

This World's Emotional Reaction to the Economic Curse of Work

It Knows Only Three Ways of Dealing with German Industry, Namely: to Match It, to Crush It or to Boycott It

By GARET GARRETT

Although there is no longer any knowing for sure what kind of place the world is, nor for what wrong reasons it is mad, one may argue still that it cannot cure itself with the hair of the animal that bit it last.

In the midst of chaos man plans confusion.

His pressing immediate business is *The War*.

His obsession is—what do you think? If you had dropped out of the sky or had come suddenly awake you could not guess it. His great obsession is *The After War*.

No sooner shall the physical contest have been decided, or drawn, than there shall begin in hate, for revenge, or for what purpose you will, an economic war that shall be bitter, remorseless and unending. This is a state of mind which a neutral is easily persuaded to think archaic or atavistic. But the neutral is not himself exempt. Countries that have not participated in *The War* are yet deeply concerned in *The After War*, and are taking steps to participate therein.

Let us attend at the beginning.

Spilling of the Secrets.

When war overturned the arrangements of trade and spilled the secrets out, some of the revelations were fantastic. An endless variety of goods traced back to a common source. Germany, it was found, had been filling the world with cheap merchandise, mostly unawares. The number of things that had been German was a matter of the widest wonder. People were differently affected, in variable degree, but all of them everywhere more or less. Americans were chagrined to find that they had been helplessly dependent upon Germany for dyes, stuffs, which we had been perfectly well able to make for ourselves, only that the Germans had made them cheaper than we could, and that when we tried once or twice to supply ourselves they had sold them cheaper still to discourage competition. That was called "dumping," a hateful, ill sounding word. There was clamor at once for legislation against its happening again. It has been heeded. We have already an "anti-dumping" law.

Curiosities of Hatred.

German goods were of many kinds. Some bore the legends of their origin, and people might have known before if they had been only interested enough to look or to ask; but a great many specialized things, sold the world over as of English make, were found to have been produced at Offenbach or Frankfurt, or Leipzig, by the thousands of gross, even to the British label.

At the Root Is Fear.

This was very humiliating. There was no fault to find with the goods. They had been satisfactory to the British jobbers who ordered and paid for them, and they had not disgraced the British labels under which they presented themselves to the world; but they had been German, the product of German skill and industry, whereas they ought to have been English, as they were before it was cheaper to buy goods in Germany than to make them anywhere else. You could buy anything there. You had only to specify. You could buy "Japanese" goods so cleverly imitating the real that only an expert could tell the difference, and as a jobber you could save money by it.

Our Own Instance.

Take the American tin plate industry. A quarter of a century ago this country found itself to be the largest consumer of tin plate in the world all of which it imported. Tin plate is sheet iron coated with tin. There was no tin ore in this country, but there was everything else, and the only reason we could not import only the pure tin and then produce all of our own tin plate was that the American product would actually cost more than the imported tin plate, largely because of the higher wage level here. Theory would have said in that case to continue importing tin plate. But people wanted a tin plate industry, nevertheless, and got it by putting up a high tariff against the foreign product. No one will deny that the resulting American tin plate industry is a considerable item of our national wealth. That is not so remarkable as the fact that after only a very few years we were able to make tin plate in this country as cheaply as it could be made anywhere else. We could import pure tin from the Cornish mines, lay it on American sheet iron and sell tin plate all over the world. Now, let us analyze what happened.

Barriers Against Cheap Goods.

The argument for protection in this country was that a barrier should be erected against cheap European goods in order that the means of industrial independence might be created. The argument for protection in England now is that a barrier shall be erected against the cheap products of German industry, in order that British industry may be restored. European competition hindered the beginnings of industry in this country. German competition has retarded the development of British industry. The differences are obvious. The similarity may need to be stated. This country has been importing from Europe skilled labor which it was able to perform for itself. That was a very unprofitable thing to buy. England has been importing skilled labor from Germany which it ought to have performed for itself, for which it had the means and facilities already established, and that was a commodity England could not afford to buy.

