The Sun.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 1914.

Entered at the Post Office at New York as Second Class Mail Matter.

Subscriptions by Mail, Postpaid.

DAILY, Per Month	$0 50
DAILY, Per Year	6 00
SUNDAY, Per Month	25
SUNDAY (to Canada), Per Month	40
SUNDAY, Per Year	2 50
DAILY AND SUNDAY, Per Year	8 50
DAILY AND SUNDAY, Per Month	75
FOREIGN RATES.	
DAILY, Per Month	1 25
SUNDAY, Per Month	65
DAILY AND SUNDAY, Per Month	1 90
THE EVENING SUN, Per Month	25
THE EVENING SUN, Per Year	2 50
THE EVENING SUN (Foreign), Per Mo.	1 03

All checks, money orders, &c., to be made payable to THE SUN.

Published daily, including Sunday, by the Sun Printing and Publishing Association at 170 Nassau street, in the Borough of Manhattan, New York. President and Treasurer, William C. Reick, 170 Nassau street; Vice-President, Edward P. Mitchell, 170 Nassau street; Secretary, C. E. Luxton, 170 Nassau street.

London office, Effingham House, 1 Arundel street, Strand.

Paris office, 6 Rue de la Michodiere, off Rue du Quatre Septembre.

Washington office, Hibbs Building.

Brooklyn office, 106 Livingston street.

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"Reasonable Return" and "Reasonable Rates."

Regarding the issues presented to the Interstate Commerce Commission in the rate case involving the Eastern railroads a correspondent asks:

"Is not the question in its simplest form whether a public utility, restricted or subject to restriction by Government regulation to a fair return on its capital in prosperous times, is entitled to a fair return on its capital at all times? If a return on capital not more than reasonable is one of the determinants of a reasonable rate it is a corollary proposition that a return on capital not less than reasonable is also a determinant. And further, if Government regulation determines rates partly on the basis of holding capital to a reasonable return, does not a reasonable rate include in its definition 'a reasonable return on capital at the particular time'?"

There is no doubt whatever that the Government does fix rates in accordance with its conceptions of the return on capital which such rates will reasonably permit.

Not since the Government took charge of the railways, for that precisely is what it has done through regulative enactment and interpretation, has the Interstate Commerce Commission set out to reduce rates on the ground that the railroads were earning too much money. It has, however, in effect argued at great length and repeatedly that reductions ordered in rates would not prevent railroad earnings from exhibiting a reasonable return on invested capital.

It has argued at even greater length, in refusing to sanction rate increases, that the increases were not needed to enable the railroads to make adequate earnings for their owners. It has at all times in recent years considered earnings in the light of rates and rates in the light of earnings.

Reduced to its lowest terms the course of rate regulation could be described as a consistent and persistent refusal to allow such rates as would yield more than a reasonable return on capital. Is there any other logical conclusion than that railroad rates must not be such as to yield less than a reasonable return on capital?

If it be objected that "reasonable return" is an elastic phrase, capable of a large variety of definition, and that there is not much profit in phrases, the answer might be made that it is not half as elastic a phrase as "reasonable rates." The Interstate Commerce Commission seems to have had no difficulty in guiding its decisions by its notion of reasonable rates, and it should have less trouble in arriving at an agreement as to what is meant by a reasonable return on capital invested in railroad service.

The commission has certain very hard facts to assist it. One is the price which capital commands in the investment markets where the railroads must seek funds in competition with other forms of enterprise. Another is the continuing necessity with which the railroads are confronted of obtaining annually fresh supplies of capital in addition to the amounts already furnished them to establish, maintain and extend the transportation industry.

Just before the European war broke out the Interstate Commerce Commission made an almost grudging acknowledgment that railroad net revenues were insufficient. It had been shown that in the last four years, despite large additional investments of money, railroad net earnings actually decreased. Power cannot be exercised in this country without responsibility. Irresponsible power is something which American public opinion has never tolerated for long. The Government is exercising the power to fix rates and it must own responsibility for the return of earnings possible when rates are multiplied by the volume of traffic.

If the railroads are going to be financed in the future as in the past under a régime of private ownership there must be increased assurance that a reasonable return on present capital invested will accrue from regulated rates. Unless this assurance is vouchsafed the railroads will be unable to obtain the supplies of new capital which they will need annually. To convey this assurance some increase, not a decrease, of net earnings must accompany large increases of capital expenditure by the railroads; and on the present level of rates this assurance is wholly lacking.

