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Germany's Captain Kid

The ex-Kaiser's histrionic instincts would be flattered if the Allies sent him to some new Elba or St. Helena. He always aped Napoleon. The tribute of island exile would round out his career with a proper Napoleonic anti-climax.

But the Allies are not bothering themselves about historic parallels. They are not in a mood to humor William II's megalomania. In their eyes he is more of a West Indian buccaneer than a twentieth century Corsican. As the German "War Lord" and the responsible initiator of the German programme of wholesale murder on the high seas he has become an international criminal. They naturally prefer to deal with him in that rôle. He was a mediocre ruler, statesman and strategist. But he will remain one of the most notorious sea outlaws in history.

The ex-Kaiser's status as a refugee in Holland has been thoroughly irregular. He entered Dutch territory claiming to be a private citizen. But there was no evidence at the time that he had actually abdicated. He was too busy saving his skin and transporting into neutral territory the hoarded food supplies which would enable him to live in luxury to fulfil the formalities of a renunciation of his claims to the Prussian throne. He grossly imposed on the confiding Dutch. Recently, as an afterthought, he has published the text of a letter of abdication.

He could have been interned originally as a German officer who had deserted the colors. But after he abdicated he became a mere German civilian, subject to extradition on charges brought against him by the German government. The simplest solution would have been to send him across the German frontier and let the new German republic settle accounts with him.

Holland did not bestir herself to get rid of an embarrassing guest in that easy way. The German government was also too occupied keeping afloat to waste any energy trying to recover the person of the fugitive Kriegsherr. So the opportunity passed to restore William II to the bosom of his people before the Allies had begun to concern themselves with his activities in exile or his destiny.

Holland can hardly resist a demand for his surrender. He sought Dutch hospitality under false pretences. He has divested himself of his quality as an officer and as a ruler. But crime is personal. He remains a monumental criminal. If the Allies ask for his delivery as a pirate no international conventions can protect him, for piracy is an offence against international as well as national law.

William II has sunk Dutch merchant vessels and committed murder on their passengers and crews. How can Holland argue that she owes him an asylum? Even if she is willing to forgive him she cannot contend that she has a right to shelter him from punishment at the hands of other nations whose citizens and subjects—men, women and children—he has wantonly slaughtered.

Napoleon was never charged with murder. He was exiled as a troublesome political prisoner. The Allies do not want to punish William II for his political offences. They have no fear of him. They want to try him as the last and greatest of the sea pirates—as the assassin of the Lusitania and the Sussex, the ghoul who ordered the destruction "without trace" of passenger and even hospital ships.

The laws of the sea are the laws of all nations. He has broken them. Holland can indict him as well as Great Britain, France or the United States. And Holland has no moral or legal right to prevent his trial elsewhere if she doesn't care to undertake it herself.

To himself William II may look like another Napoleon. To the rest of the world he is only another Captain Kidd.

Cheap Wheat in Australia

It reads queerly that the Australian government is offering a million tons of wheat at 57 pence minimum, or about $1.18 per bushel, while our government has guaranteed a base price of $2.26 for all the wheat produced in this country till the end of the crop season of 1919. In reality, the Australian wheat offer is just a sell-off of a small quantity, to make room for the new crop now coming on. The whole wheat crop of Australia does not equal that of two or three of our leading wheat states, and the whole surplus in that country now would go only part way to meet the deficit of our allies in Europe.

But the price for the Australian wheat serves to remind us of what a miracle the world's transportation service has become. Ordinarily the price in Melbourne and Sydney vitally affects the return to the farmer in Idaho or Russia. The war has temporarily blocked the channels of communication. They will soon reopen, and even the famine threatened in Russia may be averted. But no more than two or three centuries ago famines were chronic and universal, even in the richest countries in Europe. But a little back of Shakespeare's day, even in England there was famine in one part while plenty ruled in another.

That greed which is supposed to inspire commerce has in this brief time removed a curse that must have made great populations miserable through ten, twenty, perhaps fifty thousand years. The eradication of famine, once the haunting dread of the nations, is perhaps one of the largest single beneficences ever conferred upon the human race.

