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Five Minute Chats on Our Presidents

By JAMES MORGAN

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WILSON AND THE WAR

1917—Feb. 3, President Wilson broke off diplomatic relations with Germany on her renewal of ruthless submarine.

April 2, read his war message to congress.

1918—Jan. 18, laid before the senate his 14 points.

Nov. 11, the armistice signed with the German revolutionary government.

As he stood at the clerk's desk in the hall of the house of representatives on the evening of April 2, 1917, President Wilson was the central figure in one of the great moments of world history. Not only his own people but mankind stopped to listen.

The president had been re-elected only five months before because "he kept us out of the war." Alas, the war would not keep out of the United States.

The war took on new fury, with the resumption of ruthless submarine, which Germany had modified the year before at our demand. The president thereupon handed the German ambassador his passports, and next he proposed that we should arm our merchant ships. The filibustering senate failing to give him this authority, he proceeded himself to arm them. But shipping vanished from the sea, with its hidden terror, and at last he called the newly elected congress in extraordinary session to "receive a communication—concerning grave matters of national policy."

No other president in the whole course of his service has had to make so many momentous decisions as Woodrow Wilson has had to make in



Wilson and His First Grandchild.

the solitude of his study at the White House in those anxious days before the assembling of congress. He could not divide the burden of such a heavy responsibility; he had to bear it alone and without a precedent to guide him.

Should we give a further trial to armed neutrality? Or should we enter upon an independent naval warfare against the submarine menace to our shipping? Or should we back the allies with money and supplies, but leave them to do the fighting? Or should we join forces with them unreservedly, contrary to the historic policy of America to go it alone?

Those alternatives were in every mind in that bewildering period, and the president had to choose between them in framing the policy to be submitted to congress. He made the bolder choice of going into full partnership with the entente allies, pooling with them all our resources, our man power, our money power and our producing power.

The broad plan which he unfolded and which congress quickly approved assured in advance the success of the great, unparalleled undertaking, and he pushed it through to victory with grim, unrelenting persistence. Americans generally assumed at the start, and the British government agreed with them, that we should not have to send a great army to Europe, if indeed any at all. But when it became an imperative necessity to go at double quick to the relief of the broken line in France, the foundation was so well laid that we rose to the unforeseen emergency, building up in a year and a half an army of 4,000,000 and ferrying 2,000,000 soldiers across the Atlantic.

The brains of the country, all the talents, were mobilized for the war—merchants and scientists, bankers and railroad men, labor leaders and clergymen, each being charged with the task for which his training fitted him. "It is a race between Wilson and Hindenburg," said Lloyd George, when the big German drive surprised the entente and smashed through its front in the spring of 1918. Well, whoever won the war, Hindenburg lost that race.

The rest—the president's journeys to Europe, the treaty and the battle over it, are history still in the making. Many years must pass before that extraordinary chapter in the story of the presidency will be finished and may be told in the spirit of historical impartiality.

Americanism

By LEONARD WOOD

Fear God and take your own part.—Theodore Roosevelt.

THIS is one of the strongest and most frequently quoted of Theodore Roosevelt's utterances. The seven words might stand for his autobiography. He feared God and took his own part—as an American citizen.

There is a double significance in the word "take" as Roosevelt used it. It has its self-defensive significance and it has the meaning also of playing your own part for the good of your country. Roosevelt preached the strenuous life. He did not believe in soft living. His contempt for the idle American was almost beyond the reach of the words of his vocabulary. He could not conceive any sight more pitiful than that of a man willing to accept the benefits of good government and yet unwilling to bear his share of the burden of the work of securing it.

Roosevelt's words "Fear God and take your own part," were addressed to every man and woman in this land. Roosevelt was God-fearing and he knew that a God-fearing nation was a nation which would survive. He knew also that the God-fearing man is the man who, if he interprets aright his duty to God, is the man who is willing to take his own part and play his own part in the world.

There are civic duties which every American should do his utmost to fulfill. There are duties which admit of no timidity or inaction. The timid have no place in a government of the people. The timid cannot be depended upon properly to guard their treasure of liberty, a treasure which came down to them as a heritage from fearless forefathers.