Moreover the European war is going to raise the price of capital to all borrowers for years to come. This introduces a double factor of expansion in railroad fixed charges which must be admitted to the reckoning of the rate regulators.

Furthermore, it seems never to have occurred to the Government controllers of the railroad system that the railroads cannot go on forever heaping up their capitalization. Some principle of amortization of capital debt must be adopted in railroad finance. Some provision must be made for the extinction of future indebtedness at least, when that indebtedness is incurred. Earnings which permit a reasonable return on capital invested must sooner or later allow for a reasonable return of invested capital.

The Hostility of Carranza.

General CARRANZA would not be where he is to-day but for the favor of the United States. This country picked him for a winner against VICTORIANO HUERTA, the de facto President of Mexico. It weakened HUERTA'S power in every moral and material way that it could. It gave CARRANZA unstinted moral support and enabled him to obtain all the arms and ammunition he could pay for. Throughout, HUERTA'S attitude toward the United States was depreciatory if not conciliatory. CARRANZA'S was contumacious and provocative if not absolutely menacing.

Success with American support and comfort has not altered CARRANZA'S attitude in any way. He plainly regards this Government as an offensive meddler. His first idea after that of holding on to the supreme government is to rid Mexico of its interference, its influence, its participation in any degree in the settlement of the country's affairs. Above all, he is eager to push American troops off Mexican soil. Plainly his wiser supporters restrain him with difficulty from ordering an attack on the temporary garrison at Vera Cruz.

It is idle to reproach General CARRANZA with ingratitude. True, he made full use of all the opportunities we gave him to organize victory. Why not? It cannot be alleged that he ever showed any cordiality toward Washington or any regard for the advice or opinion of this country. Still less did he accept any prospect of moral hegemony during his régime. If there is any blame to be awarded it seems to attach wholly to our own leaders, who whenever an opportunity presented itself made the wrong guess.

It is quite absurd to gird at CARRANZA. We have him on our hands in spite of determined efforts on his part to keep free of us, and it certainly is not his fault that we are in Vera Cruz. It really looks as if the best thing we have to hope for is rescue from our predicament by the doughty VILLA, once regarded as impossible but apparently far more ready than his quondam ally to help us save our face.

The Menace of Wood Alcohol.

The recent death of fourteen men after drinking wood alcohol brings to mind the warning published under the above caption in THE SUN of September 28. The aim of that warning was to arouse public sentiment to the necessity of greater caution with regard to inhalation of the vapors from this dangerous article, which is used in the manufacture of cheap perfumes that are in daily and constant use by women chiefly, also in the manufacture of varnishes, from the use of which deaths have been reported. It was pointed out that the principal objection to the labelling of wood alcohol emanated from the perfumers, who find it far cheaper than ordinary alcohol. We urged the passage of a law forbidding under penalty of a jail sentence the use of wood alcohol in any preparation without its being distinctly labelled poison. And it was suggested that the use of denatured alcohol in the manufacture of varnishes should be made compulsory.

In view of the fact that it has been demonstrated that human beings are far more liable to be poisoned by wood alcohol than animals, and that the new kind of wood alcohol known as Columbian spirit is an insidious danger because its presence is not betrayed by the peculiar odor of wood alcohol itself, no legal proscription of the use of this dangerous article can be too exacting or severe.

The death of the unfortunate men reported to have succumbed to this poison will doubtless set in motion rigorous action against the dealer and manufacturer of this particular brand of adulterated alcohol. It is to be hoped that the law advised by THE SUN will be enacted though it be "locking the stable after the horse is stolen."

Uniforms for Women.

There is something so naive in the occasional struggles of the Inferior to regulate and command the Superior Sex that these should be set down to simplicity or mere masculine ignorance rather than to impudence. Mr. W. L. GEORGE, a sociological surveyor who builds novels, is therefore pardonable—inevitably he is amusing—when after viewing the petticoat landscape o'er he prescribes in the November *Atlantic Monthly* "Uniforms for Women." It is the female fondness for fine clothes that make Papas growl and Husbands swear; drags women to the street. By costly togs and frequent changes of fashion "women lead humanity nearer to poverty, envy, discontent, frivolity, starvation, prostitution—to general social degradation." In short, drink and the Crime of 1873 and the absence of the single tax seem to be mere froth on the ocean of woe. In "the ghastly picture" are strokes such as this:

"I have private information of an expenditure of $30,000 a year on dress; one of $70,000 is reported to me from America. I have seen a bill for dress and lingerie alone incurred at one shop: $35,000 in twelve months."