Mr. Hearst Heads the Procession

Mayor Hylan has been moved by the criticism that he is unenthusiastic in greetings to returning soldiers. This has been corrected. No less a person than Mr. William Randolph Hearst has been appointed a committee of one to go to Washington and arrange with Secretary Baker and Secretary Daniels for suitable greetings.

Certainly no more suitable appointment could have been made than that of Mr. Hearst. If anybody has the right to welcome our soldiers home, it is Mr. Hearst. He is not only glad to see them back; he never wanted them to go. When he arranges his first parade the procession will, of course, display a sign bearing these words from Mr. Hearst's *American* of May 17, 1917:

> To threw away our one strategic advantage by sending our fleets and armies away from their home bases to be parts of a European offensive which has practically broken down is a blundering proposal that would make a real strategist gasp and that will cost us dear if we accede to it. . . .
>
> Our money, like our armies and our fleets, should be concentrated at its home bases and not dispersed abroad.

We presume Mayor Hylan will wish Mr. Hearst to march at the head of the column. There is surely the right place to fling out the words written by Mr. Hearst on March 9, 1918:

> I cannot get so violently excited as some people over possible effects in Europe of the present war.

Plainly Mr. Hylan agrees with Mr. Hearst and does not propose to let the city disgrace itself with any violent excitement in greeting our returned soldiers.

War Prices and Peace

Seldom has Mr. Darling's genius for depicting a national feeling or state of mind shown brighter than in his striking cartoon of yesterday, showing the tree of "war prices" rising into the air after peace had laid an axe across its base. It was entitled, "And Still the Blame Thing Doesn't Fall." The fact is already becoming a national wonderment. In the three weeks since the signing of the armistice there has been no marked decline either in the wholesale or retail price of any of the chief commodities or products of the country. Cotton had a sudden and excited slump, but, under the restrictions imposed by the government, it was soon over, while corn, even from a base price of $1.20 a bushel, has had a sharp rise. Last week's papers announced that butter has, since the armistice, reached the highest price since 1875. The receipts of hogs at the principal points have been unusually heavy, the opening up of shipping gives prospect of a speedy release of all sorts of dammed-up supplies from the Orient, South America and Europe. And, in spite of all, as Mr. Darling puts it, "the blame thing doesn't fall."

Mr. Houston, the Secretary of Agriculture, assures us that these high prices will continue for some time to come, agreeing in this with Mr. Armour and other experienced judges of market conditions. And yet all this comes in the face of a tremendous slump in the government's demands, a general cancelling of advance orders and the return of a large number of munitions workers to the fields of normal enterprise. To a great many, in spite of general knowledge as to the shortage of food in Europe, the thing is a profound mystery. Undoubtedly, the food shortage in Europe and the demands of our army, which will continue for many months to come, account for the continuance of high food prices. And the apparent determination of the labor leaders to resist any reduction in wages in part explains why the steel, copper, coal and other large producing interests should be disposed to hold for present prices in their fields. But, when all this has been said, there remains the feeling that the cessation of the war's intense demands ought to mean a decline in the cost of living and of prices generally.

Yet this is not usually one of the close sequels of a great war. In the last generation an economic writer, after a broad survey, declared that, as a rule, prices were higher after than during wars. This apparently was true for some time after our Civil War. According to the figures compiled by the Aldrich commission, the gold price for a large variety of products (over two hundred) was higher in January, 1866, than in January, 1865, and that was apparently top-notch for the days of the rebellion.

The fact seems to be that almost every war is accompanied by a large issue of some kind of paper money. In the Civil War it was our greenbacks. In the present war, in this country it was the less obvious, but none the less powerful, expansion of bank credits. With this "easy money" and with general employment at high prices, there always remains a huge purchasing power that is not quickly exhausted. There is usually much more extravagance after a war than while the war is on. And that may be the case now, not merely in America but in all the warring countries of Europe.

Absence and "Inability"

The question whether Mr. Wilson's absence abroad constitutes an "inability" to administer the Presidential office will probably have to be met if he stays in France for any considerable period. Vice-President Marshall has indicated one way in which a test can be had. He says that if a court instructs him to assume the Presidency he will assume it.

