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who ran his own establishment more than compensated for the advantages of largeness. Andrew Carnegie for a long time kept out of trusts because he held they carried within them the seeds of failure. But the theory was exploded by fact. Now few challenge the superior efficiency of bigness. The retailers may save themselves, but scarcely if they persist in clinging to traditional methods of trafficking. They need closer association and elimination of waste, the gains to be given to customers.

However destructive to the corner groceries of Lawrence the particular venture of the woolen company may be, it is one, viewed more largely, that other retailers have no great reason to fear. It contains a fatal defect—it is proposed to sell at cost. Only when a concern carries itself and pays enough more to attract capital is it based on stable foundations. The mood of indignation passes, even philanthropy grows weary; only selfishness is a force persistent enough to keep doors open and wheels revolving. Unless the company changes its price policy its enterprise will scarcely bring lasting benefit. This fact may be of small consequence to one who is bankrupted by the contest, but it is of large significance to those who look ahead.

It is an open question whether it is to the advantage of society to allow any one in business to disregard economic law. There are immediate benefits, but they are offset by the waste incident to cleaning up a mess and to getting back to normal conditions.

Japan in Siberia
Whatever else happens in Siberia, one thing is clear enough. The Japanese will oppose summary ejection. They will take over the wreckage of Kolchak's Omsk government and try to hold up the progress of the "Reds" probably on the line of Lake Baikal. They will do this because a Soviet intrusion east of Baikal menaces Japan.

According to Washington dispatches, the Japanese Ambassador has conferred with Secretary Lansing and a joint program has been agreed on. America's part in its execution will be simple. The troops which the United States sent to Siberia have done little or nothing beyond guarding the line of the Trans-Siberian Railway. The relations of our high command with the Kolchak regime were more or less strained. The Omsk government professed occasionally not to understand why the American troops had come to Siberia. Our political and military status there was ill defined.

We evidently don't intend to fight the "Reds" in Siberia. If Japan is forced to, it is only proper that the Trans-Siberian road east of Baikal be surrendered to her. She will need it for strictly military purposes. There are still about 45,000 Czech-Slovak troops in Siberia. They have left the front and are concentrated about Vladivostok, awaiting transportation home. Bringing them back to Europe is a hold-over obligation resting on the Allies. The chief ostensible reason for Allied intervention in Siberia was the need of reaching and rescuing these gallant fighters, formerly Austro-Hungarian prisoners in Russia. The United States will help to pay the cost of their repatriation, it is said. Once they are afloat, our own expeditionary force is likely to be headed for home.

Japan has about 65,000 men in Siberia. She was undoubtedly restrained from sending more there by pressure on the part of her associates. An attempt was made to avoid recognizing her vital interest in the Siberian situation. By reinforcing her army she can easily hold the Baikal line. The Bolsheviks are said to have about 100,000 men on their Far Eastern front. But the Bolshevik military organization is flabby. The Japanese have little to fear from Lenin's generals or soldiers. And as to the alleged difficulties of campaigning in Siberia, greatly exaggerated at the time when Allied intervention was being discussed, Japan demonstrated how feckless they were when, in the summer of 1918, she quickly overran the Amur province and took Blagovestchensk.

When Is a House a House?
What does the Constitution mean when it says that "the Congress, whenever two-thirds of both houses shall deem it necessary, shall propose amendments to this Constitution"? Does this require two-thirds of the members or merely two-thirds of a quorum to submit an amendment? Here is a legal question likely to be much discussed in the coming weeks. The prohibition amendment was submitted by a vote of less than two-thirds of the members of both houses. The contention of those who up-

held the validity of the submission is that the word "House" means a House organized for the transaction of business, and that two-thirds of the members present may legally submit an amendment. To support this contention Article I, Section 4, Paragraph 1, is quoted, which says that "a majority of each [house] shall constitute a majority to do business." Is the submission of an amendment "business"?

Besides reliance on this clause there is reliance on practice. The roll call on the woman suffrage amendment in a Senate with ninety-six members was 51 to 25. Likewise the income tax amendment did not secure two-thirds of the memberships of the houses. On the other hand, the critics of submission make a strong case. The Constitution defines the House of Representatives, for example, and other mentions of "House" are, of course, elliptical expressions which refer back to this definition. This definition is: "The House of Representatives shall be composed of members chosen every second year by the people of the several states." Here the "House" is not mentioned as a quorum, and it is argued, that two-thirds of the House means two-thirds of the House as defined.

