

**NEW YORK
SOUTHERN SOCIETY,
1916-1917; PP. 34-110**

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was the strongest influence upon this great man, and he returned and cleared the boy, and showed how he loved his old home. I think that feeling dominates you in New York, whether you come from Texas or any other of the States in which the members of the Society were born.

It is a little singular that it has been given to the State in which I was born to have often spoken for the Navy. In the history of the Republic, the State of North Carolina has five times been represented in the Cabinet, and always as Secretary of the Navy. In the years of the 50's, when the best navy we ever built, in proportion to the navies of other countries, was constructed, it was a great statesman of North Carolina, James C. Dobbin, who was the Secretary that built it. Always the South has furnished to the Navy young men of ambition and courage and spirit.

In the closing days of the War between the States, it was the Navy of the United States, mainly constructed through the genius and leadership of James C. Dobbin that won the victory by the blockade of the Southern States.

There happened to be in command of a Confederate ship at Mobile, when Farragut won his great victory, a member of the Confederate Navy, Peter Umstead Murphy, and the Commander of the successful ship was Admiral Jouett. They had been friends and playmates at Annapolis, and on the morning before the battle, Jouett,

knowing that he was going to win, sent for his steward, and said, "Steward, I want you to have the best breakfast ever served upon this ship, because I am going to capture Peter Umstead Murphy this morning, and give him the first good breakfast he has had since this war began."

He was a prophet, and after a severe engagement, in which Umstead's arm was broken, the second officer killed, as well as a number of his men, Umstead went over to Jouett's ship to present his sword, with his arm in a sling, and with that chivalry always characteristic of naval officers, Jouett sent his men below, and all his officers on the other deck so that no mortification might come to his old schoolmate, and as Murphy came on deck with his sword to be given to the victor, and saw it was his old schoolmate, he began, Southern-like, to make an oration, to explain why he had surrendered, and to make declarations that he thought would live in history, and Jouett said, "Hold on, Pete, this is no time for speakin'; breakfast is gettin' cold."

They went below, and Umstead and Jouett enjoyed a good breakfast, and before it was over, Murphy said, "Jouett, why didn't you let me know two hours ago you had as good a breakfast as this? If you had, I would have surrendered earlier."

And that was the moment, gentlemen, that the bloody chasm was bridged, and the Navy of the South and

North bridged it, as it has done most of the good things to cement good feelings since that day on.

Yesterday, in the House of Representatives, thronged by the members of both houses of Congress, and by a distinguished gathering, for the first time at least in half a century, the President of the United States in person, following the new custom of delivering his messages to Congress by looking them in the face instead of sending them to be droned over as formerly, made a plea, an argument irresistible, and the burden of his message to Congress was the necessity, the essential necessity, for immediate strengthening of the national defense.

It was couched in no words of aggression; it had no tinge of militarism; on the contrary, it breathed the passion for peace, but with the knowledge that peace, to be preserved, and to be put beyond dispute, can be preserved only by a nation having a strong national defense behind its demands.

That address met with the approval of a great majority of both houses of Congress, and before it adjourns there is not the remotest doubt that in substance the program recommended by the President of the United States will be put upon statute law.

We have heard a great deal of talk about an adequate navy, and about preparedness, but it has not been defined to the satisfaction of everybody, and it is rather difficult

to define it when the discussion is so general in America, and happily so general as showing the prevalent deep interest in it. The best definition of preparedness that I have heard has not come out in this discussion, but it was given in the Hoosier Schoolmaster. You recall the story of the district in that pioneer day when the big boys drove out all the schoolmasters, and after they had driven out four or five, the school was closed because no teacher could be found who could control the boys. Finally a pale-faced, rather slender youth from the effete East, as the Indianans then called it, applied to be school-teacher. The trustee said, "Young man, they have driven out five, husky, strong men, and the boys of this district would make short work of you." "Very well," said the young man, "I haven't anything to do; I haven't any money, and I will try it." He was duly appointed principal of the school, and the next morning, as he walked in, on the front seat sat the big boys who looked at him with contempt and were planning how they would pitch him out. After he took his place at the desk, he walked the length of the room, put up a large cardboard in the center of which was one black dot, walked back to his desk and pulled out a seven-shooter. He aimed at the bull's-eye, and hit it seven times without missing. Then he put his hand in his pocket and taking out a bowie knife he laid it on the desk; from the other pocket a butcher knife. By that time the big boys began to look

at him with some apprehension, but turning solemnly he said, "The school will now be opened with prayer."

The program of national defense which the President has proposed meets not only with the approval of what we call the militant citizens who have ever been championing strong and large navies, but with the approval also of the bulk of the American people who deprecate it while they know it is necessary. I do not know that I entirely share the feeling, but Booth Tarkington recently, speaking of national defense, made a characteristic statement, which, in whole or in part, I think, expresses the national sentiment. Speaking of a great country abroad, he said, "They were spoiling for a fight, because they were so fully prepared." Preparedness has an element of danger but just now the infinitely greater danger is in our unpreparedness. We must be able to defend ourselves and know how to stop when we have reached the point of adequate preparation.

When I became Secretary of the navy, it became my duty, as it is of all civilian secretaries, to study the needs of the navy, and to address myself to such policies as will strengthen and improve it, and in addition, to the necessity, the imperative necessity, of new ships, of a kind that experience has shown we need. I have tried to find how it could be improved in every way to make it worthy of the full confidence of the American people.

We are living in a day of great change in naval

affairs. Old principles, old strategems, old tactics that have never been questioned since the triremes of Carthage and Rome met in the Mediterranean are being set aside and questioned. When the Merrimac in Hampton Roads won the first victory, a new day came in naval warfare, but when the Monitor sailed in, "the cheese-box on a shingle," as we called it, and showed the Merrimac she had met her match, it presaged the end of the war, and brought about a new era of naval construction.

Gideon Welles, then Secretary of the Navy, in his Diary, perhaps the most interesting book printed in a decade, writing of this period said, "When the first turret vessel, the Monitor, was building, many naval men and men in the shipping interest sneered at her as a humbug, and at me as no sailor or judge, until she vindicated her power and worth in that first remarkable conflict. Then I was abused by party men because I had not made preparations for and built more."

The program presented to Congress is based upon what we have learned, both from the war in Europe and from a year of incessant drilling by our own navy. The principal lesson is the need as shown in the fights off Chili and near the Faulkland Islands that the fast ship is an outstanding need of modern navies.

While naval events in the North Sea have not been decisive, they have been characterized with fighting and manoeuvres with fast cruisers, and the need of our Navy

therefore for this type of ship is embodied in this program. We have put in the first place, battle cruisers and scout cruisers, fast ships that can deliver the blow and leave the pursuer.

We were astounded in the early days of the war by the sensational and spectacular effect of the submarines, those ships that silently stole under forts and over mines to send the torpedo that sunk the great ships. In this program, recognizing the value of the submarine, we have made provision that in five years we may have one hundred and seventy-five submarines in the navy. The program embraces other ships to make a well balanced navy. So that if it is adopted, we shall make a long step toward the strong navy which is essential to preserve peace and enforce the demands of our Republic.

But ships alone do not make a strong navy. When I came into the office there was authorized a complement of 51,500 men in the Navy, but the men could not be secured. It was short nearly five thousand, with all the recruiting stations hard at work. We began to see that the old-time sailor who enlisted in the Navy, without the study of mechanics, without ambition to be a machinist, an electrician, or a master of some like trade, was not the material needed, and we made the appeal to the youth of America, with mechanical skill and genius, and promised them if they came into the navy they should not lose the opportunity of securing an education, but at the