The courts have the right to construe the clause in the Constitution which provides for the succession of the Vice-President. The Constitution directs that the powers and duties of the President shall devolve on the Vice-President in case of the former's "inability" to discharge them. The word "inability" has never been construed judicially. But the courts are entitled to construe it, and cannot well avoid doing so if occasion arises.

Congress may also pass a law or resolution defining Presidential "disability." It is authorized to pass all laws which may be necessary to carry into execution the powers vested by the Constitution in the government or in any department or officer thereof.

It is highly desirable to have the Presidential succession clarified. And it would be a simple thing to declare by law to what extent absence from the country or from the seat of government would constitute disqualification in the constitutional sense.

There has been no case so far in which a Vice-President has succeeded a President, temporarily or permanently, because of the latter's "inability." There is nothing in the Constitution clearly providing for a temporary succession. "Inability" is a vague and dangerous term. It should be brought into some definite relation to physical presence in or absence from the country. And some provision should be made discriminating between an *ad interim* and a permanent exercise by the Vice-President of the powers of the Presidency.

The President's trip to Europe inevitably brings all these questions to the fore.

The World of Make Believe

Romance suffers a thousand deaths yet never dies. That is as true of life as it is of art. Edmond Rostand came to his great success in the peak of a realistic uproar. He came purely and simply as a romancer, splashing all the old colors on the same old heroic scale. Not life as he and we saw it then, and not life, really, as anybody ever saw it, was his theme. He placed before us life as we have it in our day dreams, as we constructed it ideally to cheer and succor us with the beauty and soft lines in a world of hard, dull facts.

The old fence between realism and romance went crashing when it came to be seen that all art was something more than life and that the only distinctions to be made were of subject matter, of method, of time, of place, and of the degree to which the process of idealization, of generalization, is carried. In your true romance, like "Cyrano de Bergerac," the idea runs away with the fact, and we reach an extravagance of emotion and color that sweeps us off our feet. In Henry James, let us say, idea and the fact keep pace. The reader's mind stays in command, and the emotions play only their allotted part. But in both it is a reconstructed world we enter, the dream of a great man's brain, analyzing life, interpreting it, generalizing from it. Try as he will, no artist can keep himself from his work.

There have been few romancers to surpass Rostand in his combination of theatrical skill and poetical feeling. Some larger abilities he lacked. But the heart of romance and of the true poet was his, and he swept his country and this country off their feet by the sheer power of his imagination. He undoubtedly had much to do with our modern swing, if not away from realism, at least away from its narrower intimations. We relearned from "Cyrano" what we had known in our youth: that great art will not stand within a narrow definition and that pleasure, joy and wisdom are to be had from every color on its palette.

The sob-squad in Germany has had no effect on the women of Texas. In convention in Dallas the State Federation of Clubs called upon the women not only of Texas but of every other state to pledge themselves to buy goods manufactured only in the United States and in Allied and neutral nations. They themselves will refuse to buy anything made in Germany. With Texas alone 57,070 square miles greater than all of Germany before the war, this one state of itself closes a considerable market for German goods.

It is to be Christmas as usual in America this year so far as candy is concerned. The sugar shortage has been so materially relieved that the food administration has removed all restrictions on holiday candy sales. Dealers who have been refusing to sell more than one pound at a time may sell as much candy as is desired.

SHOES & SHIPS & SEALING WAX

HIS COAT

Sometimes I cannot bear to see
His coat hang there so patiently
As though it waited for the day
When he would come who went away.
Last spring it was he hung it there
Upon that peg, beneath the stair,
And then ran gayly up to bed.
He'd soon be home again, he said.
He laughed and warned me not to cry
When he and I should say goodby.

And then, I watched him as he dreamed
The whole night through. How strange it seemed
That he should have such quiet sleep!
Yet now, how terrible and deep
His age-long splendid slumber is!
And that old shabby coat of his
Still hangs, expectant 'neath the stair.
Dear God! I wish it were not there!

And still my heart would break I know
If I should try to let it go.

* * *

New all-Russian governments are formed, if we are to believe dispatches, almost as often as the Bolsheviki shoot the Grand Duke Nicholas.