There have been times when people of this country seemingly have been afraid to take their own part, let alone to play it. It was more in seeming than in reality. It takes a whole people a long time to make up its mind just what is right. When the nation's mind finally was made up, however, that the national conscience demanded action, action always has followed.

But even in times of stress there have been those timid souls who would hold back, pleading this or pleading that in order to justify a hesitating policy. It was to all the people that Roosevelt appealed when he said "Fear God and take your own part," but it was his desire to strengthen particularly the hearts of the timid ones and to clear their vision so that they could see straight the path of American duty.

Americans should take their own part not only in matters directly affecting the government, but in all the matters of every day life which make for wholesome conditions in the communities. Civic duties begin at home. If every American household trains its children along the lines of Americanism the whole body of people gets its training and our institutions are secure.

Too Tame.
Old Sam Wilkins and Hec Denton were having their usual game of checkers in the back of Sam's old store, when Denton was called away, leaving the game unfinished. Just then a darkey, who did the delivering and other chores about the store stoached in, hands in pockets. Wilkins suggested to him:

"George, sit down here and finish Denton's game for him. You know how to play checkers, don't you?"
"Yes, Ah knows how to play, boss, but" (he unconsciously withdrew his hands from his pockets and began fingering a pair of "bones") "Ah always considered checkers a lazy man's game."—Publishers' Auxiliary.

Making Sure.
"Charley, dear," said young Mrs. Torkins, "I am glad to see you taking as much interest in politics as you formerly took in racing."
"It is the duty of every man and woman to take an interest in politics."
"Do you wish me to vote for the same candidate that you do?"
"Why shouldn't you?"
"I thought it might be a good idea for me to vote for the other one. It would be a satisfaction to feel that one or the other of us has at last succeeded in picking a winner."

He Knew Whereof He Spoke.
A school teacher was visiting the boy scout camp at Klineumapooce a few weeks back. The boys were feeding her with blackberries and in every way trying to make her enjoy her visit. One little fellow, more interested than the others, gave her the following advice:
"And say, while you're here you want to get good and tanned. You won't have to wash your neck and ears then, for the dirt doesn't show."
—Indianapolis News.

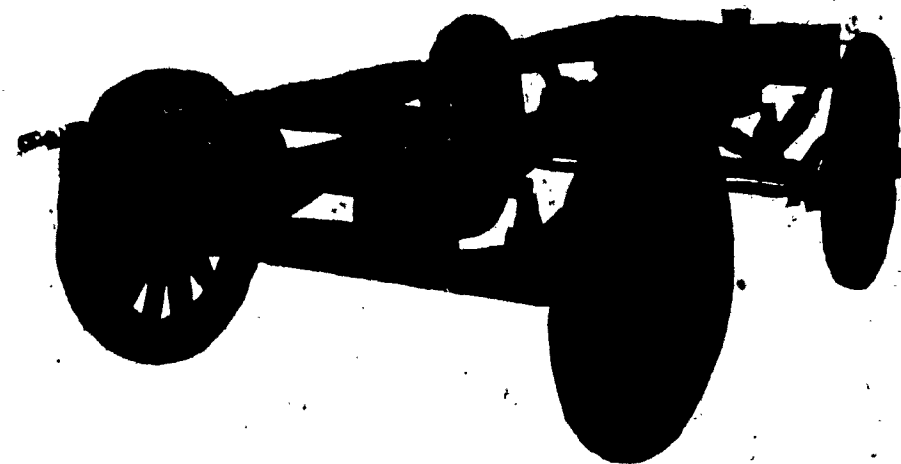
Not Qualified.
"A reporter wishes to see you, sir."
"What does he want?" asked Mr. Grabco, testily.
"He says he wants to get your views on the European situation."
"Tell him I'm not competent to discuss the question. I don't even know what's become of that poet, musician or something or other who captured Flume."
—Birmingham Age-Herald.

Its Class.
"I know one bird which without any superstition is one of ill omen."
"What is it?"
"A round robin."

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