

# "PIC"

March 17, 1942: p. 32

## THE TRAGEDY OF WOODROW WILSON

*Play "In Time To Come" portrays the Woodrow Wilson revealed in interview with Frank Cobb on eve of America's entry into World War I*

*Otto L. Preminger's Broadway production, "In Time to Come" (from which the photos were taken), has drawn with deft but honest hand the character of Wilson, even his arrogance and impatience (those qualities which did much to hinder accomplishment of his high-minded purpose). The article published below gives a remarkable real-life picture of the Wilson Norman Gaines portrays in "In Time to Come." The article is reprinted by special permission of E. P. Dutton & Co., from the book, "Cobb of the World," by John L. Heaton. Frank Cobb was the New York World editor who, perhaps better than any other man, knew Woodrow Wilson.*

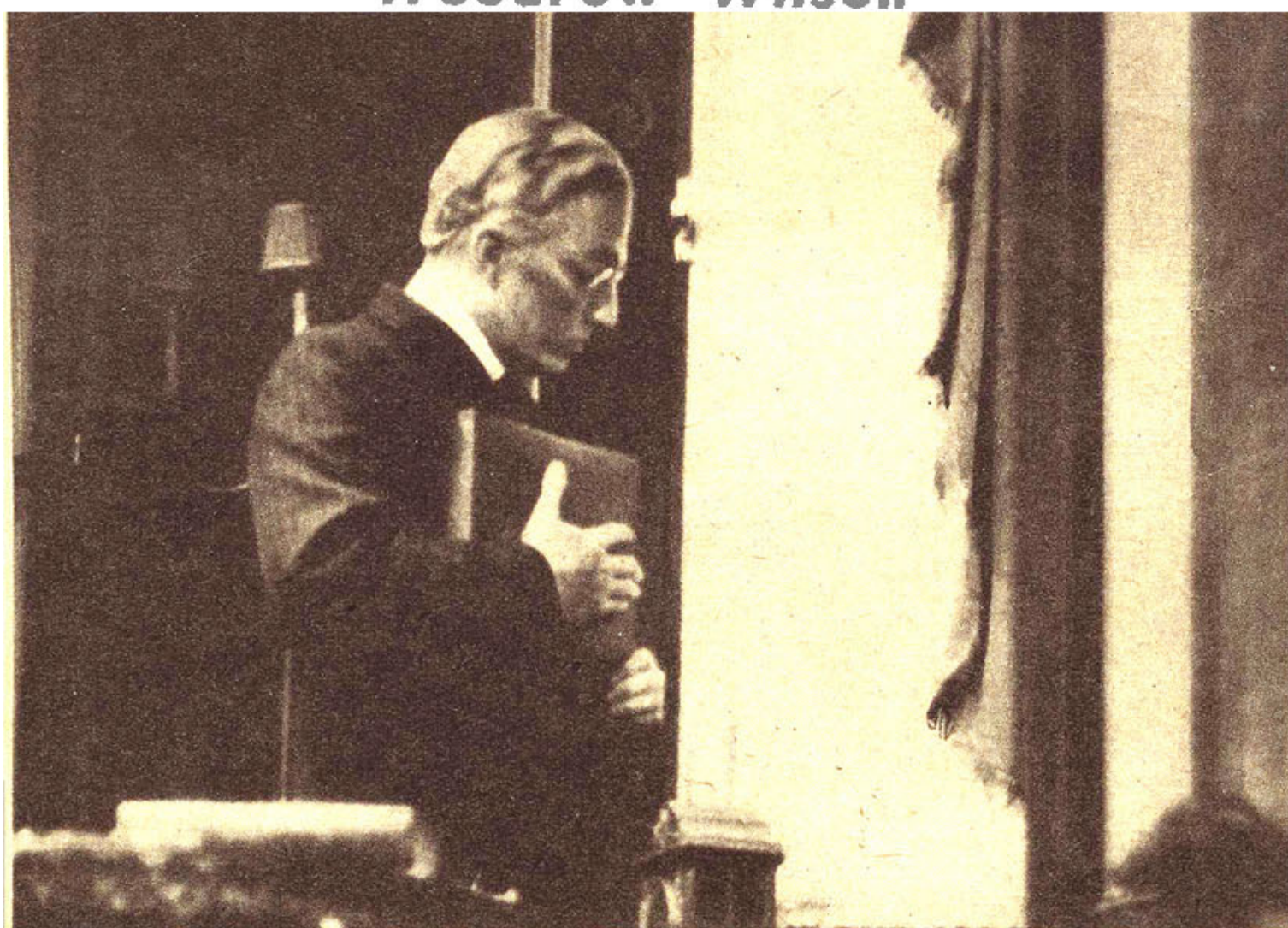


WITH HIGH HOPES, WILSON (RICHARD GAINES) SAILS FOR THE PEACE CONFERENCE.

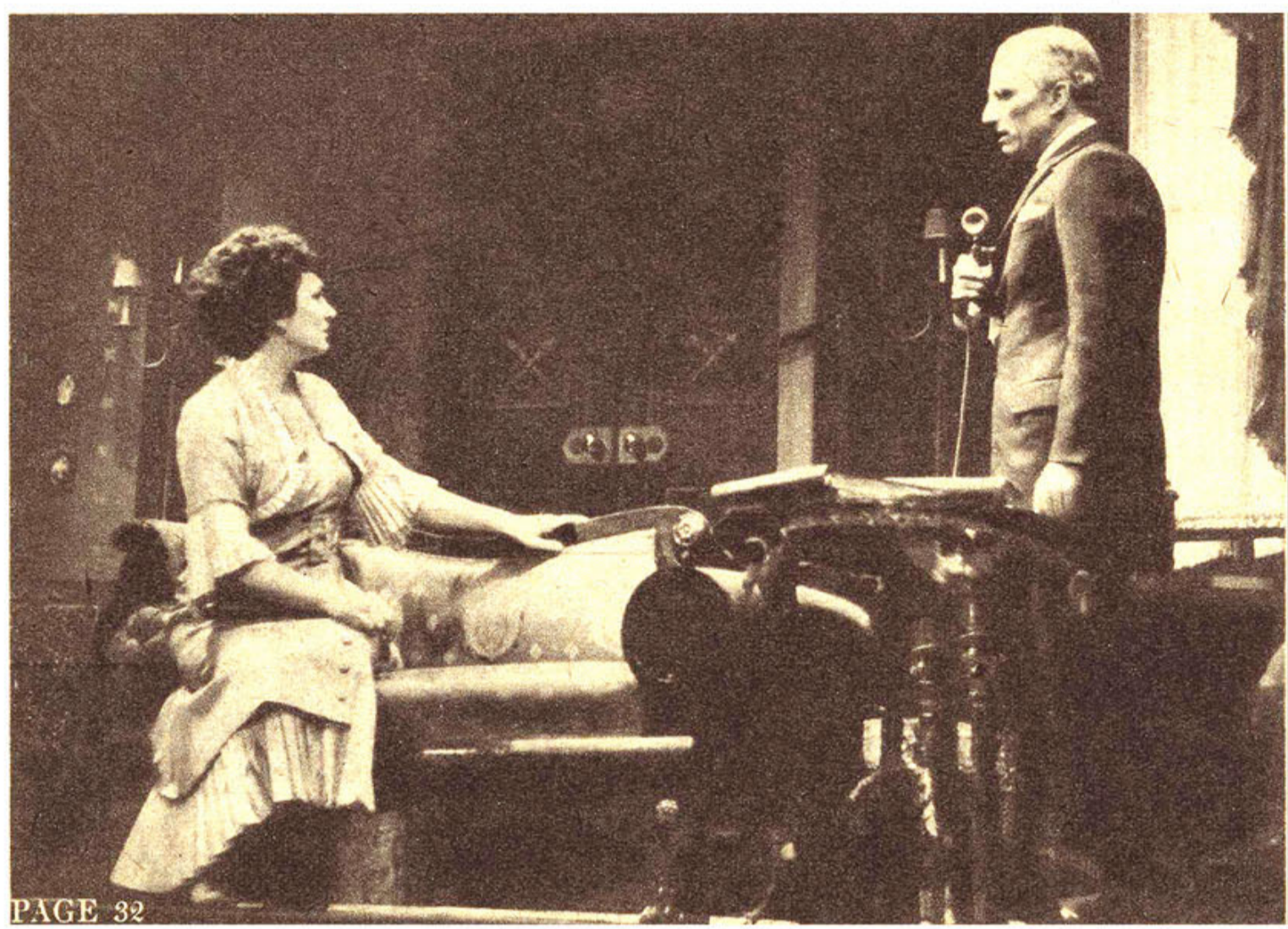
**P**RESIDENT WILSON had a way of summoning Cobb (Frank Irving) to Washington. Cobb rarely spoke of these visits to the White House. Since Wilson's death, two of Cobb's associates, Maxwell Anderson and Laurence Stallings have written down their memory of his recollection of one such occasion which is history. Mr. Anderson remembers that something said in disparagement of Clemenceau gave the impetus to the revelation.