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should extirpate "root, branch and seed of German control and influence in British commerce and industry," declaring that "the German cancer has eaten into our national body in such fashion that we cannot cut it out without seeming in some cases to cut into the healthy flesh."

The Paris Resolutions.

Feeling was almost as bitter in France. It crystallized in what are known as the Paris Resolutions, adopted at the Economic Conference of the Entente Allies in the French capital last June. The Resolutions provide:

That the Entente Allies shall bind themselves to each other by economic ties forever.

That during the period of the war they shall unite in any economic and political measures deemed necessary to bring about the defeat of the enemy. Out of this grew the famous Black List.

That during the period of transition from war to a state of physical peace the reconstruction of the Allied countries shall be expedited by such means as a boycott of German goods, a system of preferential trade among themselves, and the grant of state subsidies to shipping, railroads and telegraphs. There is a definite agreement to conserve for the Allied countries "above all others" the natural resources of their combined domains.

That there shall be adopted "permanent measures of mutual assistance and collaboration," the nature of which is vaguely indicated.

Since June the Council of the London Chamber of Commerce has been elaborating the sense of the Paris conference into concrete proposals. Its second report has just appeared, and its recommendation is that the rules to govern *The After War* shall provide:

That any measures which may be considered in connection with trade during and after the war should provide:

(a) For preferential reciprocal trading relations between all parts of the British Empire;

(b) For reciprocal trading relations between the British Empire and the Allied countries;

(c) For the favorable treatment of neutral countries; and,

(d) For regulating, by tariffs and otherwise, trade relations with all enemy countries, so as to render impossible a return to pre-war conditions and for stimulating the development of home manufactures and the consequent increased employment of home labor.

That the steps should be taken to prevent the dumping (and undervaluation) of enemy goods into British markets after the war.

The aim is to boycott competitive German goods and to penalize more or less all other competitive goods in a market to be maintained among the members of the Entente Alliance on a basis of exclusive reciprocity. They will trade with each other by preference, with outsiders when necessary, and with Germany never, if they can help it.

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wages and yet make tin plate cheaply.

In one theory we should have gone on buying our tin plate, because we could better afford to buy it than to produce it; but, in fact, no intelligent people can afford to import skilled labor. It is better even by artificial means to create the facilities and the opportunities whereby skilled labor may be applied to raw materials than that people should exchange raw materials for manufactures, or the products of unskilled labor for the products of higher skill. No people can greatly prosper by exchanging peasant labor in the form of food products for skilled labor. That is what this country was doing. It was exchanging food products for manufactures. American wheat was not actually the product of peasant labor, but it came in effect to the same case, for our wheat had to compete with, say, Russian wheat, which was the product of peasant labor.

Economics of the Herd.

Economic theory assumes that man will pursue his own material advantage, and for the most part so he will, provided he knows it when he sees it, and provided, also, that he can weigh his immediate advantage against general welfare deferred, and choose wisely. That he can very seldom be trusted on his own account to do. The deferred good is one which, after the sacrifice has been made, he may not live to realize. What may be to the present advantage of the individual may be to the future disadvantage of his nation. Therefore, it may be necessary to lay the individual under the necessity of some personal sacrifice for the sake of something to come. The individual dies; the nation continues.

Thus, there are two points of economic view. One is that of the individual, the other is that of the crowd. The individual is but a transient unit of his crowd. The crowd has a future beyond his, therefore interests above his. The advantage of the individual may be served by the theory that goods should be produced by whosoever can make them in the cheapest manner, and sold by them to all the rest. Why not? That does obviously tend to cheapen the goods of to-day for the individual; but nations may reject that theory, as now the non-Teutonic people of Europe altogether do, demanding by artificial means to be protected from the cheapness of German goods and to be saved as individuals from the temptation to buy them. What is the meaning of that? These are very intelligent people. What will they have gained when they enjoy the absence of German goods and have the right to pay as much as they please for similar goods of their own manufacture? This question may be partly answered out of our own experience.