* * *

Food (?) for Germans

F. F. V.—We talked it over at dinner yesterday and the only thing we could agree upon was green persimmons. So I pass these along to you as calculated to fill a long felt want and prove satisfactory to the public as a whole.

E. L. H.

* * *

C. R. F. wonders where the male human is who will dare apply for apartments in a house in East Thirty-ninth Street which is, according to a sign displayed outside, "A residence for men with every convenience."

* * *

THOSE WERE THE DAYS

School

Dear Bill Clough: There were pictures of Martin Luther and President Cleveland and John Greenleaf Whittier on the walls above the blackboards, do you remember, Bill? It wasn't until we got to the eighth grade that we found out that Martin wasn't the austere gentleman with the whiskers.

The desks we sat at were hacked and chipped, but the school board varnished them fresh every summer. For the first weeks of fall getting up after once sitting down was an interesting though perilous adventure.

There were plants in boxes, Bill—chiefly geraniums that grew long and spindly and never bloomed. Once we dared you to pour ink on their roots, and then they gave up the struggle, broke out into yellow spots and withered away.

Remember the smell of chalk dust, except during the winter when you couldn't smell anything else for the reek of wet woollens? We were desk mates, Bill, and we read all of Verne's "Mysterious Island" behind our geography. And now and again, during study hour, we'd have fits of coughing so that we could slip all-day suckers into our mouths behind politely cupped hands.

And do you remember, Bill, when Superintendent Wilcox suggested that Miss Hoffman try a partial honor system? We were supposed to tell at the end of the week how many times we had whispered. You and I were honest though stupid, and said loudly,

"Coupla hundred times, I guess."

We got 27 in deportment that month, Bill, and after interviews with our fathers we relapsed into perjury and were praised for recapturing our former mark of 85 or thereabouts.

Do you remember, Bill? We wonder. For you went with your father to 'Frisco the year we were eleven, and we never heard of you thereafter.

* * *

If Chile and Peru think they are going to make a success of their war now their press agent has been kidding them something scandalous.

* * *

The waiters can interest us in their strike by denouncing unanimously the further acceptance of tips by any member of their union.

F. F. V.

Yellows

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: I have noted a number of items lately to the effect that various pacifist and Socialist organizations are planning to petition the President to pardon "political" prisoners, criminals sentenced for violation of the espionage and sabotage laws, for sedition, for refusal to perform military duty, and so forth. Surely it is a time for all genuine Americans to stand on guard against the activities of such yellow curs.

My son gave his life last June for humanity. While he was fighting with that magnificent 2d Division on the Château Thierry sector, the various types of yellowa (Do not call them "Reds." Red is one of the colors of our flag) were doing everything in their power to stab him and his comrades in the back. Now they are asking for the release of political prisoners.

When the pacifists, conscienceless objectors, traitors, Bolshevists, and all others of their ilk unite in one great petition to the Almighty asking that my boy and his millions of fallen comrades shall be released from the grave and shall be restored to the happy, useful lives which they were leading when the call to duty came, when they shall have demonstrated that they have sufficient influence with the Creator to have that petition granted, then, and never until then, let them petition earthly rulers for the release of those of their kind who have been sentenced to a small part of the punishment which they have so richly earned.

C. B. SIMRELL.

West Babylon, N. Y., Nov. 30, 1918.

Jilting the Railroads

By Carl Snyder

A REMARKABLE situation has suddenly developed in regard to the railroads, precipitated by, apparently, a sudden change of front as to the government's policy of railway control.

It had been generally supposed that in any event the railroads would remain under the government's control for the full period allowed by the law—that is, twenty-one months after a formal proclamation of peace. And it was surmised that if the railway administration was fairly successful in the mean time this would lead to a strong movement in favor, if not of government ownership, at least of a continuance of the present arrangement.

Abruptly at the end of eleven months' direction of the railways Mr. McAdoo resigns, and a fortnight later the President appears before Congress to say, to the general surprise of the country, that the question of railway control presents large problems, that he has no "confident opinion" about it, and "turns to Congress for counsel upon it." He makes this further explicit declaration:

> "I stand ready and anxious to release the roads from the present control, and I must do so at a very early date if by waiting until the statutory limit of time is reached I shall be merely prolonging the period of doubt and uncertainty, which is hurtful to every interest concerned."

