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The War for American Ideals

BY

Rev. William A. Crawford-Frost

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Rev. William A. Crawford-Frost
of Baltimore

A PATRIOTIC SPEECH

Delivered at the Hotel Belvedere, Baltimore,
on
Thursday, October 25th, 1917

A. THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE
Maryland Society of the War of 1812



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Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen—Just at the present moment it would not be proper to begin any speech on the war without referring to the Liberty Loan. It is doubtful whether the American people have begun to realize the immense, the incalculable benefits of that great movement. Apart from the magnificent equipment it is going to afford our land, air and water forces; apart from the depressing effect it is going to have on the morale of the German Army and people, and the corresponding strengthening and stimulation of our Allies; apart from these essential things, it is going to bring a whole troop of minor blessings along with it. Thousands of workingmen who have hitherto never formed the habit of saving now, by the purchase of Liberty Bonds, are learning to put by money for the future. It will do much to unite the rich and the poor and to diminish class hatred and suspicion. Many a man who has been accustomed to sneer at the "bloated bondholder" will no longer do so, now that he has become a bondholder himself. Laboring men who have subscribed will feel, as never before, that they have a stake in the country; that they are part owners of the nation; that this great republic does not belong to the rich, but that the people really own it—which is the proper feeling to exist throughout a democracy and is the true antidote to socialism and discontent. But, apart from all these blessings, the Liberty Loan has taught the American people a new and much-needed lesson in economics. I could illustrate my meaning in this way: Suppose a man received word that he had just fallen heir to a large ranch out in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, that it was worth \$230,000 and was free from all incumbrance except a small mortgage of \$1,200. He went out at once and was informed by a Western banker that his ranch contained coal, iron and lime, close together, so that steel factories could be profitably established, that there were places where the boring of wells would produce abundant flows of crude oil and gasoline, and that the ranch also, in another sec-

tion, contained many thousand acres of fertile land. The banker further informed him that he would be glad to lend him any amount up to \$100,000 if he wished to develop his property. What would you think of this man if he declared: "One thing I will not do; I will not go into debt. I have no capital to develop these enterprises, but I am determined never to borrow." Why, such a man would not be able to pay off the little mortgage of \$1200! On the other hand, suppose he borrowed \$7000 at once and secured horses and wagons, and men with picks and shovels, and began to get out and sell the coal that lay on the surface, and another \$7000 and bored a well and struck oil, and yet another \$7000 and bought live stock, and gang plows and other implements, and started to farm on a large scale. What would his little mortgage of \$1200 amount to? Now, gentlemen, you see the force of this. You and I can think in terms of thousands, but we have not become accustomed to think in millions and billions. Yet the same principles which are so obvious in the case of the man with the ranch are applicable to the policy of a nation. At the time when this war with Germany began, the assets of the United States were two hundred and thirty billions. Think of it! And our liabilities were only a little over one billion—less than one billion two hundred millions—just the same proportion as the man with the ranch—and our issuing bonds for seven billions is really no more of an undertaking for us than his borrowing \$7000, on assets of \$230,000, was for him. The solvency of a nation is much like that of an individual. It depends chiefly on the relation between the total assets and the total liabilities. The main difference is that in the case of a nation the units are billions, while with individuals the units are generally thousands. France has sixty-two billions of assets and eighteen billions of liabilities. Consequently she is in sound financial condition. Great Britain, with eighty-six billions of assets and only seventeen billions and a half against her in liabilities, is still better off. Con-

sequently the United States could issue bonds to the extent of forty-eight billions and still be relatively as well off as France, or to the extent of forty-five billions and still be in the position Great Britain is now, or, as Mr. Farrell of the Steel Corporation says, America could issue bonds up to one hundred billions and still be financially sound. This has opened the eyes of everybody to the great capacities of this country, to her immense powers that were really lying latent and dormant before this war began. It is not the debt that is the blessing. It is the activity that is made possible by the employment of the capital that the debt obtains. It is the wonderful movement and development of enterprises, creating incredible demands for labor and for commodities, making everybody busy and spreading good wages among workingmen, plentiful money among farmers and wealth throughout nearly all classes of the community. These are the blessings—not the debt, but the things made possible by the debt. Let us hope that the nation will learn this great lesson and not be afraid to issue more bonds after peace is declared, that the activities may go right ahead—only they will be in productive enterprises, not unproductive, constructive, not destructive, so that our war industries may be directed into peaceful channels without any slump in the labor market or in the stock market, and the millions of soldiers returning from the front will find ready employment at good pay, and the prosperity of the country go steadily forward in the future.

