



1919

## Spilt Milk. What Now?, 1919

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1919

*Spilt*  
SPILLED MILK. WHAT NOW ?

by

Huntington Wilson

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The mind whose theories are many but are seldom either original or practically relevant is perhaps less that of the true theorist than of the opportunistic realist. A private oddity of aim will often give rise to an oddity in the application of theory and so to the semblance of the theorist. Never more than at the Paris Conference has there been work, not for the pedant or pragmatist, but for the true theorist, for the mind of constructive imagination and inventive resource to deal with grim realities; the mind at home among generalities but apt, too, for specific action. A practical theorist was wanted. Neither Knox nor Root nor Lodge, nor any other American of greatly proved wisdom, knowledge or skill in diplomacy speaks for America at Paris.

History will have a good deal to show and to say of our incredible political situation, of its amazing and pitiful dangers, of its strangeness to the spirit and intent of our institutions. America, in the nature of things, was to have great influence at the conference. Almost all that influence has been squandered in the service of chimerical ideas which, imposed in the name of America, have distracted the work of the conference from the fateful urgencies of mankind. In neither America's interests nor the world's is there found clear justification of the phenomenon. If fiasco and tragedy result, our allies may in the end almost

curse the day we ever came (in self-defense) to their assistance. May a merciful Providence and our national luck ward off that event.

While fiddling away to the tune of the League of Nations for the remote future, while not Rome, but the whole world, burned; while delaying reconstruction and endangering the fruits of victory until the specter of a German-Bolshevik menace and a new war of self-defense becomes visible to an exhausted Europe, the policy at Paris seems to have found time to display in passing some singular ineptitude about various lesser but still important things. A Japanese question seems to be in course of manufacture. The Monroe Doctrine has been exposed to <sup>challenge</sup> question. By failure to make peace promptly, the nations have been deprived of early return to health-giving hope and normal economic life. By postponement of intensive domestic reconstruction, they have been denied the vaccine of economic, social and political stimulus, and all in the ostensible pursuit of ideals of the dim future. So much for <sup>spilt</sup> spilled milk. What now ?

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