(April 19, 1920.)

"John Bull and Uncle Sam"

By Mr. Wm. F. Wile.*

Mr. President and Fellow North Americans,—I have been only a few hours across that imaginary line which separates completed drought from interesting possibilities; but I feel myself, in this company, very much at home. I felt at home within an hour of getting here last night, for I found myself in an overheated room. I found ice water on the table, and I found that streets are repaired at night in Toronto. But I am very glad to be among folk who speak and understand the North American language. I feel it a compliment, as I hope you do, that people in England refer to you and to us younger Canadians as the people who between them made English the *common* language.

I can never speak of language and nationality without remembering how a distinguished citizen of New York, who rejoiced in the fine old Anglo-Saxon name of Patrick Murphy, once defined his origin. He said he was American by residence, English by language, Irish by extraction, and Scotch-and-soda by choice. Nor can I think of Murphy without thinking of the definition once given of the four races that make up the United Kingdom; an Englishman loves his bible and his beer; the Scotchman keeps the Sabbath and anything else he can lay his hands on; the Welshman prays on his knees on Sunday and on his neighbors for the rest of the week; while the Irishman, bejabers, doesn't know what he wants and won't be happy until he gets it.

I have often wanted to come to Canada; but, heretofore, have never come any nearer realizing my ambition than to be a bank clerk, which, in the old days, seemed to hold out certain possibilities in that direction. I would like to say that before I degenerated into a scribe and after-luncheon spell-binder I was a bank clerk in Chicago, and a bank clerk in an institution that was the outgrowth of the local branch of the Canadian

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Bank of Commerce, and I learned what little I managed to absorb of the business at the hands of two very splendid Canadian bankers; who, if I am not mistaken, came from the Ontario-an metropolis of Peterboro'. I was more anxious to get to Canada than the story they tell of a native of my sainted state of Indiana, who, having abandoned the hope of making a career in God's country, fell on his knees one night in a moment of dejection and desperation; and in an attitude of supplication said, "Good-by God, I am going to Canada." Now that prayer was mis-punctuated. That prayer should have been a prayer of rejoicing, and it should read, "Good; by God! I am going to Canada."

Friends, I am mighty glad to be on the soil from which sprang the men who have won such imperishable glory for the whole North American name at Paschendaele and Vimy. I am proud to be in the land from which Arthur Currie, that war-giant, comes. The other night, at a meeting of the Canadian Club in New York, I heard read for the first time that amazing and beautiful piece of English,—Currie's order to the Canadian corps on the night before the critical struggle for Amiens. I was not surprised to hear the President of the Canadian Club of New York say that that beautiful piece of English, translated into French, was by the order of the French government displayed and ordered to be displayed perpetually on the walls of every school in the republic. Mr. President, I hope that ways and means will be found of circulating that order in the United States, for I know of no piece of English, with the possible exception of Lincoln's speech at Gettysburg, more inspiring than Currie's order on that historic occasion.

The other day, in Washington,—that metropolis of rumour, recrimination, and remorse, where I now practise the profession of chasing the nimble item,—a distinguished American of national renown told me that he had been approached by one or two Canadians who had asked him to launch in the United States an agitation in favor of the annexation of Canada; and assured him that such a movement would meet a responsive echo in the Dominion. That distinguished American, being a man of great sagacity and common sense, said that the persons who made that proposal must be gravely misinformed as to the state of public opinion in the United States. He told them that there was no man outside of a lunatic asylum in the United States who would participate in such an agitation and he doubted whether there were any men at liberty in the Dominion who would support such a campaign.

The relations at present existing between Canada and the United States are very much indeed to our liking. We glory in your progress. We are sharing very materially in it; because, as may not be known to some of you, we are already selling to the Dominion of Canada every year twice as much goods as we export to the whole of South America combined. It may not be known to all of you that Canada to-day sells us more goods than any other country on the face of the earth, with the single exception of Japan. I came across the statistics only during the week-end, and I confess they were positively startling; but they indicate to me that the commercial relations between the Dominion and the United States are of such a calibre that should fill no American with any particular desire to change the relationship that now prevails.