Temperamentally, the German and the American represent opposite extremes. Sir Charles Waldstein, in a booklet entitled "What Germany Is Fighting For," relates an anecdote that illustrates my meaning. A certain man was traveling in Europe, before the war, and sat down one day at a table d'hote dinner in a Continental hotel. It was in the early Spring. There were a good many guests seated, and the waiter began to pass around a platter of asparagus. There was not much of the vegetable on the dish, and what there was was thin and small. Unfortunately, the first

person to whom the waiter passed the platter was a big, fat German, and the guests were horrified when they saw the latter draw his knife across the tips of the asparagus and sweep them all on to his plate "Why!" expostulated his neighbor, "you are cutting off all the tips!" "What are you talking about?" was the reply. "That is the best part." Sir Charles points out that this story vividly illustrates the most salient feature of the German character, the utter lack of any sense of fair play, the entire absence of altruistic imagination, of the social instinct, of sympathy, of the sense of proportion or of humor. The French, he points out, are full of these very qualities, and consequently are the most polite and chivalrous of all nations. The Englishman has altruism, but it is not, with him, so much a matter of imagination. It springs from his conscience. The English, above all other nations, have the stern sense of justice and fair play. Now, Sir, I believe that the American has the same altruistic imagination and social instinct as the Frenchman. Living in a democratic country, where everybody is treated with deference, he is bound to have his sympathies widened and to learn how other people feel. This sympathetic alertness is the foundation of humor, and is the recognized characteristic of Americans all the world over. But, with this fine sensitiveness to the feelings of others, shown pre-eminently in the French, the American combines the rigid devotion to justice and fair play that is possessed by the British. Therefore, I hold, Americans and Germans temperamentally represent the most opposite extremes. Owing largely to this characteristic difference, there are three fundamental ideas wherein the German point of view is diametrically opposed to the American. These are God, the State and Man.

The German idea of God is that the Divine Being is Himself a German, that He is their God and they are His people, that the Ruler of the Universe loves the Teutons and the Prussians, especially the latter, and that He despises the French,

hates the British and ridicules the Americans. Any one who reads the utterances of their public men, from the Kaiser down, cannot escape this conclusion. Their speeches and writings are full of it. It is the same idea that the ancient Jews had, who thought that the Divine Being rejoiced in their slaughter of the Amalekites, the Hivites, the Hitites and the Jebusites. Christ taught a different conception of God. Talking with the woman of Samaria, He showed her that God did not belong to any one tribe or nation, but was the loving Father of all. This notion of the Universal Fatherhood of God, and His impartiality, is the idea accepted by the American people, not the absurd and childish conception of a tribal divinity that obsesses the German mind.

Likewise with the idea of the State, the American point of view is irreconcilably opposed to the German. According to the Prussian mind, the State is a Divine Entity, of which the Kaiser is the material and official embodiment. He is the supreme tribunal of the individual conscience and this must bow to his commands as those of God Himself. A man may steal and lie and murder, or commit any action however treacherous, and he is doing right if it is done in the interest of the Fatherland. The American conception of the State is that it is the collective expression of the wills of the individuals composing it, that the ruler is ordained and sanctioned by God just so long as he does right, and no longer; that a thing is not right because the ruler commands it, but that the ruler commands it because it is right. It is this fundamental difference that has made it possible for Count Bernstorff to do as he did in Washington, or Count Luxburg to act as he did in Argentina. Can you imagine any American ambassador, in any age, or in any country, acting as these men did? I cannot. To me it is unthinkable. There are depths of meanness and dishonor to which no American ambassador would stoop. You could not convince him that such baseness would ever result in the permanent good of his country, or ulti-

mately be to its advantage. The German and the American ideas of the State are absolutely contradictory of each other. There can be no compromise between them. One of them must go under—and it will not be the American.