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imported from Europe it paid in raw materials and foodstuffs. For the skilled labor the English have been buying from Germany, rather than to perform it for themselves, they have paid the market price, which was low enough, and then, above that, an intangible price for which there is no symbol in economics. It might be called their place in the line.

The reason Germany was able to sell its goods in England, in competition with English goods, was that it sold them for less than it would cost to produce them with English capital and labor. And the reason English capital and labor did not produce goods more cheaply was not that they could not, but that they definitely would not.

How the Blight Spread.

In a given case, the British manufacturer, wishing to increase his output, would find that he could contract for it in Germany at a figure which actually widened his own profit, besides saving him all the bother. He would do it. Ultimately he would decrease his production in England and increase his German contract. In that way it happened that English overcoats were made at Frankfurt, English leather goods at Offenbach, a famous sheer English fabric in the environs of Berlin, and so on. That was all in addition to the German goods that came openly to the English market and were sold there against English goods, often displacing them. The consumers were immediately benefited, but English labor was at a disadvantage. To meet the German competition, it would have had to work for lower wages, work longer hours, or work harder, thereby diminishing its immediate happiness.

But what of the German labor by which goods are produced so cheaply? Is its condition as wretched as that of English labor would be if it accepted the competition? One cannot say what English labor would make of the German equivalents, but one does know that German labor is not more wretched than labor elsewhere. It is more comfortable than English labor. In normal times there are no undernourished persons in Germany; in England, many. In normal times there is no ghostly poverty in Germany; in England there is. Everybody works in Germany, whether he wishes to or not, because unless he works he may not eat; but, on the other hand, he has a right to demand that the state shall see to it that work is provided for him, which it does. In England unemployment is a great evil. But now, if you hold that work is a curse and happiness is in leisure, the weight suddenly shifts. Germans work long and hard and tragically. They boast of it, they make a virtue of it, but hate it none the less.

Imagine a Valley of Twenty.

Imagine a valley in which there are twenty families, each of which has the means and the ability to be self-sustaining, without much over. One family is more industrious than any other. Its light is the first to appear in the morning and the last to go out at night. It seems to work all the time. Besides satisfying its own needs it is willing to take in work from other families. It does the churning of one for the butter-milk. It does the sewing or the spinning for those who get behind, and charges very little. Its willingness to work brings work. All the others begin to depend upon it for labor which they would rather hire than perform for themselves. Such a family will be looked down upon by the others, but it will prosper, and when the evidence of that becomes so pronounced as to provoke envy the others will call it names. They are indebted and beholden to it, as they ought not to be, and, therefore, it pleases them to call that household a sweatshop. "Naturally," they say, "people may get rich if they are willing to work like that." And when at last it is realized that everybody will have to work harder or yield the valley, simply because one family thinks there is nothing in the world but work, then that family will be hated.

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that. It shows itself unawares. If you keep a German long enough on the subject of the English, no matter what kind of German he is, statesman, economist, manufacturer, soldier, merchant or editor, he will be certain to say with a bitter mixture of scorn, disgust, wonder and envy: "Do you know, an Englishman leaves his business on Thursday for his week's end holiday—every Thursday! No matter how urgent your business with him is, he will not stay. They like to play—those English."

The Sin Unforgivable.

Germany cannot forgive England—that she plays so much and yet lards it over the earth with a fine air. If she had worked as hard as Germany, then a German might excuse it.

LITTLE CAPITALISTS MAY HIE TO EUROPE

Pittsburgh Looks for Frugal Workers to Emigrate.

A curious development has appeared in the labor situation, according to one large employer of coal miners and coke drawers of this district. He says that instead of an increase in immigration after the war there is likely to be emigration of the better class of common labor now engaged in the mining regions of Western Pennsylvania. Investigation has disclosed that among the more frugal workers advantage has been taken of full employment and higher wages to increase savings, with the object of going back home after peace is restored. They believe there will be exceptional opportunities for an able-bodied man with a little capital to do better abroad than by remaining here.