There stands before you a prodigal son who is returning to his native North American heath after nearly twenty years exile on the other side of the Atlantic. Thirteen years of that time were spent in Germany,—with frequent intervals in civilization. Six or seven years were spent in Great Britain. After those six or seven years, being of a fairly observant turn of mind, I think I have begun,—just begun,—to understand British character. During the war, I made it a point, as far as opportunities presented themselves of interrogating thousands of American soldiers and sailors who were in the British Islands on their way to or from the Great Adventure in France as to their conception of the Britisher and of Britain; and I found that nine-tenths of these impressionable youths came to England and left England with the stereotyped misconceptions of British character that most of us Yanks cherish who have never set foot on that soil.

I found that our boys, almost without exception, were of the opinion that the average Britisher was an exceedingly chilly proposition, with all the qualities of a poker except its occasional warmth. Our boys came to the conclusion that every man woman and child in that island seemed bent on looking, and growing up, and acting as much as possible like an animated ice-berg. I told those fellows when I got them together, as I did periodically, that what Americans had for ever so long misinterpreted as coldness and reserve to the point of down-right rudeness in the average Britisher, is nothing in the world but shyness. And I'd like to tell you how I found it out.

I am the proud possessor of a 12-year-old boy, who will have to grow up under the handicap, seeing he was not born

in the United States, that he can never become the president of the United States. We removed to England in August 1914 under circumstances beyond my control. We decided to send that young hyena of ours to a typical English boarding school for boys of his age. We sent him to that pretty little sea-side town of Eastbourne. When he went down there he was a typically red-blooded, michievous young American,—a holy terror. Four years of English school training have turned him into a human icicle. He now comes home for his vacations so tame, so reserved, so modest, so shy, that his parents almost feel they need a letter of introduction to him.

The first time I went down to Eastbourne to visit that boy I jumped out of the train along with thirty or forty other parents on a similar mission. We discovered our progeny distributed along the platform waiting for us, and when I had placed my boy I dared to rush up to him in my wild impulsive way and embrace him. When that operation was over, that boy of mine, assuring himself that none of his English school mates could see or hear him, led me down to a deserted part of the platform and whispered in my ear, "Dad, next time you come down here, if you want to kiss me will you please wait until we get to the hotel?" When we got to the hotel I put that youngster in the witness-box. I learned that he was being brought up on a system that teaches that hearts were given to them to keep where God placed them, and where they cannot be revealed to anybody on earth. Under no circumstances must hearts be worn upon sleeves. Under no consideration must any Englishman let any living soul know what is going on behind his brow or behind his bosom. And that convinced me that that system of training is at the bottom of the system which breeds a race of men and women who are determined to create upon their fellow human beings the impression that they are indeed inanimate objects.

I learned something else about my boy's English school training. As far as out door sport was concerned, he was growing up on a weird thing called cricket. I wonder how many of you have ever seen a game of cricket. Personally I never have been able to keep awake at a game of cricket, for the game usually takes three whole days to play. It takes exactly one hour and thirty minutes to play a game of baseball. Cricket is slow, conservative, cautious, lady-like. Baseball is rapid, impulsive, rough house, and radical. And in the difference between cautious cricket and impulsive baseball I believe we come very near indeed to getting down to bed-

rock distinction between the British and American characters.

I told the American dough-boys that although cricket was to them uninteresting and lady-like it had accomplished its important object; namely, that it is the institution which trains British character in the making. I told them of that splendid expression in England that when a man or a woman or a child has done something dishonorable or small; the slang expression is, "they have not played cricket." I told them what Wellington meant when he said that Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton. He meant that the guards of Britain, who smashed the power of Napoleon, had been enabled to achieve that decisive result because they had to employ on that occasion lessons taught on the cricket fields of Britain; lessons of fighting hard and fighting clean, right through to the bitter end, no matter what the cost.

I tried to tell them what Britishers mean when they sing "God Save the King." I told them that they prayed God might save Britain, that the King was only a symbol of British principles and British freedom. I tried to make them understand that in Great Britain to-night there is just as much liberty to the square inch as there is in the United States; because, according to the latest accounts, you can still get a drink over there. I told them that Britain went into the war for the same reason that we did, to see that honor and freedom should not vanish from the face of the earth. I told them that Britain and her Dominions the world over were prepared to be bled white, for the same reasons that we were prepared to give all we had and all we were for the same cause.