What of it, if the buyers "have the price"? What of it, too, if women spend more on dress than men? Such is by no means the invariable fact. Mr. GEORGE forgets the innumerable women who make their own clothes and create for small cost, other than patient and skilful labor, frocks that are wonders to the benighted male and cause heartburnings even among sister connoisseurs. He forgets, too, the sums spent by men, and not by women, on their little habits and diversions. Besides, unless the late PRICE COLLIER was deeply misinformed, the Englishman as a rule gets the lion's share in the matter of personal expenditure, wives and daughters and sisters faring much more meagrely. But hear the solemn voice of sociology:

"The truth is that changes in fashion are a habit and a hysteria, an advertisement, an insult offered by wealth to poverty, a degradation of women's qualities which carries its own penalty in the form of growing mental baseness."

Let snickers on the distaff side be severely repressed. To be in the fashion is degrading and mentally base. "A group of leaders of fashion determined to abolish fashion" is therefore called upon to invent a woman's uniform. Mr. GEORGE modestly offers his own suggestion; says blithely that he "could sketch a dozen uniforms." We leave to the experts the task of picking to pieces the one he does invent, merely remarking that it includes "a fixed type of hat." Menfolks have two fixed types of hat, the derby and the stovepipe, both devised, we are convinced, by the Horned Devil himself, ugly, uncomfortable, a pain to the head and an invitation to the winds, tortures, cruel jokes to which the two legged sheep meekly consents. Such is the crown of manhood. Shall the ornament of more gracious polls be submitted to standardization and uglification?

Bah! The regulators want to regulate everything, but before they exact conformity in vesture feminine suppose they try to standardize the "various and ever mutable, woman," whose cycles of fashion are but the visible reflection of the genius of surprise. Not that uniforms, sure to be most ununiform, wouldn't be well in their way.

Mr. GEORGE has written "A Bed of Roses." He will find an uncommon collection of thorns, not to say needles and hatpins, in it if he doesn't give up reforming and uniforming.

Thanks to an Enemy of Society.

To the humorous and imaginative Massachusetts enemy of society who on Saturday solemnly insisted on the enforcement against Harvard's crimson banners of the prohibition of red flags we offer our sincere thanks and congratulations. He showed up the absurdity of this particular enactment neatly and completely; may he have further opportunity to expose the meddlesome and oppressive statutes that too busy legislatures all over the country delight in putting in the books.

Apparently the authors of this monument to wisdom and intelligence regard the revolutionary symbol as the cause and fountain head of the revolution, a view it is not surprising to find they were able to impress upon the lawmakers. "Suppress the red flag," we can hear them tell the solons, "and there can be no more riots"; and so the thing was done. Thus in dozens of cases futility has found its expression in penal enactments, until the law libraries are fat with ridiculous statutes aimed at utterly inconsequential and trivial practices.

Only occasionally is it possible to display these enactments in their ludicrous phase so that public attention may be centred on them. Whenever such an opportunity presents itself, may our Old Bay State revolutionist be on hand to manage the exhibition.

Where Does the Car Stop?

New York street cars are operated in strict conformity to the near side stop ordinance except in cases in which it pleases the motorman, the company's inspector or the traffic policeman to introduce a rule of reason for its modification. The result is that at important and congested corners nobody can know in advance where the car he wants to ride in will take him aboard.

This introduces into what might be a most prosaic incident of daily life an element of chance and excitement hitherto unknown. Saturday the car stopped on the uptown side of the cross street; yesterday it stopped on the downtown side; a daring gambler would undoubtedly give odds that to-day it will come to a halt in the middle of the street. Regular patrons of the lines derive great pleasure from trying to outguess the powers that determine the car's course, usually losing; and strangers in the city find themselves moved to wonder at the ingenuity that has been expended in devising and maintaining this remarkable puzzle.

The Criminal Insane in New Jersey.

The search for the insane murderer RICHARD VON KREBS draws attention to a weakness in the penal system of New Jersey which, happily, is in the way of being remedied to some extent. The State has had heretofore no asylum for the criminal insane, and the dangerous characters of that class have been confined in the State hospitals at Trenton and Morris Plains. As a result several criminal patients have escaped. There seems to be considerable laxity in institutions where escapes are common, but naturally the precautions are less where no idea of imprisonment is involved in the detention.

In addition to the escaped criminal lunatics others have been released in custody of their friends from time to time. VON KREBS was one of these. All the New Jersey hospitals are so overcrowded that the officials are always ready to find an excuse for getting rid of an inmate. The net result is that the authorities know of sundry persons at large—six is a minimum number—who are insane with criminal tendencies and are therefore a standing menace to the people of the State.