Diminishing Profits

Reasons for this change of the administration's attitude, if change it be, may be found. One very patent one is that there has been a huge increase in expenses over last year, on practically the same amount of traffic; and that this increase is so great that it may eat up all the added revenue gained from the 25 per cent increase in freight rates last June. It might possibly necessitate even a further increase. As a war measure the heavy raise of last summer was accepted practically without opposition. A further increase now, with the return of peace, would probably excite a bitter controversy. It would certainly not be a popular measure.

It had been generally hoped that unified administration and control, short routing, the elimination of competitive operations and the rest would result in large economies. But whatever may have been gained from this source, it has been utterly swamped by the enormous increase in wages and expenses. For the month of September, the last month available, there was a gain of $130,000,000 in the operating revenues of the larger roads—about 27 per cent. But the increase in net was practically zero. For the month of October "The Wall Street Journal" has made a compilation to show that for twenty of the larger roads an increase in revenues of 33 per cent was accompanied by a decrease in net of 5 per cent. Its comparative figures for the last four months, as compared with the same months a year ago, are as follows:

	Oct.	Sept.	Aug.	July.
Increase in net revenues ...	33.7%	36.0%	37.4%	34.5%
Increase in net op'g income.	*5.0%	4.2%	25.9%	48.9%

*Decrease.

It is evident that for these twenty roads there has been a considerable increase in the actual traffic handled. But this is not true for the whole country. The detailed figures are available only for the eight months to September 1, but up to that time the total ton mileage of all the roads had gained over the year before only 1.1 per cent—practically zero.

The Rising Bill

If September and October should prove representative months, the return from these two months would indicate an increase of expenses at the rate of something like a billion and a half per year. The actual increase for September was almost an even 50 per cent. This was an astonishing figure. And it was not due preponderantly to the increase in maintenance charges. The increase in transportation cost was almost as large—44 per cent.

Now it might be that in the next few months the roads will be able to get control of the situation and reduce this rate of increase in expenses. But the likelihood of this is not overly clear. The comparisons are with the two months of last year, when, through priority orders and general bungling, the tie-up of the railway traffic was beginning to produce a great discontent, leading to the agitation which finally led to the government taking over the roads. Expenses for the two months of last year were not low, nor were conditions favorable to economical management. If in comparison to these conditions the government in these two months is not able to make a more favorable showing, it is none too clear where the desired improvement is coming from.

If no improvement does take place it is easy to see what might follow. If expenses increased by anything like 40 to 50 per cent for the full year, while the revenues increased only 25 to 30 per cent, this would mean added revenues of only $1,000,000,000. With a possible increase in expenses of around $1,500,000,000, that might mean a deficit under the guarantees of around half a billion for the next twelve months of operation.

The Deficit

The actual result for the nine months of the calendar year up to October 4 was a reduction of net revenues by about $210,000,000. It was expected that the raise in rates would wipe out this deficit and leave the government with a handsome surplus. This hope seemed justified by the results in July and August.

Meanwhile, that strong pressure which brought the heavy increase in railway wages continues. Already before the wage board is a demand from the brotherhoods for a further wage increase of, it is estimated, something like $175,000,000 for the brotherhood employes alone. A similar demand from the Railway Telegraphers' Association was turned down by Mr. McAdoo last week. This probably reaches the very heart of the difficulty inherent in government operation—that is, the strong political pressure to raise wages higher and ever higher. It might well have been that when the realization of this difficulty began to become acute administrative sentiment favoring government railroads might have undergone a change.

Handing Them Back

But consider the situation if now the President should decide to return the roads to their owners. The matter is in the President's hands. The government is under no obligations to go on operating the roads for any specified time, nor for a day longer than it thinks best.

This is the possibility that the railway executives must consider at their meeting in New York to-day. It is well known that opinion as to the desirability of immediate return, even among the railway managers, is extremely divided. It is evident that if the unfavorable results of September and October should continue the desirability of this return would be immensely lessened. It would place the roads in a genuine predicament. It is well known the roads are in none too good condition. Expenses for maintenance have risen very heavily, and in spite of this the last accounts show an increase in the number of locomotives and cars under repair. It is likewise well known that expenditures for renewals and improvements have been this year at the lowest ebb. The budget made out by Mr. McAdoo at the beginning of the year called for an outlay of something like $1,300,000,000. The actual expenditure for ten months was under $450,000,000.

