasons, has not offered this cooperation, no further time can be wasted in waiting for governmental action.

"In order that their sacrifice may not have been in vain, humanity owes it to the millions of men led like cattle to the slaughter house, that a supreme effort be made to stop this wicked waste of life.

"The people of the belligerent countries did not want the war. The people did not make it. The people want peace. It is their human right to get a chance to make it. The world looks to us, to America, to lead in ideals. The greatest mission ever before a nation is ours.

"This is why I appealed to you, as a representative of American democracy, in my telegram of the twenty-fourth. It is for this same reason that I repeat my appeal to you and urge you to join a peace pilgrimage.

"Men and women of our country, representing all of its ideals and all of its activities, will start from New York on the 4th of December aboard the Scandinavian-American Steamship Oscar II. The peace ship that carries the American delegation will proceed to Christiana, where Norway's valiant sons and

daughters will join the crusade. In Stockholm, the ship's company will be reinforced by the choicest of Sweden's democracy. The crusade will then go on to Copenhagen, where further harbingers of peace will be foregathered.

"These various groups will add such momentum to the crusade that when the pilgrims reach The Hague, with its achievements or international justice and comity, the moral power of the peace movement will be irresistible. In The Hague we hope to meet delegations from Switzerland and from Spain.

"From all these various delegations will be selected a small deliberative body which shall sit in one of the neutral capitals. Here it will be joined by a limited number of authorities of international promise from each belligerent country. This International Conference will frame terms of peace, based on justice for all, regardless of the military situation.

"This International Conference will be an agency for continuous mediation. It will be dedicated to the stoppage of this hideous international carnage and further dedicated to the prevention of future wars through the abolition of competitive armaments.

"In case of a governmental call for an official neutral conference before the Peace Ship departs from New York, or even reaches European shores, our party will continue on its mission, rejoicing that the official gathering has materialized. We will then place our united strength solidly behind those entrusted by the governments to carry on the peace negotiations.

"In The Hague the members of the Peace Pilgrimage will dissolve. Accomodations will be provided for each one back to his home. It is impossible to determine the exact length of time the pilgrimage will take. Six weeks, however, should be allowed.

"I respectfully beg of you to respond to the call of humanity and join the consecrated spirits who have already signified a desire to help make history in a new way. The people of Europe cry out to you.

"Information about the meeting place in New York, the hour of sailing, the amount of luggage, your accommodations, etc., will be sent as soon as we have your reply. I should appreciate it if you would telegraph your affirmative decision. Will you send it to the Hotel Biltmore, Suite 717, New York, our temporary headquarters.

"Yours for peace

(Signed) Henry Ford."

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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 Schrimer would have been in command. She saw quite clearly the exploiting tendencies of Madame Schrimer, 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 Schrimer. But she did not go.

It was a tragedy of hasty action, of attempting a great end without proper preparation. Mr. Ford would never have attempted to build a new type of automobile engine as

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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.

The Peace Ship was a failure, but so were the under-cover official efforts of the President and his sympathizers then steadily pushed. Things grew blacker. The day when we would go in seemed always nearer to me. In February of 1916 my depression was deepened by hearing Mr. Wilson, himself admit it. My friends Secretary and Mrs. Daniels had been so gracious as to include me among their guests at the Cabinet dinner they were giving in honor of the President and the new Mrs. Wilson.

We were all standing in the Daniels' drawing room waiting their arrival. I was talking so interestedly with

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somebody that I had forgotten what it was all about, when I was conscious of a distinguished pair in the doorway. It took me an instant to remember what we were there for, and that this was the President and Lady. How they looked the part!

At the dinner table the President was gay, telling stories, quoting limericks. Later when it came my turn to talk to him and I told him how charming I had found Mrs. Wilson's animation and lively wit he rather eagerly fell to talking of her and to my amazed delight of the difficulties of courting a lady when each time he calls the house is surrounded by Secret Service Men!

Dropping his gayety, he told me a little of the situation at the moment. "I never go to bed without realizing that I may be called up by news that will mean that we are at war. Before tomorrow morning we may be at war. It is harder because the reports that come to us must be kept secret. Hasty action, indiscretion might plunge us into a dangerous situation when a little care would entirely change the face of things. My great duty is not to see red."

I carried away from that dinner a feeling of the tremendous difficulty, of the tremendous threat under which we lived, and of a man that had steeled himself to see us through. It strengthened my confidence in him.

But of all this I could say nothing on my Chautauqua Circuit, even when I began to realize that more than anything else these people were interested in the War.

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One of the most convincing proofs I received of this came from things I over-heard at night. We ended our circuit with a siege of terrific heat - the kind of heat that made sleep impossible. The best room you could get was generally on the second-floor front. You pulled your bed to the window, and lay with your head practically out; but if you could not sleep you would certainly be entertained, for on the sidewalks below there would gather, around nine thirty or ten, a little group of citizens who had come down to town after supper 'to see a man.' Shop-keepers, laborers, traveling men, lawyers, and occasional preachers and hotel-keepers would sit out talking war, preparedness, neutrality, Wilson, Hughes, for half the night.