It is rather too late to point out the culpable negligence of this condition. It is on the point of being remedied. The State is building an asylum for the criminal insane at Trenton which will soon be finished. It may appear strange that such provision is being made so tardily, but the fact is the evolution of New Jersey in recent years from semi-rural into what may be called metropolitan conditions has been so rapid that it has taxed her energies and financial resources to keep up with her own growth. Less than a generation ago she had a relatively small and homogeneous population, most peaceably disposed. Her cities, relatively small, were almost free from vicious or criminal elements. To-day population is dense and cosmopolitan, especially in the cities, and all the resulting problems have developed suddenly and exactingly.

In this matter of the criminal insane as in other large questions, such as sanitation, social control, road making and park extension, the State is dealing with the situation in the modern spirit. The only pity is that, owing to restriction of funds, it is not making sufficient allowance for future needs. The new asylum will accommodate 200 patients at the most, and it appears there are already that number in the State hospitals awaiting transfer. Extension of the new buildings is called for before they are finished and waste of money and postponement of efficiency result.

Regardless of the broad reform near at hand, does not the case of VON KREBS call for a roundup of the known criminal lunatics now running free and their confinement somewhere to keep them out of harm's way?

Will Uncle JOE CANNON please try and get it into his wicked old pate that the G. O. P. is no longer a rogue elephant?

Restoration of sugar duties by a Democratic Congress and Administration because of the so-called war deficit may well be regarded, if it comes to pass, as a blending of the bitter with the sweet.

The worst spirit of French anti-clericalism is exhibited in the attacks of the socialist press upon the nuns who are nursing the wounded along the battle lines in northern France. These devoted women are enduring all the sufferings and horrors of war for the sake of their country and of humanity. More than one has given her life in the work. Their crime is that they offer the consolations of religion to men dying and in pain. The hostile newspapers call this an unfair advantage taken by the Church of the opportunity the war has given it. Of course religion is always at the height of its influence in times of woe. It is a natural advantage founded in human nature, and it is the very substance of faith and piety to press the advantage, thus awakening hope in the sufferers' breasts instead of agony and despair—hope in the future, hope here and hope hereafter. The unimaginative type of mind that fails to see beauty and good in this when hardly any other beauty or good survives is a baleful and destructive influence. Its true description is not anti-clerical but inhuman. The narrow bigotry which it propagates is far more terrible than that which it imputes to those who disagree with its teachings. Its ultimate triumph in national life would mean complete servitude of the soul.

It must afford considerable amusement to the cynical to find the enlightened ENVER taking the place of old ABDUL HAMID in the pillory as the champion bad man of Turkey. Whatever the faults of the "Red Sultan" may have been it is not easy to imagine him embroiling the remnant of the Ottoman Empire in a war by which it stands to gain nothing and to lose its existence. HAMID was cruel, but he was the shrewdest diplomat of his day.

A new demand on American generosity is presented by Ambassador GERARD, who reveals the wretched plight of the Belgian prisoners of war in Germany. There are 35,000 of them, and their homeless Government has been unable apparently to supply any of their needs, whereas France, England and Russia have taken care of their men through the Spanish Ambassador. With the rigors of a German winter close at hand these victims of the war must incur the severest suffering unless outside benevolence help them. But the requisitions on benevolence grow so fast that it is a question how long there will be resources to meet them, however keen the spirit of giving. Every day reveals a new area of want and suffering, and every day increases the drain upon the fountains of relief.

Not to Be Starved Out.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* To say that Mr. Murphy is strong in his friendships and unflinching in his enmities opens an avenue of replies that could not possibly be accommodated for space. If Mr. W. B. Ellison will precisely define the sort of "friendships" he mentions I will admit the unflinching character of the enmities.

A vital principle of political leadership is the power to make you believe that your leader can do something to you if you desert. It is not unusual at times to discover that he can do nothing for you. That is Mr. Murphy's position to-day. Tammany has retreated into its main fortification to-day, but prefers to starve within its walls rather than risk annihilation without. Profitable treachery is impossible. It sticks and starves and so the leader remains.

The brand of the organization is upon each of its members. There may be mutterings about the lack of provisions, but there is no prospect of a full and satisfying ration in the camp of the enemy. You cannot starve Tammany out.

IRVING E. DOOR.

NEW YORK, November 7.