In the face of the present cost of living and the prevailing high prices, and especially with the urgent demands for still higher wages, it would be very difficult for the roads now to make a drastic reduction in wages. And whatever may happen in the next six months or so, there is no present indication of a heavy decline in the cost of supplies.

Net Results

Apparently, then, the result of the government handing back the railroads to their owners would be to leave the roads in a worse plight than they were before. The President himself says that this is unthinkable.

The main problem is that of providing adequate capital for this needed development. More than ten years ago James J. Hill declared that the roads needed at least a billion dollars a year for the following seven years to put them abreast of the transportation needs of the country. Scarcely half this sum has been expended. If the need was for a billion dollars ten years ago it is nearer two billion dollars a year now. Indeed, two billions now would not represent what one billion did when Mr. Hill spoke. Without a friendly policy on the part of the government this new capital could not now be obtained. The rewards for capital are too attractive elsewhere.

Cheap Transportation

But would it be any misfortune if still higher rates were needed? It is well to recall that through twenty years, up to this year, the average rate per ton mile has not substantially varied. Meanwhile, before the war the general average of prices had gone up fully 50 per cent, and it has gone up 75 to 100 per cent more since the war—between 200 and 300 per cent in all. This means that railway rates even under a 25 per cent increase are not relatively much more than half, or possibly not more than 40 per cent, what they were twenty years ago—that is, the relative cost to the country. No other country has anything like such rates.

Jews of Poland

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: The war for democracy and liberation is over, but it remains yet to be seen at the peace table whether the Allies who fought so gloriously in that war will insure at least liberation for the race that for two thousand years has been stamped under foot by the nations of the earth.

Reports are even now being heard of the renewal of massacres of Jews in Poland—that Poland for whose liberation more than six hundred thousand Jews in the armies of the Allies fought. Shall the blood of those Jewish sons who died in battle have been shed to give the anti-Semitic Poles a free hand in the slaughter of her Jewish subjects? Shall the gold that millions of Jews gave with their hearts' blood have been used to purchase freedom for a race that may enslave another? The Poles, too, have been sorely oppressed. In one hundred and fifty years they have been a dissected, denationalized people. They have fought on divers occasions against the hopeless odds of the bloody Czars of Russia. And the Jews of Poland were with them. Hundreds of Jews died in the steppes of Siberia for their participation in the revolt of 1903. Thousands more spent the best years of their lives in the inquisitional dungeons of Muscovy, or gave of their blood in the sanguinary street fighting in the various Polish cities. Hundreds of thousands went into an everlasting exile. But all this the Pole has forgotten. At a time when all the world turns again to brotherhood and reconstruction his mediæval hatred belches forth in murder and destruction. Now what shall the Allies say?

Another offender is the Kingdom of Rumania. Here is a country which, in times of peace, is a land of milk and honey. And yet in the last thirty years nearly one-half a million Jews fled from its bounties to avoid the countless persecutions and degradations they were subjected to. The thousands of Jewish men who laid down their lives in battle and the great Jewish wealth that was lost through battle have not availed any. The Rumanian Jew is reviled, bullied, massacred and unenfranchised. Now what shall the Allies say?

WILLIAM N. KIRSCHNER.

Brooklyn, Nov. 23, 1918.

As of Old

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: Will you let a Buffalo preacher thank you for the sturdy, spiritual editorials that feed the moral fibres of your readers? The Old Testament prophet is now voicing his faith in papers like The Tribune, as well as from our pulpits. The Tribune is among the spiritual assets of the American people.

MORTIMER P. GIFFIN.

Buffalo, N. Y., Nov. 30, 1918.

It Does Not Behoove Us

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: The recent outgiving of Mr. Frank R. Kent in "The Baltimore Sun" is infinitely regrettable. It would be so even if it correctly represented the situation. But it does not. It does contain certain facts. These facts, however, are neither new nor is their publication harmful, however questionable it may be in taste. The objectionable and pernicious part of the statement is not in its recital of facts, but in the setting forth of Mr. Kent's own deductions and in his reproduction of mischievous gossip.