I told them I hoped they would become the fathers of children in the United States who would be brought up on somewhat different teachings of United States history than I was brought up on. I told them that I hoped the day would come when we would be taught in our public schools that George III. was not a British King at all, but an importation from Germany who never until his dying day could read or write in the language of Shakespere. I told them, I hoped the day would come when our youngsters would be taught that, of the eight million people who inhabited the British Isles in 1770, less than one-third had a vote. All those things should be taught side-by-side with Bunker Hill and the Boston Tea Party, and Yorktown. Alongside those things, in Heaven's name, why not teach the other thing, so our boys and girls can grow up with a true perspective—with history as it was, and not as it has been written in our text-books in the United States by German and Irish writers.

I mentioned Ireland. It is thin ice, and I am not a good skater. But no discussion of British-American affairs would be complete without a brief mention of Ireland. I am a friend of Ireland's. That self-same youngster of whom I spoke is to-day at an Irish Catholic school, where I myself was brought up. The best friend I have got in the world was my class-mate at Notre Dame, now a Catholic priest. I sympathize with the aspirations of the Irish race for a square deal. I believe Great Britain owes a square deal to Ireland; also she owes a square deal to the British Empire. I would no sooner think of giving Ireland absolute and unqualified independence than the United States thought of giving Cuba absolute and unqualified independence when we passed the Platt amendment giving us control over Cuba's foreign affairs. I have tried to tell American friends that it is territorial, not political, necessity that requires the Emerald Isle to remain part of the British Imperial system. I have asked them to tell me, if they can, what the English side of the Irish case is; and precious few knew it.

Because you Britishers, with your invicible refusal to blow your own horn, have let Sinn Fein into the United States. You have not spoken up. You have not told Americans the facts; that Ireland, far from being oppressed and tyrannized, is the one absolutely unoppressed portion of the British Empire. You have failed to tell the people of the United States that Irishmen do not have to fight the Empire's battles unless they want to. You have not told them that Ireland suffered no restriction of its drink, suffered no restriction of its food, and had to endure—for very good reasons—no German air raids. You have not told them that Ireland to-day is revelling in the utmost economic and industrial prosperity in Ireland's history. These things have not been told; and that is why, my friends, the opinion has started to spread that John Bull is trampling Ireland under his heel. I advise you, before it is too late, to spread the English conception of the Irish question; because, even to that question, there are two sides. I would advise you, before it is too late, to climb down from the tower of silence which you fancy and turn and tell the truth about your conceptions of the Irish controversy.

I said a moment ago I had lived a long time in Germany. I want to tell you a few facts about Germany. I tell you, out of the depths of a very intimate acquaintance with German psychology; I tell you solemnly, that although Germany is down, she is not out. I tell you solemnly, that we are dealing

with a German people that, in defeat and, temporarily, in domestic chaos, is absolutely unrepentant and unregenerated. We are dealing with a German people who have one solitary regret about the war; and that is, that they lost it. That German people would to-morrow revert to all the indescribable horrors which they employed three or four years ago—to reconquer everything they lost, if they could. I ask you to believe with me that France is right in doing what she is. Foch knows his Boche. France has lived alongside Germany for many years now. She has suffered the agonies and terrors of German invasion. France, for four years, knew the horrors of German occupation and what German occupation means; and I tell you, that if you and I had had sisters taken into Germany in captivity and something worse—women folk of ours who to-day are the mothers of German babies—if your fair province of Ontario and my sainted Indiana lay in ruins from the ravages of a German army of occupation; you and I would not blame France for what she is doing towards throwing back the German terror.