Why, Soldiers, Why.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Please may I say to "M. M.," about her protest against the use of "Tipperary" on festive occasions, that "Tipperary" is no dirge? Its cheerful inconsequence is what makes it popular with Tommy Atkins, who is not a man to sniffle over his emotions. I think he would like to know that his tuneful ditty was chanted in Broadway as well as in the trenches.

NEW YORK, November 8. M. WHITE.

Who Was Old Roper?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Will you look in the "Dictionary of Unprofane Profanity" and find out what is the origin of "Dang old Roper"? Who was "Roper" and why should he be "danged"?

F. F. Y.

RICHMOND, Va., November 7.

Suffering Humanity.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* In estimating the reasons for the "rise" taken out of the Democrats by the voters last Tuesday don't overlook the potentialities of Haman and his gibbet. J. P. D.

NEW YORK, November 8.

Perambulatory.

I met a Cheddar cheese one day,
Out strolling for the air,
And at its side there proudly walked
A robust Camembert.

I promptly gave them right of way,
Because it seemed quite fair
And logical for them to be
Out walking for the air.

H. S. H.

RELIEF FOR THE BELGIANS.

The Generous Contribution Made by the Nova Scotians.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* The Rockefeller Foundation is taking up an enormous job and one well worthy of it in the present movement to aid the Belgians. As you so clearly state, this magnificent action should spur other Americans to more liberal giving, rather lean cause them to regard the needs of the Belgians as practically taken care of.

You may not be aware that the Premier of this province issued on September 18 a personal appeal to the people of Nova Scotia for food and clothing to be sent to the women and children of Belgium, and as a result of this appeal there was gathered together within the next month over $35,000 in cash and 5,000 tons of useful gifts.

The steamer Tremorvah, carrying a part of this material, sailed from Halifax on October 29 for London, to be delivered to the Belgian Minister. Its cargo consisted of the following goods, which will be distributed as he directs, probably through the American Minister in Brussels:

One thousand seven hundred tons of potatoes, 140 tons of flour, 4,000 cases and packages of clothing, 1,000 drums of cheese, 250 barrels of fish, 6,000 cases of canned goods, &c.

This magnificent gift came from a province with a population of only 465,000. If the 90,000,000 people in the United States respond as well as have a scant half million in Nova Scotia the hunger of the Belgians will soon be satisfied.

The departure of this ship from Halifax seems to have been unnoticed in the United States papers. I hope that you can find space to call attention to it and give due credit to the Premier and the generous people of this province, whose gifts are, I believe, the first to have been despatched. I hope also that the example of this small province may prove an inspiration to the multitude of generous people at home.

AN AMERICAN IN NOVA SCOTIA.

STELLARTON, N. S., November 5.

MADE IN THIS COUNTRY.

What Is the Proper Mark and Superscription of Such Goods?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Now that the subject of marking goods manufactured in this country is receiving attention it occurs to an observer that there may be some difficulty in securing a fitting mark to identify goods as having been made here.

The marks generally used and discussed now are: "Made in America" and "Made in U. S. A." Neither seems fit to be adopted for countrywide use, because both are ambiguous. Even if through our inaccurate use the word "America" has come to mean our own country to us, still "Made in America" does not actually mean "Made in the United States of America" and would apply to any nation on this continent. "Made in U. S. A." of course designates this country, but if the Union of South Africa at some unknown future date starts to market products it can correctly use the same mark.

This last seems rather far fetched and of course we cannot help it if the Union of South Africa can use our beloved "U. S. A.," but the business industry here has always invented very individual marks for its products, and its ingenuity should be able to devise some mark that is distinctly our own. Humble suggestions are: "Manufactured in United States" contracted into "Manunista," also "Unistamade."

RANDOLPH WILLIAM SHANNON.

NEWARK, N. J., November 7.

THE ELECTION.

Protest of the Empty Dinner Pail Against Too Full a Statute Book.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Great is reform, great is managing the other man's business, great is wholesale legislation, but greatest of all is the awakening of the people to the simple elementary fact that it is capital, not legislation, that fills the dinner pail.

Virtue cannot be legislated into the minds of men, particularly on an empty stomach. Man is sincere in hunger, in liquor and in the presence of death, but only very rarely in the voting booth. The recent election, however, was simply an outburst of sincerity. It was a demand of the people throughout the country for a return of the days of Republican prosperity, when the dinner pail was full, when business was alive, when "malefactors of great wealth" were building up industries instead of fighting indictments, in short, a demand for a return of the times when we were more comfortable than now, even though not so high minded.