The Constitution in several instances is at pains to declare when a specific fraction of the members "present" is able to act. Two-thirds of the Senators "present" may ratify a treaty (Article II, Paragraph 2). Again, with respect to impeachments, conviction may follow the concurrence of two-thirds of the Senators "present." It is asserted, inasmuch as the Constitution carefully mentions when two-thirds of the members present may do a particular thing, that in other cases when it requires two-thirds it means two-thirds of the whole membership.

It is also pointed out that the Constitution, in all, uses the word "House" twenty-two times; that in nineteen cases it necessarily designates a whole House, and that in the three other cases the usage in the nineteen cases is not contradicted. That the word "present" is employed when it is clear that less than two-thirds of the whole House may act, is said to forbid reading into the Constitution the word "present" when not expressly there.

Finally, touching the claim of authority to do business by a majority of a quorum, it is reasoned that this refers only to ordinary business—not to such business as is separately treated in other parts of the Constitution. As to the practice followed when the income tax and woman's suffrage amendments were considered, it is declared practice cannot amend the Constitution, and that thus the precedents are without legal weight.

Our Backwoods Town
A highly civilized spot we self-satisfied New Yorkers take our town to be—the last word in comfort and convenience and luxury. Think of the poor yaps by country crossroads who have to get their water from a pump and fuss with a kerosene lamp! What backward folk! How can they exist?

Nevertheless, comfort and convenience are wholly relative terms, it behooves us to remember. And New Yorkers should not be quite as proud and pleased as they are. They lead a very comfortable life in some respects; in others they are far behind the head of the procession. Take a state like California, for example, where electricity is not a semi-luxury as in New York but an accepted part of everybody's home-living and home-making. The annual consumption of electricity in New York per capita is \$1.14. The consumption in California was \$30 three years ago, and is now estimated to be over \$40. That expresses mathematically a difference in comfort. The California home uses thirty times as much electricity as the New York home; and, in one important respect, is about thirty times as convenient.

All know the convenience of electric lighting—you press a button and the light is on. There is no filling of a lamp, no lighting of a match, no dirt, no smell. We should feel that we were going back a hundred years if forced to use candles. Yet the coal stove belongs with the candle period, whether for heating or for cooking—so a pitying Californian will tell you. Lighting has run ahead of general heating; but the electric pad—shades of the old warming pan!—and the room heater are already practical and marvelously convenient appliances. And the electric toaster, the electric vacuum cleaner, the electric iron and the electric motor for the sewing machine—who that has ever used one would go back to old methods without a feeling akin to that of abandoning, let us say, an automobile for a buggy, or giving up the central furnace for a batch of stoves?

There is an especial and growing need now for the electric household appliance—a need that makes its service an essential comfort, not a mere luxury or convenience. As the houseworker tends to disappear, the electric servant steps forward to take her place. Hands are not eliminated; but they are helped and

kept clean, and their time of service is reduced to a minimum. How can New Yorkers hope to progress and ultimately come abreast of California in comfort and convenience? A cheap rate from the power companies is one answer. Another is the construction of houses and apartments with the proper wiring for electric service. New York City is only 10 per cent wired, it is estimated. Nor is new construction wired as completely as it should be. Here is a point for the intelligent landlord and the discerning tenant—at least for the latter—as soon as tenants are again permitted to discern or do anything except pay more and more rent.

The increased cost is small. In new construction complete wiring with base plugs, wherever full electric service demands them, adds only one-fiftieth of one per cent to the total construction cost. In normal times such installation is bound to be demanded and bound to pay. The builders with foresight have already taken notice. If there are enough of them another decade may see the New York home as comfortable and convenient as the California! And think of the public and private gains of home-saving, of preserving an institution concerning whose future there is anxiety!

Teaching Real French
Where Ollendorff Is Stupped by Actual Tongue Stuff

To the Editor of The Tribune. Sir: Some time ago I read your editorial on American-French and was rather surprised at your statements, for my experience has not at all been along those lines. I looked into the matter and concluded that you must have had your French in the past days when teachers never used the spoken tongue and when nearly all the textbooks were built as per the German formula, viz., lay down a more or less important principle of grammar and then hunt at the head of the defenseless student numberless, meaningless sentences to illustrate said principle; then move on to a new one. Thus were built the old-fashioned books, like Chardanal, Fraser and Squair, Keetel, etc. Look them over in your leisure hours in the editorial rooms. Practical, idiomatic French? Practice in conversation? No, no, none of that! Friends of mine, who are now in business, tell me that they never heard a word of French in their college courses.