The German idea of Man is directly opposite the American. The Prussian philosophy and religion have both ceased to regard men and women as human beings. They are only biological specimens—and cosmic forces. It is true that man is a cosmic force, as a wolf is, but it is not true that man is the same kind of a cosmic force that the wolf is. The man has something that the wolf does not possess. There is a spirit in man and the wisdom of the Almighty giveth him understanding. The law of the survival of the fittest does not apply to man in the same way that it applies to the wolf. That is precisely where the German philosophy is wrong in the present day. I believe in the survival of the fittest, if you mean by that the most beautiful, the most intelligent, the most capable and the most unselfish, but I do not believe in it if, by the fittest, you mean the most ugly, the most stupid, the most cruel and the most relentless. The Prussian mind, perverted by the lust of power and the fiendish philosophy of Nietzsche, has deliberately rejected the morals of Christ and gone back to the ethics of the wolf pack. And they glory in it. It is not a new thing among the Prussians. Frederick the Great did the same. The strangest part of it is that they are genuinely surprised that the other nations do not admire them for their openly professed reversion to barbarism. An old Scandinavian writer says: "How shall a man grow except upon the blood of his enemies? How does the wolf live? How does the kite live? How else shall Odin fill Valhalla?" This is the kind of religion that the German people now prefer to that of Jesus Christ. Our Saviour taught that the individual man or woman, however humble, is an immortal being, made in the image of God, and, as such, possesses sacred rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Human beings

must not be brushed out of existence as of no more importance than flies or mosquitoes. Between two such radically opposed ideas of Man there can be no reconciliation. Either the Prussian or the American idea must triumph, and it will not be the Prussian unless Satan is stronger than God. The American idea of Man is Christ's idea and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.

These conceptions are so fundamental and so essential that they must influence human actions. Accordingly we find that the conduct of the Germans throughout has been on a par with their low views of God, of the State and of Man. The German Empire in the beginning was founded on a forgery. What made the German Empire? The Franco-Prussian War. What brought on the Franco-Prussian War? The Ems forgery of Bismarck. Following the tactics of Frederick the Great, and of every bully that ever lived since the world began, they waited till they were strong and their neighbors weak—and then they struck. The German army was prepared to the last man, the last horse, the last gun, the last strap and the last buckle. They knew that Napoleon III was a sick man and that the French army was weak with graft and rottenness, so Bismarck forged the paper that brought on the war. And, when it was over, they were not satisfied with wringing from the conquered nation an indemnity so large that they thought France would never be done paying it, they stole Alsace and Lorraine. They could not resist these luscious tips of asparagus. Bismarck opposed it because he was a shrewd judge of human nature and knew that they would always be a source of trouble in the future. He was overruled by Von Moltke and the other generals.

When the present Emperor's father lay dying the New York Times had a distinguished novelist as its correspondent in Berlin, and he wrote a remarkable letter to that paper describing the character of the Crown Prince, now William II, and this letter was recently republished by the

Times. It created a profound impression all over the world. The writer gave the young prince credit for good looks, ability, dignity and many royal attributes, but asserted that, if the opinions of those who knew him best—namely, the women of the Court who had watched him from childhood—were to be trusted, he was as cold-blooded as a fish and absolutely without a heart or conscience. He further said that William was a fanatic imbued with the idea that it was his destiny, following the methods of his ideal, Frederick the Great, to conquer the earth; and the writer prophesied that, with the army of two million well-equipped men which he had inherited, as a beginning, he would some day bring about a holocaust of slaughter in Europe. Gentlemen. In the light of what has since transpired that letter was almost uncanny. The Emperor played the part, from the beginning all the way through, and is doing it at this very moment. From the first he posed, theoretically, as the champion of peace, but his actions spoke louder than his words. In practice he devoted himself, heart and soul, to his preparation for the world slaughter. The first thing he did was to get rid of Bismarck, partly because his megalomania would brook no rival idol, and partly because Bismarck was too sensible to countenance any wild scheme of world domination. So the young Emperor kicked off the aged statesman, to whom he owed his Empire and his all, as coolly, and with as little compunction, as a man throws away an old boot. He was fulfilling the expectations of the women who had known him in childhood—he was proving himself to be without heart or conscience. From that time on there was not a gun, or a torpedo, or a submarine, or an aeroplane invented without its being pounced upon by him, and, if it was any good, assimilated in his preparations for the great conflict. He preached openly his divine right to rule, and, what is more, he converted his congregation to his way of thinking, if any of them needed conversion. Rapidly everything in the nation became subordinated to the Army and the