While the victory is to the Republican party, it is the voice of human nature that was speaking. L. FORDCLIFF.

UTICA, November 7.

BORES.

The Nutmeg Sociologist Discourses of Two Varieties.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* There are two classes of bores that I would like to have added to the "little list" in "The Mikado": First, the intellectual know-it-alls who tell you what kind of verse a beautiful poem is instead of showing at least a shred of literary decency in appreciating its beauty; second, the musical geniuses who, at the symphony when the mellifluous harmony is falling on your barbarous ears, tell you in a sonorous, stridulous and analytical voice all about the movements of the compositions, using all their technical expressions. If such people were condemned "to a life sentence at teaching," as Mr. W. J. Henderson suggests, it would do much to raise the people from the nadir of despair to which some of our modern literary and musical geniuses have condemned them by their "worship of an echo in the crowd" and chase the lines from the brow of the true artist whose eyes have been "charged with unshed tears."

JAMES D. DEWELL, Jr.

NEW HAVEN, Conn., November 6.

"Rule," Not "Rules."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Will you permit me to point out that "Britannia, Rule the Waves," is the correct wording of that song, not "Rules"? It is an invocation and not a boast. It seems incredible that one possessing a such high degree of "Kultur" as that exhibited by your correspondent "C. J. S." should misquote through ignorance. Possibly his letter was mailed at Sayville, L. I., or is it, perchance, a specimen of German "thoroughness"? B. R.

NEW YORK, November 8.

Rules and Waves.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Apropos of the violation of Belgium the following is being passed around:

"Britannia rules the waves,
And Germany waives the rules."

NEW YORK, November 8. P. L.

Another O. L. G.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* My friend Dr. David F. Atwater, the sole surviving member of the Yale class of 1839, passed his ninety-seventh birthday at Springfield, Mass. He is also the oldest alumnus of the Yale Medical School of the class of 1842. He is hale and hearty, has all his faculties, can read without glasses, and according to the Springfield *Union* is very much interested in the coming Yale-Harvard football match. He also holds all the popular opinions concerning the European war and other matters, both religious and social.

SIMEON B. CHITTENDEN.

NEW YORK, November 8.

Kriegspiel.

The strongest forts are little use,
They offer short resistance,
For Krupp's projectiles play the deuce
At an amazing distance.
The cruisers have small chance to fight
With enemies and pink 'em
When these with weapons out of sight
Have found the way to sink 'em.
As Sherman taught us long ago
That war was then a hell game,
So German guns would seem to show
That now it is a shell game.

GEORGE B. MORRWOOD.

THE ESSENTIALS OF SOUTH AMERICAN TRADE.

Observations by a Man Who Understands the Conditions of Success.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* The practical and commercial results of having travelled through every country south of the Caribbean Sea, not merely touching at the capitals but travelling thousands of miles on horseback in the interior, show unequivocally that there is for the United States a good and wholesome trade in these countries, provided that we handle it in a good and wholesome way.

Cart tail methods of doing business, brass band procedure of selling corn cures and many other well known tactics significant of some of our American enterprises will produce only unsatisfactory results, not only in the immediate transaction but in the damage incurred as the pendulum swings back, as it must, in seeking its normal position.

The essential features for trade with South America might be put in the following form of advice:

Send better men to these countries, send men with more admiration, more understanding and more observation and with less criticism and less conceit.

Manufacturers and producers in the United States who seek business in South America should bear in mind that over three hundred years of trading with Europe has established a confidence in these countries which will be very hard for us to reach in the few years of our Latin American activities.

We are often inclined to consider South Americans as half barbarians and half civilized, but it should be remembered that Lima, Peru, had a university when the Indians were running naked over Manhattan Island. I remember on one occasion being reproved in a manner which I will not soon forget by a man much my senior and to whom I had thus expressed myself. He said: "Do not call us barbarians because we disagree with you, or because we do not always conform to your ideas and habits. I will give you an instance of where perhaps you Americans are barbarians." In his following words we have an excellent mirror in which to see ourselves as the South American sees us. He said: "You have 95,000,000 people in the United States who eat because it is 12 o'clock."

The significance of that expression conveys the idea of the mental process of these people. They eat when they are hungry; they ask for goods when and how they want them, and they know what they want.

They want to deal with the United States, they prefer to deal with the United States; but there must be harmony and reciprocity in the transaction. We cannot expect to sell them goods and take their gold in payment therefor and then force them to borrow that gold from us at usurious rates in order to develop their own vast countries. Few Americans realize that Brazil alone exceeds by 200,000 square miles the area of the entire United States.