"He was a tricky old bandit!" said Cobb, as the three of us entered his office. "A tricky old bandit—but he knew the game. He was the most formidable person at Versailles when it came to a pinch. Lloyd George was a child beside him. W. W. knew it, and knew how to meet the old boy, but he was hampered by having ideals of justice and government. Clemenceau used to look at Wilson as if he were a new and disconcerting species. He thought Wilson had the Messiah complex.

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THWARTED BY POLITICIANS, WILSON BROODS OVER VENGEFUL TERMS THEY DEMAND.



PAGE 32

MRS. WILSON ADVISES HUSBAND TO ACCEPT FRAGMENTARY CONCESSIONS OFFERED.

“He was dead wrong about it, though, and everybody who thinks Wilson didn’t know his way about and didn’t know what he was in for should have heard what he said about the war before he went in. Old W. W. knew his history. He knew what wars were fought for, and what they do to nations that wage them. The night before he asked Congress for a declaration of war against Germany he sent for me. I was late getting the message somehow and didn’t reach the White House till 1 o’clock in the morning. “The Old Man” was waiting for me, sitting in his study with the typewriter on his table, where he used to type.

“I’d never seen him so worn down. He looked as if he hadn’t slept—and he said he hadn’t. He said he was probably going before Congress the next day to ask a declaration of war, and he’d never been so uncertain about anything in his life as about that decision. For nights, he said, he’d been lying awake, going over the whole situation; over the provocation given by Germany, over the probable feeling in the United States, over the consequences to the settlement and to the world at large if we entered.

“He tapped some sheets before him and said that he had written a message and expected to go before Congress with it as it stood. He said he couldn’t see any alternative, that he had tried every way he knew to avoid war. ‘I think I know what war means,’ he said, and he added that if there were any possibility of avoiding war he wanted to try it.

“I told him his hand had been forced by Germany, that we couldn’t keep out.