Navv. From the schoolboy to the university professor one idea became paramount—Germany's preparation for the coming war. Nineteen years ago, I met a member of a well-known shipbuilding firm, at a dinner in Washington, who told me that, from inside information, he knew that Germany was preparing to dominate the world, that her spy system was universal, that, even in the houses of the English nobility, German butlers, acting as spies, had superseded English butlers, though the English butler has always been supposed to be perfection in his calling. At the time when the Wrights were beginning to fly, I patented an aeroplane, and, no sooner was the patent issued than I received a letter from a firm of German patent attorneys in New Jersey, with branches in all the chief cities of the world, offering to take out a patent in Germany and to bring it to the notice of the German Government without any cost to me. I relate this because, though I did not realize it at the time, it shows the watchfulness and universality of the German system in its preparation for the approaching struggle.

The beginning of the Twentieth Century was hailed as the dawn of the Millennium. Everybody thought that, the Nineteenth having been so wonderful, the early part of the Twentieth would see the end of war and the inauguration of world peace—and so it would if it had not been for the Germans. The Emperor thought it was too soon for the abolition of war. He considered it was time for Germany to begin to enjoy the fruits of her long preparation. At the close of the last century he began to move. First he tried to get Russia to betray France; then he sought to induce France to betray Russia. Then he endeavored to have England betray both France and Russia. They all resisted his blandishments. When he attempted to get a secret arrangement with Russia, he only succeeded in frightening the Czar, and that brought about the First Hague Conference. Nicholas, realizing what William II was aiming at, appealed to the

other nations to bring about a universal disarmament. The First Hague Conference was held in the Spring of 1899. Baron Von Stengel, delegate from Germany, put a stopper on every peace move, and the conference was a failure.

The next peace effort came from America. At the St. Louis Exposition an interparliamentary convention was held and a resolution was passed asking President Roosevelt to call another Peace Conference at the Hague. This seemed good to the President and in 1904 Mr. Hay, then Secretary of State, issued the invitations to all the Powers, which resulted in the second meeting at the Hague in 1907. In preparation for this conference England tried, before the meeting, to come to some understanding with Germany about disarmament. Campbell-Bannerman telegraphed the German Chancellor, coming down to definite terms and offering to reduce England's torpedo fleet 60 per cent., her cruisers 40 per cent. and her battleships 25 per cent. if Germany and the other nations would do the same. This showed that England really desired peace for the world, because England's life depends on her fleet. What was the reply? The Chancellor sent back word that, if the subject of Disarmament was to be brought up at the Second Hague Conference, Germany would not send delegates. And yet, in the face of this, the Germans have the audacity to claim that England really desired this war and brought it about!

This was not the only effort made by Great Britain to win Germany to the side of Disarmament before the meeting of that conference. King Edward, who was admitted to be the best diplomat in Europe, decided to go to Germany himself to see what his personal influence could do with the Kaiser to soften his attitude. William II would not entertain the idea of Disarmament. He refused point blank to discuss it, but he took advantage of the opportunity to suggest to King Edward that, if England would keep out and give him a free hand against France and Russia, he would be willing to form a friendly alliance with

the British. In other words, England must betray her Allies. In 1908 he returned King Edward's visit. Certain elements in both countries were trying hard to bring about an alliance between Germany and Great Britain. The Emperor was very friendly and full of the idea of peace between England and Germany—if England would betray her Allies. Also, on this visit, he brought with him the man who was at the head of his spy system and this person did not keep his eyes shut during his stay.

Each year Great Britain renewed her effort, ending with Lord Haldane's visit to Germany in 1912, but always the answer was the same. Germany would agree to be friendly—if England would betray her Allies.

We come now to the last chapter in this record of progressive iniquity. Heligoland had been fortified. The Kiel Canal was finished. The country was criss-crossed with railways. The German spy system was well organized in all the countries in the world. England was supposed to have her hands full with Ireland. German intriguers were at work, not only in all the Balkan States, but in Egypt, in Arabia in India—even in China. Plans were complete for railway communication from the North Sea, through Bagdad, to the Far East. German officers were drilling the Turkish armies. The Emperor had arranged with the Ottoman Khalif to proclaim a Jihad, or Holy War, when the word was given. The ships were built and manned. The army was thoroughly equipped and prepared for instant mobilization. Every horse and vehicle was registered. Grain was stored in warehouses all over Germany. Money was piled up in the Spandau Tower. All things were now ready.

