

THE ROAD TO WAR



General Funston's troops entrain for objective near Vera Cruz, 1914.

(Continued from page one.)

The martial splendors and imperial ambitions in which the Rooseveltian age had risen and flourished meant little to the liberal idealism of 1912, of which Mr. Wilson had made himself the mouthpiece.

The new freedom believed in a vague, uncritical way in international peace, arbitration, and disarmament. William Jennings Bryan, its secretary of state, had been preaching arbitration for years, and even Mr. Wilson had joined the American Peace society in 1908. He had readily assented when Mr. Bryan, on being offered the state department, had outlined his project for "cooling-off" treaties with the nations of the world. Upon the eve of the inauguration Mr. Bryan had publicly declared it to be the "imperative duty of the United States . . . to set a shining example of disarmament." This proposal had naturally shocked all the militarists and conservatives. Yet even in his own party no one took Mr. Bryan very seriously as a statesman, and few could have really intended to sink the navy. The new freedom preferred merely to assume that the United States would always be found upon the side of righteousness in world affairs.

II.

Foreign policy had played no part in the electoral campaign. Yet a curiously premonitory thought had passed through Mr. Wilson's mind a few days before his inauguration. "It would be the irony of fate," he had mused, "if my administration had to deal chiefly with foreign affairs," and almost immediately the great ironist had begun to spin her web. At the cabinet meeting on May 23, Mexico loomed up as an ugly problem.

The issue was over the recognition of the latest revolutionary president, Gen. Victoriano Huerta. "The President and Bryan," as Mr. Houston, the secretary of agriculture, noted in his diary, "were opposed to recognition. I emphatically opposed it as immoral." It was the characteristic note. Secretary Houston's reasoning was simple. The Huerta government, he thought, was "bad in origin and purpose"; besides, recognition would merely enable it to get a loan from American bankers, which would in turn permit it to fasten its despotism upon the Mexican people. What more was necessary? Despotisms abroad and bankers at home were equally the enemies of a movement dedicated to popular government and the control of "predatory interests." General Huerta was not recognized.

The result was that disorders in Mexico continued to endanger American life and property. Yet if idealism and democracy, "good" government and social justice, were principles adequate to the solution of domestic problems, they should be enough for foreign policy as well. The disorders would have to be accepted. If individual Americans in Mexico were endangered, "we should earnestly urge all Americans to leave Mexico at once." And then a really fine ethical concept was introduced which was to find its echo in a far greater crisis:

"We can afford to exercise the self-restraint of a really great nation which realizes its own strength and scorns to misuse it," the President said. "The steady pressure of moral force will before many days break the barriers of pride and prejudice down and we shall triumph as Mexico's friends sooner than as her enemies."

Unhappily, however, the steady pressure of moral force did not triumph. The Mexican people seemed somehow not to appreciate our imperious desire to serve them by compelling them to be a democracy. The American citizens refused to leave Mexico; the oil companies were supplied with powerful emotional weapons with which to combat the Wilsonian statesmanship. Wider international complications also began to develop; there were British as well



(Underwood & Underwood photo.) President Wilson and Colonel House after the latter's return from visits to European capitals.

as American citizens in Mexico, and the Monroe doctrine itself might be placed in jeopardy.

In October Mr. Wilson was generalizing his Mexican policy into a broad philosophy of foreign relations:

"I want to take this occasion to say that the United States will never seek one additional foot of territory by conquest. . . . We dare not turn from the principle that morality and not expediency is the thing that must guide us, and that we will never condone iniquity because it is most convenient to do so."

To the new freedom the new diplomacy had now been added. It had been hammered out suddenly, under a great press of other and seemingly more important affairs; to meet unexpected exigencies of foreign relations and practical politics. The thoughtful might have perceived that its effect need not always be pacific, nor was its practical application always easy.

So 1913 passed into history and the year 1914 was ushered in.

And now our own Mexican problem was suddenly to take a most extraordinary—and strangely militaristic—turn. A party going ashore from one of our naval vessels off the port of Tampico was arrested by the Huerta forces; the men were released immediately, but when Admiral Fletcher demanded a salute to repair the insult to our flag it was refused. In a quick decision the President authorized a peremptory dispatch to the recalcitrant Huerta; the fleet was ordered to hold itself in readiness, and Mexico became a front-page sensation of the first rank.