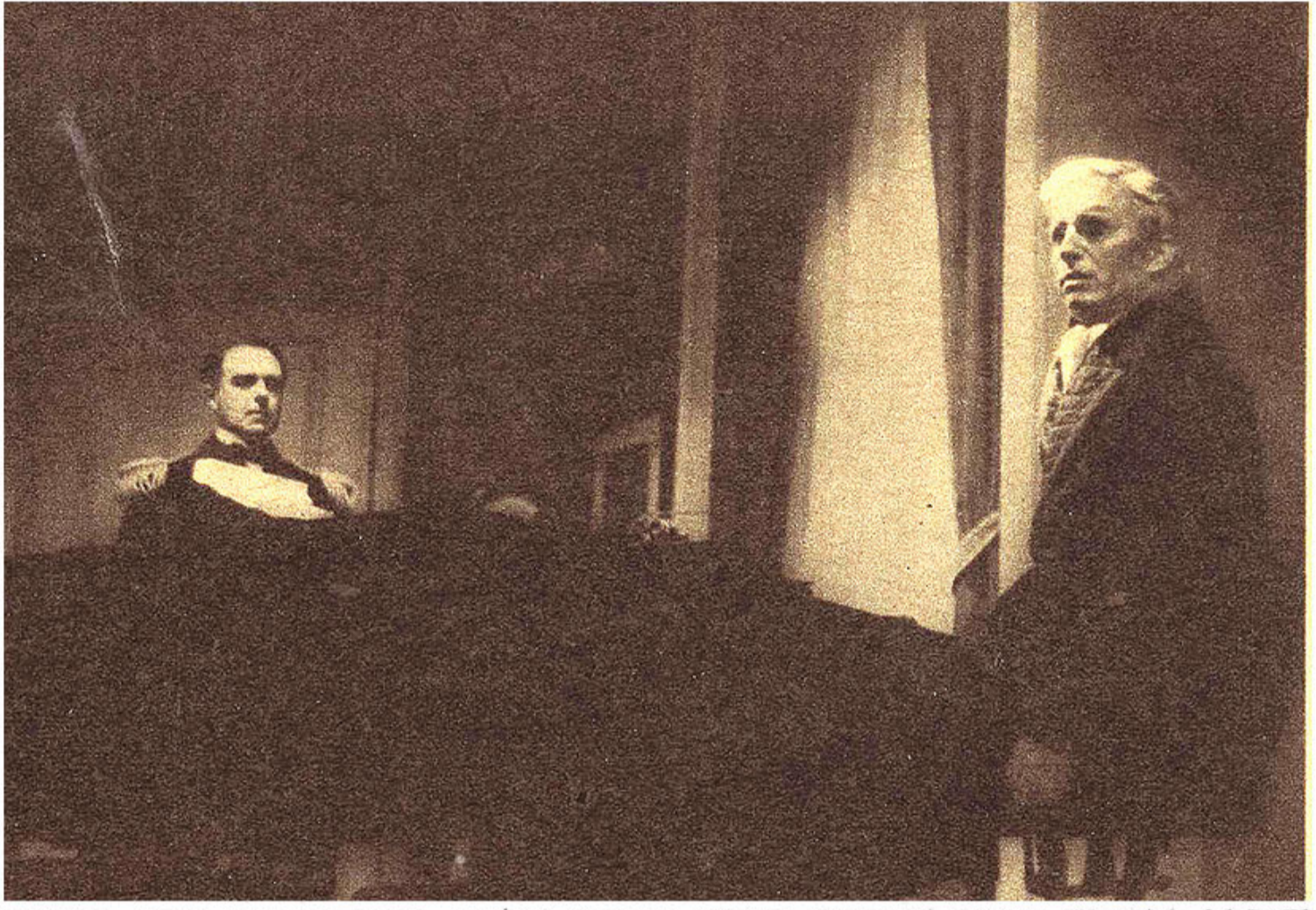
“‘Yes,’ he said, ‘but do you know what that means?’ He said war would overturn the world we had known; that so long as we remained out there was a preponderance of neutrality, but that if we joined with the Allies the world would be off the peace basis and onto a war basis.’

## Woodrow Wilson



WILSON IS UNABLE TO "SELL" LEAGUE OF NATIONS IDEA TO SENATOR LODGE.

"It would mean that we should lose our heads along with the rest and stop weighing right and wrong. It would mean that a majority of people in this hemisphere would go war-mad, quit thinking and devote their energies to destruction. The President said a declaration of war would mean that Germany would be beaten, and so badly beaten that there would be a dictated peace, a victorious peace.



SICK AT HEART, WILSON MOURNS HIS FAILURE TO ACHIEVE A PEACE TO END WARS.

"'It means,' he said, 'an attempt to reconstruct a peace-time civilization with war standards, and at the end of the war there will be no bystanders with sufficient power to influence the terms. There won't be any peace standards left to work with.'

"The President said that such a basis was what the Allies thought they wanted, and that they would have their way in the very thing America had hoped against.

"Then he began to talk about the consequences to the United States.



THE DYING WILSON IS GENTLY USHERED TO BED BY HIS CONSOLING, DEVOTED WIFE.

"He said when a war got going it was just war and there weren't two kinds of it. It required illiberalism at home to reinforce the men at the front. We couldn't fight Germany and maintain the ideals of government that all thinking men shared.

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**Woodrow Wilson**

“‘Once lead this people into war,’ he said, ‘and they’ll forget there ever was such a thing as tolerance. To fight you must be brutal and ruthless, and the spirit of ruthless brutality will enter into the very fiber of our national life, infecting Congress, the courts, the policeman on the beat, the man in the street.

“‘If there is any alternative, for God’s sake let’s take it,’ he exclaimed.

“Well, I couldn’t see any, and I told him so.



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