The assassination of the Archduke was either planned by the Germans, to give them the desired opportunity, or, if not instigated by them, was utilized for the purpose. On July 5th, the representative of Austria met in secret Council with the Emperor and the Crown Prince, and a select few kindred spirits, Bethmann-Hollweg

and Von Tirpitz, and then was hatched the most evil conspiracy that ever disgraced the history of mankind. Austria's ultimatum to Serbia was drawn up in such a way that the latter could not possibly accept in the forty-eight hours which she was to be given for decision. It contained a large number of demands, all of them humiliating, two of them impossible unless Serbia gave up her sovereignty altogether. Having fired the fuse, the Emperor left for a cruise in his yacht, so that, when the explosion came, none would think he had anything to do with it.

Austria's ultimatum was delivered on July 23rd and Serbia's answer was received in Vienna on the evening of the 25th. Serbia had agreed to all the conditions except the impossible two, and had offered to arbitrate these. This was technically a non-fulfilment of the requirements of the ultimatum so that Austria was in a state of war with Serbia and began to move on the frontier at once. On the next day, July 26, Prince Henry, who was in England, telegraphed his brother, the Emperor, that George V had promised that England would keep her hands off. As a matter of fact, what King George had said was that he would do all in his power to prevent actual hostilities and he proposed a compromise. England would consent to Austria seizing Belgrade, and a small strip of territory near the frontier, to be held as security by Austria until Serbia should come to some agreement with Austria by diplomatic arrangement, and the Emperor was asked to notify the Czar to that effect so that he would not begin to mobilize. In the meantime the Czar, knowing nothing of this proposed compromise, was besieging the German Emperor with telegrams, imploring him to hold Austria back and giving his word of honor that, if he ordered mobilization, it would only be a partial one, and that Russia would not strike a blow so long as there was any hope of Austria and Serbia coming to a peaceable agreement. The Emperor, anxious to make it appear that the blame for the war did not rest with him, agreed to the compromise suggested by George V, and

got Austria to assent to it—but *instead of letting the Czar know of it, as King George had asked him to do, he carefully concealed it from the Czar.* He knew that the Czar would agree to it at once and the war would be stopped. That was not what he wanted. He wished the Czar to order mobilization to give Germany an excuse to declare war on Russia. He had three whole days in which to telegraph the Czar and stop the war. He did not do it, and the German Declaration of War against Russia reached St Petersburg at 5 P. M. on August 1st. Then William II declared it was too late to stop, even though the Czar asserted that he was willing to do so the moment he heard of the compromise that had been agreed on between England, Germany and Austria. It is customary to speak of the causes of this war as if they were extremely numerous and complicated, racial, commercial, political, military and ethical. If an incendiary set fire to your house, and used, in doing it, matches, rags soaked in kerosene, shavings, and kindling wood, and took advantage of a high wind and a dark night, and other conditions that favored his enterprise, would you say that the matches were the cause of the fire, or the rags, or the kindling, or the dark night, or the high wind? That sort of talk is plain foolishness. The incendiary himself is the cause of the fire, and no one, or no thing, else. These others are simply the materials which he uses for his crime. The cold-blooded Hohenzollern hypocrite, William II, has at last accomplished the holocaust of slaughter which he has been planning for forty years, and has fulfilled the prophesy that was made regarding him as his father lay dying.