My experience (New York City, I thank you!) has been quite different. I have now had a year and a half of French in the evening classes of the College of the City of New York. Our professor, as far as I can judge, is absolutely bi-lingual; we all talk French in the class and he is awfully fussy about intonation, ease of delivery, etc. The book we use, "Nouveau Cours Francais," is a live, practical, interesting mixture of grammar, oral and written exercises and texts on daily life, French customs, institutions, history, government and so forth; the whole thing is developed along methodical lines, teaching idiomatic French that one would use every day. In my line of business I often meet Frenchmen and I find that I can follow their conversation and, haltingly, am able to talk to them about our country and our customs. I am able to inform them that now our trains are "souvent en retard" ("est la même chose chez nous," they say), that, according to their understanding, it is "treize heures vingt," or that "ce soir Caruso va chanter l'opéra," again if I hear them say that "cette cravate est très chic, elle coûte huit francs vingt-cinq. I know that old H. C. of L. in the shape of a \$1.65 necktie staggers them, and that when they find that a good United States dollar will buy about nine of their francs and not five, as they always figure, they will be more dismayed than ever.

So, all in all, I feel that your editorial is no longer fair, that American-French is not universal. Let us hope that the numerous ex-German teachers who have been thrust into the teaching of French (imagine that!) will not give us something worse, Prussianized French!

STUDENT.
New York, Dec. 31, 1919.
'The Poor Railway Owners'
To the Editor of The Tribune. Sir: I beg to say that in the edition of The New York Tribune of December 18, there is an editorial entitled "The Poor Railway Owners." I enclose the editorial, with the section marked to which I write your attention. In it you criticize railroad managers and, in rather imply that it is for selfish and personal reasons that they oppose the Cummins bill and that they are not representative of the owners of the railroads. All I have to say in reply is that the Association of Railway Executives represents about 94 per cent of the trackage of the country, and it also represents the shareholders owning that trackage through the boards of directors of the various companies, and so far as I am aware the shareholders are in entire accord with the position of the executives, who are solely desirous of protecting their interests to the fullest extent. They are not raising any factious objection to the Cummins bill. There are features of it that are admirable, but on the other hand, there are other features that need to be corrected while the bill is in conference, and it is to those features that they are directing such criticism as they think proper to make.

THOMAS DE WITT CUYLER, Chairman.
New York, Dec. 30, 1919.
How to Detect the Imitation
To the Editor of The Tribune. Sir: The difference between wood alcohol and real alcohol is that wood alcohol does it sooner.

G. FRED PITTS M. D.
Warwick, N. Y., Dec. 30, 1919.

The Conning Tower

THE CHEERFUL GIVER
I would give thee, my love, fair things:
I would give thee jade and turquoise,
Sandalwood and stained ivory, diamonds,
And a bowl of amethyst.
I would give thee a cloak of ermine,
And a scarf, all of silk, threaded with gold.
Around thy neck would hang pearls,
A hundred pearls, threaded upon platinum.
All of these rare things, and fair,
Would I give thee, my love, and more.

In the mean time, accept this New Year's card
As a token of my esteem.
JOHN MCMASTER.
In the pursuit of song alone is the quarry more important than the chase. In the quest of wine, as evidenced by last night's "celebration," the talk about getting it, the pleasure in circumventing puritanism, and the reminiscent joy of having had the wine are far more important than the actual drinking of it. As to the relative merits, values, and importance of the quarry and the chase of the other member of the world-famed trio, unless we may have the whole page we cannot even scrape the surface of such a theme.

The Ordinary Five-Foot Shelf
My comrades, when I'm no more drinking,
But sink with gout or psalmsie
Exhausted on my death bed sinking,
Columbus eight two hundred try.

But die I this day or to-morrow,
My testament's already made.
From Doctor B. A. Baer I'll borrow
And thus the Campbell church's paid.

And when me to my grave you're bringing,
Then follow after, man by man.
Let no sad funeral bells be ringing,
But Frank E. Campbell be your plan.

Lay him low, Lay him low,
In the clover or the snow.
What cares he? He does not know—
Call Columbus 8209.