My justification for taking part in the discussion aroused by Mr. Kent's statement rests on the fact that I was in Europe during a considerable part of the period to which Mr. Kent refers, and that I had occasion to see the principal members of the British and French Cabinets, our own leading representatives, from General Pershing and Ambassador Sharp down, and editors of the most influential organs of public opinion in England and France.

From the facts as I had opportunity to ascertain them, and not from hearsay, I know that the attitude of the governing circles in these countries was and is one of the utmost good will and the most generous recognition toward America and the sincerest seeking for lasting and cordial friendship. I know of my own knowledge that more than once requests from the representatives of America were complied with—although such requests did not accord with the views of the French and British authorities and at times were far from easy to meet—and they were complied with solely from a warm-hearted desire to accede to anything within the limits of the practicable that America might ask.

And I have never seen or heard of any more touching and unanimous manifestation on the part of the people of one nation toward those of another nation than the solicitous eagerness on the part of everybody, high or low, in England and France to make our boys welcome and to minister to their wellbeing and comfort. And the universal praise and admiration bestowed on our soldiers for their appearance, conduct and valor were in striking contrast to the reticence of the English and the French in speaking of the sacrifice they themselves had made and were making, the privations they had endured and were enduring and the superb heroism of their own defenders.

If anything can be more regrettable than Mr. Kent's remarks concerning England and France, to whom the world owes a debt beyond all appraisal, and the alleged frame of mind of their governments concerning America it is what he says about Italy.

Italy might have stood aside from the great conflict, and by bargaining secured from Austria nearly everything she meant to obtain—without firing a shot. But, with a fine passion for freedom and right, she chose the road of daring and of sacrifice. She chose to throw her sword into the scale on the side of the cause of justice and humanity. She did so not when the star of the Allies was in the ascendant, but at the moment when they had received a severe setback through the disastrous defeat of the Russians, in the spring of 1915. Insufficiently equipped and provided, she fought valorously against the most formidable difficulties, while her people suffered untold hardships through lack of fuel and food. After the disaster of Caporetto, due to causes for which little responsibility attaches to her, she accomplished the wonderful feat of stopping the invader when everything was in his favor, of holding on with grim determination, of beating off his renewed attack last summer and finally of utterly defeating him. Her soldiers fought at the French front in a manner worthy of her comradeship in arms with the soldiers of France.

What it meant to the Allied cause to have Italy on its side can be best appreciated if we picture to ourselves what would have been the situation if Italy had sided with the Central Powers, or even if she had merely been benevolently neutral toward those powers.

In view of what Italy has done, dared and suffered for our common cause, it is more than deplorable that any American in a responsible position should make himself the medium for publishing insults against that great nation.

And without the slightest wish to revive old controversies I add this:

For three terrible years the Allied nations fought and bled and sacrificed before America came to realize that their fight was our fight and that our place was by their side. During those years we drew enormous wealth from their resources, depleted in the struggle for a sacred cause. Some things which, at the time, hurt them deeply were said by us in the course of official pronouncements.

We entered the war very, very late—almost too late. Since entering it America has conducted herself in a manner, at home and in the field, which measures up to the full greatness of her traditions, of which we are justly proud, and which has gained for us a position of the highest honor and of immense prestige and power among the nations of the world. But does it not behoove us, and especially those of us whose words find their way into print, to look back from time to time to those thirty-three long months which preceded the 6th of April, 1917, and should not that retrospect tend to cause us to put a certain measure of restraint upon our judgments, claims and utterances?

OTTO H. KAHN.

New York, Dec. 1, 1918.

The Gold Star

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: May I, without offence, suggest that in the welcoming celebrations for our returning troops places be kept in the front ranks of each company for representatives of our fallen heroes? Is it not practicable to invite each hero's nearest of kin (man, woman or child), to march there before all others, carrying the gold star that is their aching pride?

Nothing can please us more or become us better than thus before all else to celebrate the heroes who have given their lives, and to honor their kinsfolk who have given them.

MARY PERRY KING.

New Canaan, Conn., Nov. 30, 1918.