I happen to be a Yankee out of fashion in my own country at present, because I seize every possible opportunity to confess publicly to the wisdom and necessity of friendship between British nations and my own. I say it is unfashionable at present in the United States to espouse that doctrine; but, as I am not a candidate for office, I can for the moment speak freely. I would say that I would be satisfied with a League of Nations that comprised the one hundred and sixty million white people who between them speak the tongue of Chaucer and of Lincoln. I believe that such a union can dominate the world's affairs without domineering them; that such a union would be good for Britain, would be good for British dominions everywhere, would be good for the United States, and would be good for all decent and liberty-loving people throughout God's foot-stool. I would not be so foolish as to stand before an audience of Britishers and say that you are universally beloved in my country. That is not right. It would be equally grotesque for me to pretend to an audience of Americans that they are universally beloved throughout lands over which the Union Jack floats. That would be equally wrong. But I do say to my people at home that, despite the voice of hostility and rancour and, sometimes, ego, that occasionally comes across the ocean to us from the British Isles—that the hearts of the overwhelming bulk of the British people beat sound and firm for friendship with the people of my own land.

I am not blind to the fact that the years that lie immediately ahead of us are bound to see vigorous combats between your Empire and our Republic. I know perfectly well that John Bull realizes that he has to face very vigorous rivalry in the peaceful routes of the world at the hands of this vigorous, aggressive and ambitious young giant of the Western world. I am aware of the British impost on the British people, merely to pay interest on the huge war debt of four and a half billion dollars that the war piled up in our favor against you. I know that John Bull feels he must drink less tea and play less golf if he is to hold his own in the race of nations. But I have told American friends they are dwelling in a fool's paradise if they imagine John Bull is to be caught asleep at the switch. I have told them that a nation that could pull itself together as John Bull pulled himself together between August 1914 and the armistice is quite capable of holding its end up in any emergency.

The plain truth, my friends, is that the United States at present is swept by a very unfortunate, deplorable wave of anti-British feeling. It has its root in many causes. Sinn Fein is one of them, but not the only one. There is a presidential election on. That has been a fight for the League of Nations, and the subject has made very excellent campaign material for one of our great political parties. But I make you a confident prophecy that when the smoke of the presidential battle has finished, as it will in God's goodness,—and none too soon,—in a very few months—I make you the confident prophecy that British-American relations will speedily find their normal and natural level. I make you the further prophecy that Americans again, after the Presidential elections, will revert again, as far as public sentiment is concerned, to the high ideals that inspired the United States three years ago this very month when we went to war. I make you the confident prediction that altruism and idealism is the spirit that will again reign over the Republic. I am convinced that the American people are ready, in their good time, once again to do their full duty toward the world.

And we have a duty. Again, it is unfashionable for men to stand up in the United States to-day and proclaim that we have a duty. The popular thing, and the selfish thing, in public to do in my country is to talk about Americanism; and to define it as meaning a world that consists of that part of the world bounded on the north by Canada, on the west by the Pacific ocean, on the South by the Gulf of Mexico and on

the east by the Atlantic. There is a spirit in America to-day, —rolling as we know in billions of wealth, wealth beyond the dreams of any nation in history,—that says, "The world and the future belong to us." I prefer to believe with Victor Hugo; who wrote of Napoleon, speaking of a time that might come when defeat and disaster might overtake a great conqueror, "The world belongs to nobody. The future belongs to nobody. To-morrow belongs to God." I believe that America will not belie all history. I believe that America must prepare for a politically rainy day, as all great nations in the past have had to prepare. And I believe our people are going to realize the time will come when we shall need a great, powerful friend. I believe we are coming to realize that the day has arrived when we ought to bring our political house into order; that we shall look for those friends where they are most naturally to be found, where Admiral Dewey looked for them at Manila.

I come from a country now presided over by a stricken ruler, who perhaps at this hour is at the zenith of his unpopularity. I risk you Canadians a further prediction, that the day will come when the name of Woodrow Wilson will be revered in history. I have prophesied that the day will come when his name will be remembered, when the names of his critics and detractors are long-since forgotten. I prophesy that the day will come when Woodrow Wilson, the apostle of American idealism, will be universally and internationally renowned. I am not a partisan of Woodrow Wilson. He has made indefensible, asinine, blunders. But, in pointing out to Americans their duty to the world and civilization, he has enunciated a doctrine, I believe, that the American people in their overwhelming majority support.

Mr. President, my time has expired. I will go on only long enough to say it has been a great privilege to be among you. I appreciate the quiet patience with which you have listened to these rambling remarks. I wish to express the hope that this first visit of mine to this metropolis of the Dominion may not prove to be the last.