"Like the rest of us," writes R. R. W., "Doc Baer must have his favorite character in history. I'll bet his is Nathan Hale, whose last words, 'I regret that I have but one life,' etc., is the spirit that keeps Columbus 8209 always busy."

And Waitben suggests that the Doctors' advertisements should be continued to the—you've guessed it—mourning papers.

Trials of the Contris' Dinner Committee in Session
1. Shall Berthold Baer be invited, and in case of accident who is to write his obit?
2. How can we keep Morrie, the demon press agent, from ringing in Famous Players every time he rises to speak?
3. Ditto for Freckles and his Goldwyn outfit.
4. Shall we buy Adelaide a fountain pen and keep her quiet, or will the Boss do it and give us peace?
5. How to frame up more meetings at the home of Heloise, where cookies, cider, 'n' everything are served.
6. Shall we permit contris to bring non-contributable wives who are good to look upon?

Lest Heywood Brown 3rd be infuriated by such words as "bourgeoisie" and "proletariat," his father spells these in his hearing. But for two months the intelligence of our kitchen has been so great that it is necessary to say, lest he grow excited, that there is going to be fish for dinner; also, when the kitten is in an unusually graceful attitude, he grows self-conscious if you say, "See the kitten," so you say, in a monotone, "O-b-s-e-r-v-e h-i-m"

Christmas, 1919
The children of America
Made merry Christmas Day
With food to eat and milk to drink
And many games to play.
But the Lord Christ looked down and wept
Upon His natal day.

"And was I born in Gattico,
For but one kind to know?
O, men, who chant My praise above,
And mock my words below:
Forgive them, God, who cannot feel,
And cannot, therefore, know!"

And Russian children starved that day
Because of the blockade;
As German babies and Austrian
Knew Death and were afraid.
But the Lord Christ took them all to Him,
For Heaven has no blockade.

"Speaking of the non-essentiality of keys for valves," writes D. C. F., "I used one several days ago. I do not carry a change purse, neither do I keep a personal expense account. But when I carried my last remaining pint of Liqueur de la Vieille Cure a distance of some forty miles by rail I locked my bag tightly, and rejoiced that it had a lock. Had such hardware been available, I would have wound the whole affair with yards and yards of log chain, fastened with as heavy a padlock as I could lift."

Speaking of waste metal, M. L. F. cites the hook that comes with every Prophylactic toothbrush. The hook, she says, lasts a lifetime; and if the brush doesn't, what does one do with the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th hooks?

Six years ago this morning The Conning Tower moved to Nassau Street. It was the day of Mayor Mitchell's inauguration, and the day when Henry Miller retired from the stage, though this column prophesied his return by October. Also that morning appeared the following remarkable lyric.

If during the impinging year,
This column drags a single tear:
If cup or crank or wanton wife
Of mine can raise a single smile.
If only one in all the town
Shall cease, because of me, to frown—
The circulation dept. would be
Unconscionably sore at me.

Well, as advertised: Happy New Year.
F. P. A.

MAYBE SOME DAY SOMEBODY WILL THINK TO OPEN A WINDOW



Our Foundation Stone
A Poor Time to Chip Pieces Off the Constitution

To the Editor of The Tribune. Sir: The Constitution of the United States was not drawn by a committee on resolutions of a town meeting. It required four long months of the most intense brain work upon the part of men whose names have lived one hundred and thirty-two years to carve its syllables. Hence its words, its punctuation, its most delicate shades of form, have a meaning that careless rhetoric never conveys.

Once more, let us look at the paragraph that clothes the President with all the power he has a right to claim in the making of treaties: "2. He shall have power, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, to make treaties, provided two-thirds of the Senators present concur; and he shall nominate, and by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, shall appoint ambassadors, other public ministers, and consuls, judges of the Supreme Court, and all other officers of the United States, whose appointments are not herein otherwise provided for, and which shall be established by law; but the Congress may by law vest the appointment of such inferior officers as they think proper in the President alone, in the courts of law, or in the heads of departments."