But General Huerta, unfortunately, was not yielding. On

April 19 an ultimatum was dispatched. There was no reply. The President found himself trapped in his own rash intransigence. To avoid humiliating retreat he must now go forward.

Early on the morning of April 21 Mr. Wilson, apparently never supposing that the Mexicans would resist an actual show of force, authorized the seizure of the custom house at Vera Cruz by the squadron lying off that harbor; and a few hours later the string of boats were going in, packed with armed and excited men dispatched for the first time since 1898 upon the conquest of foreign soil.

The landing took place before noon. The same evening the dispatches were at the White House—four Americans killed up to that time and twenty wounded, with the fighting still in progress. The Mexicans had resisted. So swift and so irremediable were the consequences of the word which Mr. Wilson himself had given less than twelve hours before. It was a first bitter and uncalculated fruit of the new diplomacy.

III.

As early as January, 1913, while the Balkan crisis was at its height and while Mr. Taft was still in the presidency, "Colonel" E. M. House of Texas, lunching quietly with a friend, had confessed to a great ambition. Already the guide and confidant of the President elect and one of the chief architects of Mr. Wilson's victory, he was now looking for broader fields in which to exercise his peculiar talents. He confided to his friend that he proposed "to get Governor Wilson to let me bring about an understanding between Great Britain, this country, and Germany in regard to the Monroe doctrine"; but beyond that, and as a necessary condition to the attempt, it would also "be my endeavor to bring about a better understanding between England and Germany."

His first thought had been that "we could encourage Germany to exploit South America in a legitimate way" and thus cure the deep-seated ills of western imperialism.

Count Johann von Bernstorff, the German ambassador at Washington, was unexpectedly encouraging; he even suggested that "perhaps China was the most promising field at present for concerted action." House was pleased; and that summer he was in London with American Ambassador Page, meeting still greater statesmen and repeating to Sir Edward Grey what Bernstorff had said.

"My purpose," he artfully explained to his diary, "was to plant the seeds of peace."

House was greatly taken with the English. Sir William Tyrrell, Grey's secretary, was most flattering in his kindly encouragement; he even consented to advise House as to the best "procedure." Oddly enough, the Englishman thought he should go to Germany first—though carefully warning him that "the minister of marine, Von Tirpitz, was a reactionary."

"He thought I should proceed quietly and secretly, but should secure an audience with the kaiser and say to him, among other things, that England and America 'had buried the hatchet' and there was a strong feeling that

One of These Must Die!



Jack Barrick as KIRKE McKEEL, district attorney.



Doris Larson as MRS. JOE CRESSY, pleasure-loving young matron.



Willard Waterman as MARTIN YORKE, sweetheart of Edith Ryder.

Naomi Anderson as ALICE MARY BROWN, defendant in murder trial.



Caroline Rathbone as PHOEBE LOCKWOOD, beloved of both McKeel and Murray Bentle.



Stanley Walman as MURRAY BENTLE, criminal lawyer.



Kay Campbell as EDITH RYDER, wife of Hugo Ryder.



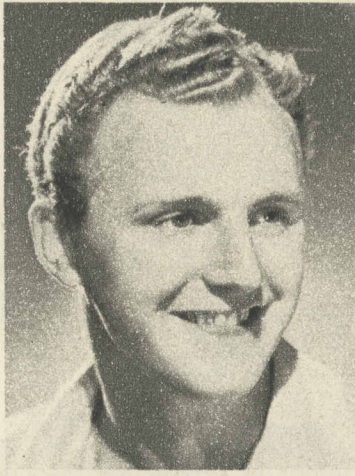
Bob Barron as HUGO RYDER, Edith's jealous husband.

George Neise as DICK BENTLE, Murray's brother, admirer of Mrs. Cressy.

You Will See Drama of Their Lives Unfold

● These may be strangers to you—but not for long. Tragedy, love, hatred have woven their lives inextricably into a dramatic story, and week by week you will watch the breathless action of its unfolding. One of them will die! Others will conspire for selfish gain. Some will find final happiness.

● Rupert Hughes has fashioned their story. He calls it "The Guilty Bystanders." The Tribune has put it into picture form for weekly presentation in the Graphic Section. Turn now to pages six and seven, where even now is being laid the groundwork for tragedy!