How far this belief has gone cannot be definitely stated, and therefore it is uncertain whether it will reach the proportions of a "movement" or whether there are merely isolated cases of a determination among workers to try their luck abroad. It is certain, however, that employers are gradually revising their views as to any materially increased immigration after the end of the war.

In this connection an interesting statement is made by a contractor who has had much experience in the work of laying pipe lines for the oil companies. Prior to the war he was engaged on a large contract, employing nine gangs of men of 150 to 175 to the gang. It was his fortune to have one gang composed exclusively of Montenegrins. He said they surpassed all other nationalities in efficiency. There are no Montenegrins coming to the United States these days.

CANADA WELCOMES SOLDIER SETTLERS

Would Help Solve an After-War Problem.

Canada, with its millions of acres of good agricultural lands, its vast tracts of timber and its undeveloped mineral resources, can provide homes and a livelihood for all the British soldiers who may wish to resume peaceful occupations after the war, providing they have a desire to take up life in a new country. To encourage such emigration the Premier of Ontario, Mr. W. H. Hearst, in an address recently delivered in London before the Council of the Royal Colonial Institute, stated that the cooperation of the British government was needed and that his government was prepared to cooperate in any properly organized movement to that end. Mr. Hearst called attention to the fact that the province of Ontario is eighteen times as large as England, and at the time of the census of 1911 had a population of 2,523,274 and only a little over 13,000,000 acres under cultivation, less than 6 per cent of the whole area. Large tracts held greater possibilities for timber and minerals than from an agricultural standpoint, but millions upon millions of just as good agricultural land awaited the advent of the settler as the land already under cultivation. This land, he said, the government would give free, or at the nominal price of 50 cents an acre, to all desirable classes fitted for agricultural life.

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THIN CROPS AT HIGH PRICES

Or Is the Farmer Worse Off with Large Yields and Low Prices?

By ARCHER WALL DOUGLAS.

St. Louis, October 6.

One of the very practical problems in economics is whether the farmer is benefited most by high prices and low yields or high yields and low prices of his products. Incidentally, the question of benefit or harm extends to all classes, so that the ultimate broad problem is as to the effect upon the country as a whole. On the face of the matter the general interest seems to be best served by large outputs, even at low prices, because of the supposed consequent low prices to consumers, who are the most numerous class of all, the tonnage furnished the railroads and the surplus left for export. But such a conclusion only shows the exceeding danger and misleading nature of all generalizations.

In 1898 the cotton crop was the largest ever grown up to that time, following the previous largest crop on record of the year before. The result of these two great yields in succession, also influenced partly by the Spanish War, was the lowest levels of prices ever known before or reached since that time. The effect upon business throughout the South was almost in the nature of a paralysis, for the South then, much more than now, depended upon cotton for its revenue for spending money. In such a situation it is difficult to see who received any benefit whatever from the enormous production of potential wealth. The low prices did not help the situation as regards exports, for the percentage of the crop exported to the crop raised was less than usual both in 1898 and in the following year. In fact, the great producers of wealth in the cotton belt were selling their product at less than cost, so that the stream of commercial activity was dammed at its source. Nor does it necessarily follow in large yields and low prices of foodstuffs that the consumer receives the full benefit.

When Wheat Was Too Cheap.

A striking denial of this is furnished by an analysis of the wheat crops of 1893 and 1894. In 1894 the production of wheat in the United States was 460,000,000 bushels and the farm price on December 1 of that year touched the unprecedented low figure of 49 cents a bushel. It is estimated that the consumption per capita of wheat in this country averages five and one-half bushels per annum. We have, then, the following interesting example:

	Millions of bushels.
Wheat production of 1894	460,000,000
Carried over from yield of 1893	79,000,000
say, 20 per cent of total 1893 crop	539,000,000
Exported in 1894	144,000,000
Saved for seed for next spring—1 1/2 bushels to 34,000,000 acres	51,000,000
Fed on farms—say, 2 1/2 per cent of total yield	13,000,000
	208,000,000
Leaving available supply of	331,000,000

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