As I understand trade, it means the exchange of something you do not want for something you do want, and my observations of the export situation have taught me to look with more fear upon the commercial policy of Germany than that of England. It is not generally known that there are two representatives who patrol entire South America and who report directly to the Kaiser. They see the buyer, they see his customers, they see the banker, they see the men who extend and require credits, and so on down the commercial line. They hear his story, they meet and know him personally and form therefrom their estimate of his moral fibre and financial responsibility. In this moral feature lies perhaps the most striking difference between our method and the European method of trading in South America. The personal integrity of the buyer has considerably more weight with Europe than it has in America, and my years of experience in these countries compels me to say that opinions reached by this method have been the more correct and are still more to be depended upon than a strictly commercial rating.

Another instance I recall which emphasizes this phase of the South American merchant: it is much easier to secure his written contract than his word of honor, the reason being that a written contract means only what it says, whereas a verbal agreement is "mucho mas delicado" (much more delicate).

The people of these countries are good people; they are kind, but they are shrewd, and any narrowness on our part or any attitude consisting in the least of trickery will not be successful. Straightforwardness has its par value with them as in all parts of the world, but formulas of trickery best known in the United States are very mild concoctions compared with the ingredients which the South American has at his disposal for producing a very palatable mixture should the situation call for that prescription.

When we have improved the personnel of Americans seeking business in South America, as we have improved the personnel of the American consular service, we shall find in these people an attitude of appreciation and esteem which one cultivated person recognizes in and assumes toward another.

Until such time it is useless to seek her trade on the basis of "$— U. S. currency, cash against bill of lading, f. o. b. alongside steamer New York, — per cent. extra for ocean shipment."

ALFRED J. THOMPSON.

NEW YORK, November 7.

British Buttons on Martial Jersey Chests.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* I wish to enlighten you that I am the man who detected that the buttons made in England appear on the U. S. militia uniforms.

I noticed the statement in your paper by that patriotic citizen, as no doubt the incident reached his ears as I remarked the case to a good many of my friends. I appreciate his feelings towards such conditions that prevail in our country, which I consider is not a scandal but a disgrace for a American soldier to wear a uniform with English make buttons.

I lodged a protest with our Governor as he is chief commander of the N. J. militia and I also enclosed one of the button's with a card board stamped "made in England" and button engraved in the back "A. J. Gaunt & Sons Limited, England." NOAH GEIGER, D. O. S.

P. S. Member of the militia N. J. N. G. First Regiment.

NEWARK, N. J., November 7.

Tired of Teacher-Mothers.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* I am so tired of the teacher-mother question. Let women who wish to bear children resign and give many a young struggling teacher a chance. Naturally a woman's husband should support her; even a teacher-mother's.

AN OLD FASHIONED WOMAN.

NEW YORK, November 8.

The White Plains Muse.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* To those Republican "leaders" who are now the loudest I take particular pleasure in dedicating the following doggerel, "To the Republican Party," assuming it, in principle, to exemplify the mental attitude of the average independent citizen to the now victorious host:

I wouldn't get up and holler,
That is, if I were you,
And tell people that you did it,
For you know that isn't true.
So don't strut round and bluster
And make yourself look tall,
For the saving remnant called the independent
Did the business after all.
You've got a scaly record, you are a chap
of no renown;
We've only used one fool to run another
down.
You don't possess our full confidence, we
hold you by a chain,
You betrayed us when we trusted you and
will not suffer it again.
If you behave no better than when in power
before,
You'll find your hide again tacked up on
the smoke house door.

B. CODINGTON.

WHITE PLAINS, November 7.

PUBLIC SERVICE BILL DRAWN AS A MODEL

Seth Low and W. R. Willcox Make Report on Civic Federation Measure.

RADICAL IDEAS DEVELOPED

The National Civic Federation has had its executive council prepare a model public service commission bill. It has also just issued a report upon this bill by Seth Low, its president, and William R. Willcox, ex-chairman of the New York city Public Service Commission.

The federation studied public and private operation of municipal utilities here and in England and its commission practically agreed that in the United States under existing conditions of municipal politics private operation would be preferable to public ownership, provided only that there were sufficient regulation to protect the citizens against too high rates and poor service.