Germany should come into this good feeling and evidence their good intention by agreeing to stop building an extravagant navy and to curtail militarism generally."

Sir William assured him that in such a program the British would "coöperate." Mr. Wilson seemed almost "enthusiastic"; and it was decided that House should make the visit to Berlin, just as Sir William had instructed him to do.

Today there hangs about the slight figure of Colonel House, as it passed through the capitals of Europe in the early summer of 1914, a strong suggestion of innocence in a den of suspicious gangsters. With Berlin came the first shock of reality, and it appalled him. "The situation," he wrote to the President, "is extraordinary. It is militarism run stark mad. Unless some one acting for you can bring about a different understanding there is some day to be an awful cataclysm." The Germans, laboring under the disastrously mistaken

impression that because he was called "colonel" he was a military man, entertained him at all sorts of military shows. It all served most unhappily to reinforce the tuition which Sir William Tyrrell had been kind enough to supply.

Nevertheless the colonel was able to grasp the fact that the problem was more intricate than he had thought. He met Tirpitz, who turned out to be slightly less an ogre than represented, and he had a long private conversation with the kaiser. He heard another side to the naval controversy; he heard about "encirclement" and about the German fears of being crushed between France and Russia whenever England should consent. House, enjoying all the optimism of ignorance, summed it up as on the whole "satisfactory" and departed to sow the seeds of peace with the Triple Entente.

In the British capital the "season" was at its height, and he was plunged into a whirl of nota-

bles. He met all the best people in or out of politics; he talked with Haldane and Lloyd George as well as with the foreign secretary and the prime minister. Page told him that his work in Germany was "the most important done in this generation."

It was in the midst of these dinners, luncheons, and exciting conversations that the Austrian heir apparent was assassinated at Sarajevo. The event left no impress upon the published papers of Colonel House, who was proposing to solve the problem of European peace. On July 3 there was another luncheon. Tyrrell told him that Sir Edward would like him to convey to the kaiser the "impressions" he had obtained, but would not send "anything official or in writing, for fear of offending French and Russian sensibilities."

Though House stayed on for another week or two in the July weather, this was about the best that he could get. Evidently it was not enough to warrant that triumphant return to Berlin bearing the dove of world peace upon his shoulder of which the colonel had dreamed. Instead he sat down and wrote a long personal letter to the kaiser, expressing his "high hopes" and pointing out how "much has been accomplished." He had a congratulatory letter from Mr. Wilson and felt "happy," according to Page; but on July 21 he sailed for the United States.

The American people, of course, were wholly ignorant of this essay in amateur diplomacy undertaken in their name. Europe itself, with its rumors of wars and its spectacular armaments, might make glamorous reading, but it was all remote enough to the ordinary citizen. On the morning of Monday, June 29, it is true, the assassinations at Sarajevo were announced by all the American newspapers with staring headlines and long

and accurate dispatches upon the shocking details of the murder. Vienna, London, Paris, Berlin spoke of the most serious "possibilities." Yet the war scares had come so often, and the whole thing was so far away.

The alarm came overnight. On Friday, July 24, most of the newspapers were unconcerned; on Saturday morning the headlines were leaping from all the front pages: "Europe at Point of War," "European War in the Balance." The cables pouring in from London, from Berlin, from Vienna and Belgrade were of the gravest character.

By the evening of Aug. 4 the immense catastrophe had become complete and irretrievable, and on Wednesday morning, Aug. 5, the great banner heads went marching like fate across every American breakfast table:

England Declares War on Germany; British Ship Sunk; French Ships Defeat German; Belgium Attacked; 17,000,000 Men Engaged in Great War of Eight Nations.

The thing had happened.

IV.

Our somnolent state department, where William Jennings Bryan ruled placidly and idealistically over his deserving Democrats, had not really awakened into activity until the crisis was in full career. It was not until July 28, five days after the Austrian ultimatum, that the first thoroughly alarming cables began to come in from the ambassadors; while as late as July 31 Mr. Bryan was just remembering to wire all representatives in Europe for daily telegraphic reports on the situation. The idea of an American mediation, however, was as spontaneous as the shock and horror springing from the disaster itself. There was a resolution in the senate on Aug. 4 urging the

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The assassin of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife in Sarajevo is taken to prison shortly after the tragedy, 1914.