We reproduce the whole paragraph in order that the punctuation may be noted. The clause "by and with the advice and consent of the Senate" is used twice: First, in defining the President's power as to treaties, and second, in defining his power as to the nomination and appointment of "ambassadors, other public ministers," etc. Note well, in the second instance, the President is given the power to nominate, to initiate, to suggest, all by himself, unhampered by consulting the Senate. It is only the approval of his nomination, the confirming of his initiative, the indorsing of his suggestion which calls for the advice and consent of the Senate. He nominates without the advice and consent of the Senate. That is as plain as sunlight. After the Constitution says "he shall nominate" it then uses the conjunctive "and" in saying "and by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, shall appoint ambassadors," etc. But it does not say that the President shall make treaties and then add the conjunctive "and" in saying "and by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, shall 'finish' the treaties, or 'execute' the treaties, or 'promulgate' the treaties"; etc. No, it does not permit the President to take a single step in treaty-making save "by and with the advice and consent of the Senate."

The Constitution has no grammatical error in it. The syntax of Hamilton and Jefferson was quite as calculated as their reasoning. If their meaning that Woodrow Wilson violated the Constitution of the United States from the very moment that he proposed to appoint himself sole treaty-maker for the United States; he violated it when he failed to acquaint the Senate with his foreign plans; he violated it when he appointed the little bunch of Boswells who acted as train bearers for him in France; he violated it when he held court in Europe and kept the Senate in ignorance of every step of the treaty-making; he violated it when he allowed the Allied nations to believe that he was the treaty-maker; he violated it when he rushed home last March and announced that his treaty must and would be accepted

"Whom Are You?"
What Every Grammarian Thinks He Knows

To the Editor of The Tribune. Sir: Let us speak by the card or equivocation will undo us. As every eighth grade pupil does not know punctuation, or as the Editor of The Tribune certainly should have observed, or as F. P. A., at any rate even the rate he receives for conducting his Abacus of Aestism, might have been able to explain: "Alfred, whom a greater king never reigned, deserves to be held up as a model to all future sovereigns," is not, never was, nor ever will be what Mr. George Wrightman thinks it is. Mr. George Wrightman is wrong; it should be "who," as every grammarian knows. However, it may be admitted that for euphony's sake it were well to avoid this construction unless one has the courage of his conviction, which, no doubt, is the case with certain of our literary criminals, who might otherwise be law-abiding reactionaries, if left to themselves.

HAMILTON CRAIGIE.
Summit, N. J., Dec. 20, 1919.

To the Editor of The Tribune. Sir: Dr. Vitzelly's defense in The Tribune of the 23d of the anti-dramatic Cyrillism "Whom are you?" is a shining illustration of the appositeness of Horace Smith's definition, in the first volume of his "The Tin Trumpet," of the word inconsistency as "the only thing in which men are consistent." For in his "Desk Book of Errors in English," published by the Funk & Wagnalls Company in 1906, Dr. Vitzelly writes (page 228) verbatim as follows: "Who: Often improperly used for whom; a mark of ignorance when so applied. Do not say 'Who do you refer to?' but 'To whom do you refer?' Not 'Who is that for?' nor 'Who did you give it to?' but 'For whom is that?' 'To whom did you give it?'"

Moreover, Funk & Wagnalls' "Faulty Diction" (1915), a sort of appendix to the "New Standard Dictionary," of which Dr. Vitzelly is the managing editor, says (page 78): "Who, improperly for whom; as, 'Who do you refer to?' In all such instances if the words are transposed the impropriety becomes obvious."

However, to quote from Horace's "Ars Poetica": "Quandoque bonus dormitat Homerus!"

PRISCIAN.
New York, Dec. 30, 1919.

To the Editor of The Tribune. Sir: Mr. William P. F. Ferguson, in today's Tribune, shows that he is on the right side in regard to Mr. Frank H. Vitzelly's attack on your anti-Cyrillism crusade. But, then, he spoils it all by calling "than" a proposition. Of course, it's a conjunction. Would Mr. Ferguson say "than him"? As to "than whom," we say that, I think, because Milton did.

"... Besidebub ... than whom. Satan except, none higher sat." And we haven't sufficient courage of our convictions to admit that Milton made a mistake. But if you want to start an anti-"than whom" crusade, I'll pledge my support here and now, Milton—and Mr. Ferguson—notwithstanding.

ADELAIDE.
New York, Dec. 29, 1919.

Or Something
Pancho Villa, stirred to emulation by the successful business operations of the Carranza brand of bandits, captured and held for ransom an American citizen. Is it possible that we shall have to let that fellow "dead or alive" go, maybe write him a sharp note or test?

JULIA LANCASTER BLOOD.
New Canaan, Conn., Dec. 28, 1919.