Nine men were then set to work to draft a model utilities bill. They were Emerson McMillin of the American Light and Traction Company, chairman of the council; Franklin Q. Brown of Redmond & Co.; John H. Gray, head of the department of economics and political science in the University of Minnesota; Edward M. Bassett, ex-member of the New York city Public Service Commission; Halford Erickson, member of the Wisconsin Railroad Commission; William D. Kerr, a Chicago lawyer; Blewett Lee, general solicitor of the Illinois Central Railroad; Milo R. Maltbie, member of the New York city Public Service Commission, and Arthur Williams, chairman of the Association of Edison Electric Companies and himself an engineer.

Provisions of the Bill.

The bill provides for a salaried commission of five appointed by the Governor for five years, the chairman to be elected by the members. None of the members is to be interested in or associated with any public utility under the commission's jurisdiction. The commission has power to regulate and supervise any public utility, to inspect books and examine witnesses and receive complaints. It may fix rates. It may determine the division of expense to be assigned to utilities rendering joint service.

It is empowered to supervise the issuance of stock and loans, but the State shall not guarantee stocks. It provides against issuance of bonds for more money than is actually required. Provision for amortization of discount and all expenses connected with such issue may be required by the commission.

Funds from stocks and bonds must not be applied to purposes not specified by the commission, and upon demand utilities must account to the commission for proceeds of such disposal.

To the model bill as a whole Mr. Maltbie dissents; Prof. Gray and Mr. Bassett join with him in three particular objections. All the others named concur heartily, although the bill is necessarily full of compromises.

Mr. Maltbie, Mr. Bassett and Prof. Gray point out that the bill does not give a public service commission jurisdiction over holding companies. They are alarmed also at possibilities of overcapitalizing consolidated companies. The bill as now drawn, they remark, "opens the gate very wide for stock watering in providing that the capitalization may equal the value of the property. Value may be high because of large dividends due to excessive rates. Capitalizing according to value rather than according to investment may be a means of perpetuating excessive rates." They would in no case allow the capitalization of a merger to exceed the sum of the capital of the merging companies.

As for the model bill's treatment of franchise grants, the three dissenters say sharply: "We particularly object to the provisions * * * which undertake virtually to deprive cities of all control over franchise grants affecting their own streets. Any private corporation now operating a public utility may, under the proposed law, get a new franchise without the consent of the municipality, abutting property owners or the State itself. All it has to do is to file a document, and ipso facto it gets a franchise. In many States such a provision is unconstitutional * * * It flagrantly violates the principle of home rule."

Regulation and Capital.

The whole contention in framing the bill reduced itself to this issue: The more radical members of the council are inclined to press regulation of utilities to the limit even if it makes it impossible to secure private capital to own and run them; to some of these men public ownership and operation are really preferable.

The other framers, some of them men familiar with the task of interesting private capital in this field, are convinced that too much regulation will permanently repel capital; therefore, they would regulate as lightly as possible; some hardly believe in regulation at all. The National Civic Federation has not itself indorsed the bill.

Mr. Low and Mr. Willcox, commenting on the model measure, foresee a struggle between civil service and organized labor if municipal ownership shall make serious progress in this country. If organized labor should win such a conflict they think the sequel will be the placing of every public employment upon a military basis. They say:

"In San Francisco a street railway system has been taken over by the public and is now publicly owned and operated. By consequence it comes under the operation of the State civil service law. The application of this law to the men employed by the private company when taken over resulted in the loss of their places by many members of the local union of street car employees. The effect upon the union was so serious that the American Federation of Labor has sent a commission to Europe this year to study particularly this aspect of the question.

"Without attempting to anticipate the report of this commission, it seems to lie upon the surface that the civil service system and regulation of rates of pay by law are inconsistent with the methods and objects of collective bargaining by organized labor. In this apparently irreconcilable conflict which system in this country would be likely to go by the board? * * * If the civil service system were to be broken down the country would be in danger of returning to the demoralizing doctrine 'To the victors belong the spoils,' with the spoils multiplied so as to include every position necessitated by the operation of the public utility, whatever it may be.

"If it be imagined that collective bargaining, including the right to strike, may be permanently enjoyed in connection with the public service any one who thinks this should recall what happened in democratic France when the railroad employees of France went upon a general strike. The men were ordered to the colors and the strike was broken.

"The attempt to carry out the methods of collective bargaining and the right of striking in connection with the service of the public is the pathway toward placing every public employment upon a military basis. * * * The political consequences * * * are certain to be not less vital. It was said by some one at the time of the Hayes-Tilden controversy in connection with the Presidency that if the political patronage had been twice as large as it then happened to be it would have been impossible to have escaped civil war."