"Look at them," said a talkative Congressional candidate, "four years ago I could have told how practically every one of the men in this town would vote in November. I can't do it to-day. Nobody can. They are freed from partisanship, as I could never have believed. They are out there now thrashing over Wilson and Hughes, and not twenty-five percent of them know which it will be when election day comes."

More and more I came to feel that you could count on these people for any effort or sacrifice that they believed necessary. One of the most revealing things about a country is the way it takes the threat of war. Just after we started the call for troups for Mexico came. It seemed as if war were inevitable. There was no undue excitement where we traveled, but boys in khaki seemed to spring out of the ground.

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I shall never forget one scene, which was being duplicated in many places in that region. We were in an old mountain town in Pennsylvania. Our hotel was on the public square, a small plot encircled by a row of dignified, old-fashioned buildings. In the centre stood a band-stand and beside it a foolish little stone soldier mounted on an over-high pedestal - a Civil War monument. We were told that on the square at half-past nine in the evening a town meeting would be called to say good-bye to the boys who were 'off to Mexico on the ten-thirty.' 'How many of them?' I asked. 'One hundred and thirty-five,' was the answer; and this was a town of not over twenty-eight hundred people.

As the hour approached the whole town gathered. It came quietly, as if for some natural weekly meeting; but a little before ten o'clock we heard the drum and fife; and down the street came a procession that set my heart thumping. Close beside the City Fathers and speakers came a dozen old soldiers, some of them in faded blue, two or three on crutches, and behind them the boys, one hundred and thirty-five of them - sober, consciously erect, their eyes straight ahead, their step so full of youth.

The procession formed before the little soldier, who somehow suddenly became anything but foolish; he took on dignity and power as had the boys in rank - boys whom, if I had seen them the day before, I might have called unthinking, shiftless, unreliable. The mayor, the ministers, a former Congressman, all

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talked. There was a prayer, the crowd in solemn tones sang 'My County 'tis of Thee.' There was a curt order; the procession reformed; the old soldiers led the way, and the town followed the boys to the 'ten-thirty.'

Nothing could have equaled the impression made by the quietness and the naturalness of the proceedings. Besides the continuous ~~vaudeville, the~~ agitations and hysteria to which the East had treated us in the last two and a half years, this dignity, this immediate action, this willingness to see it through, gave one a solemn sense of the power and trustworthiness of this people. It was a realization that I would have been willing to pay almost any price to come to. Certainly it more than paid me for my forty-nine days in forty-nine different beds.

Eight months later this impression of the steadiness of the people under the threat of war was deepened. After my Chautauqua Circuit which I supposed to be had ~~seemed to me~~ a temporary adventure ~~turned out to be the beginning of a side profession on which I was to spend a few weeks every year from 1916 to the time I no longer had the strength for such strenuous work.~~ the Bureau asked to ~~had~~ book me for a month of Lyceum work, most of it in the Middle West. Late in January of 1917 I started out.

I was on the road when the break with Germany came. Our evening papers of February third had the digest of the President's speech to Congress. The next Sunday morning there was the full text. I went out to walk early that morning and one

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of the first things I saw was a lively row in front of a barber shop. Inquiring I found that a big Swede had expressed sympathy with the Kaiser, and was being thrown into the street. At the hotel, my chamber-maid, the elevator boy, the table waiter, did not wait for me to introduce the subject. Everybody was talking about what the break meant, war of course ~~and the general opinion was it meant war~~. They were ready, they said.

As the days went on, I found that was the opinion of everybody. One morning I landed at a railway junction town, with no train until late afternoon. It was a forlorn place at any time, but deadly now, with the thermometer around twenty below. A friendly ticket agent warned me that the only hotel was no place for ladies; and sent me off into the territory beyond the railroad shops to a dingy-looking house, which, he said, was kept by a woman who was clean and decent. It was anything but inviting on the outside but travellers who are choosers are poor sports. The woman gave me a room and, following the only wisdom for the lecturer who would keep himself fit, I went to bed. It was four o'clock in the afternoon when I came down. The woman of the house whom I had found in the morning rubbing out clothes was in fresh gingham dress, sitting in the living room reading the Chicago Tribune. Beside her lay a copy of the Record Herald. I found that this woman since the beginning of the trouble in Europe had been reading full details in these admirably edited newspapers. She had not been for a war, she said, until they went back on their word.

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"That settled it for everybody out here. Now," she said, "there is nothing else to do."

I do not know how often I heard those words in the days that followed. When the President said of America in closing his address to Congress on April 2, 1917, "God helping her she can do no other," he was only expressing that to which the majority of the people of the West, as I had heard them, had made up their minds.

Closely watching I personally felt utterly remote. There was nothing for me to do. In the pandemonium of opinion nothing I could say or do would hinder or help, and so I went on with my daily rounds.

I was speaking at a big dinner in Cleveland early in April when a telegram was handed to me, signed by the President. It appointed me a member of what he called the Womens Committee of the Council of National Defense.

You know on the instant sometimes what you must do. I did not know what the appointment meant, but it had something to do with the War and when your Government is trying to put through a war, whether you approve or not, I had long ago concluded that as for me I would do whatever I was asked to do. And so I sent at once an acceptance of what I took as an order. Two weeks later I went to receive my first instructions. They came from the head of the committee, Dr. Anna H. Shaw.

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