Let us now see how Germany has treated the United States. She has always hated the Americans, not only because our Monroe Doctrine interferes with her designs in South America, but because the ideas of human freedom, for which America stands, are extremely repugnant to the Rulers of Prussia. What could Germany have done against the United States that she has not

done? Look at the way she served Ambassador Gerard. Remember her treatment of the Americans left in Germany. I was told recently by a gentleman whose word is unimpeachable, and who received the information from a reliable source, that two young American girls, who were in a boarding school in Germany, were urged by their parents to return at once when a war seemed inevitable and the reply did not return till some time after war had been declared. The girls wrote that they could not come home, even if they would be permitted to do so. They were both enceinte, and that every American girl in the boarding school was in the same condition, through the compulsion of young German officers who visited the school, for the purpose, under orders from the German Government. What could be worse than the drowning of the American women and children on board the Lusitania? While we were neutral, Germany torpedoed one of our ships after another, until she practically ordered us off the seas altogether. She tried to make trouble for us in South America, in the Canal Zone, in Hawaii, in the Philippines—and, if it had not been for the promptness of Admiral Dewey, she would have done it. She attempted to involve us in a war with Mexico, and, if it had not been for the coolness and good management of our Government, she would have accomplished her purpose. For the past ten years, she has done her utmost to stir up hatred in Japan against Americans, and fear and dislike among us for the Japanese. She has sent orders, and money, to her Ambassador to try to influence our Congress, to blow up our factories, and to spread sabotage, strikes, and intimidation amongst our miners, farmers and workingmen. What more could she do than she has done, and is still doing every day? Her working of evil is limited only by her opportunity and her capacity.

The great maxim of the Germans is the "Will to Power." There is nothing new in it. What actuated the primitive cave man, with his club,

but the will to power? That was the rule of life under which the whole creation groaned in travail till Christ came to teach men that the will to power was not as high a motive as the will to service. He that is greatest among you, let him be your servant. The King of Kings, the Lord of the whole universe, came to this planet and was born in a cow stable, passed his boyhood in a carpenter shop, and spent his life going about and doing good amongst the poor and needy. He might have been an Emperor, like the Great Mogul, on an ivory throne, but He came to make us ashamed of the will to power, the will to rule, to bluster and brag and bully the weak. He came to exalt amongst us the might of sympathy and love as the greatest power in the Universe. Gentlemen. This is a cold world. It makes people hard-hearted. Business life is apt to make one callous and severe, but there is a power that can soften it, a force that is irresistible. One day I was walking along a street in Baltimore and I saw some men welding steel rails. The white, sputtering flame was too much for the hard steel. It melted it like wax. There is no heart so hard, unless it is obsessed and insane, but that the great white heat of Divine Compassion will not melt it, if it be properly applied. Americans are the kindest-hearted people in the world. What made the war between the North and South? It was pity for the woes of the negro as described in books like Uncle Tom's Cabin. I believe the sufferings were much exaggerated, but that does not touch the point. Why did we go to war with Spain? Because our hearts were moved with pity for the agonies of the women and children in the Spanish concentration camps, in Cuba, as pictured in the newspapers, and, when the Maine was blown up, the American people were so roused by their sympathies that the war fever could not be stopped. My friends, the hearts of the American people have melted with compassion for the suffering of the noble Belgians who preferred death to dishonor. Our hearts have melted with

pity when we read of women openly raped in the public squares, and people carried off into slavery. Our hearts have ached with pity when we read the statement of Paderewsky, that among the twenty million unfortunate inhabitants of Poland there was not a child left under seven years of age. Our hearts have melted when we read of the whole Armenian people being wiped out with indescribable savagery, of women and children cooped up in a wooden building and burned to death—and when the frantic mothers threw their children out of the windows to save them, the little ones were picked up by the legs and thrown back into the flames again, amidst the jeers of the Turkish maniacs, egged on by their German officers.

When you melt a man's heart you set fire to his will, and when you set fire to one man's will, he will set fire to the wills of other men. So, from one end of America to the other, men, women and children are on fire, not with the will to power, but the will to serve, and the question everywhere is: "How can I serve my country? Where there is the will to serve, God gives the power to serve, and that is why men's pocket books are out, and the Liberty Loan is over subscribed: that is why women are joining in Red Cross work, and Food Conservation, and everything else they have the opportunity to do. Yes, Gentlemen of the patriotic Society of the War of 1812, it is because I know your hearts have been melted with Divine Compassion for the victims of these abominable atrocities, and thousands of similar ones, that I know you will echo the sentiment when I say, that, by the aid of the Living God, the God of Grace and Mercy, America, having drawn her sword in the sacred cause of Freedom, will never put it back into the scabbard until she has cut off the head of Prussianism, the writhing and cruel Monster that is trying to crush the life out of Human Liberty.