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Paying for Years of Folly.

A letter printed in another column relates the typical experience of an American firm ready and anxious to sell its goods in a South American market eager to receive them. None of the ingenious explanations of our export difficulties fits the case. The trouble was purely in the field of transportation. It was almost impossible to get cargo space. Sea freight rates were extortionate. When this problem had been dealt with a still worse tangle arose over getting the material to the seaboard.

Thus in the greatest opportunity that has ever confronted the business men of this country our traders find their hands tied if they try to do business at new stands. That maritime conditions should be abnormal might fairly be expected; that our land transportation facilities should be totally inadequate is a scathing commentary on the failure of governmental regulation of American railroads. The programme of that regulation has contained no single constructive feature, and until it is reformed all the advice to exporters might as well be unuttered. Charity is not the only virtue that begins at home.

Straight Talk From One of the Big Four.

President W. G. LEE of the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen spoke last week on the Adamson law to the members of the Central States Conference on Rail and Water Transportation. One paragraph of his address revealed an understanding of the public attitude toward the chaotic conditions he and his associates threatened to create last summer in the transportation industry of the nation, and it is for that reason worthy of reproduction:

"Both sides [railroad managers and railroad workers] are suspicious of the result of arbitration and are not in favor of continuing the present plan.

"But they will have to agree on something that will, in some degree, appease public demand that 'strikes must not occur on railways,' or some one will do it for them, and, most likely, in a way they will not like."

There is in this declaration nothing of the spirit which frequently characterizes the utterances of labor leaders and labor employers. Mr. LEE, whose devotion to more pay for less work for the men he represents has been adequately and frequently shown, has recognized the existence of a third party to disputes between the proprietors and the servants of public utilities, and he has not refused to acknowledge it.

As to the inevitable adoption of a method to prevent strikes on railways, we believe Mr. LEE is right; and we wonder whether he sees clearly the heavy responsibility the situation unavoidably imposes on him and the association he captains.

Those Added Billion Drinks.

Confusion of mind flows from the figures used by Colonel BRYAN in Washington and Colonel RUPPERT in this city. Colonel BRYAN repeated, presumably on good authority, the statement that a majority of the inhabitants of the United States are living in territory wherein the sale of intoxicating drink is prohibited by law. Colonel RUPPERT quoted, presumably correctly, figures from reports of the Commissioner of Internal Revenue showing that in the year ended June 30 last tax was paid on 11,602,061 more gallons of whiskey than in the next previous year. Is the increase of the extent of "dry" territory the cause of the increase of the consumption of whiskey, and if not, what is the cause?

The amount of the increase in whiskey consumption is not a trifle, even if we consider not a half but our entire population. It is not an increase reasonably accounted for by unusual prosperity. The standard American whiskey bottle holds one-fifth of a gallon, and it has been found, we are informed, that averaging one, two, three and four finger portions a whiskey bottle is emptied in eighteen draughts upon its contents. Thus it is seen that in the year ended June 30, 1916, Americans took 1,044,239,400 more drinks of whiskey than they did in the year ended June 30, 1915.

Colonel RUPPERT says that in dry territory whiskey is substituted for beer by persons who will drink; the greater bulk of the malt beverage makes beer much more difficult than whiskey to smuggle, the advantage to whiskey in this deliverance being about as one to sixteen. This may explain in part, but it leaves much to be investigated. We are not yet convinced that all beer drinkers deprived by law of their favorite tipple turn to whiskey for comfort, or that if they do they are so incautious as to consume more than a billion drinks annually. This intolerable deal of drink has not yet been accounted for by competent students.

"To New York."

Poor little old New York, slapped on one cheek and turning the other, always lambasted but holding her head serenely against adverse winds, must wince, if she has a hide that can be pierced, under a new barb hurled from the Golden State.

From Stanislaus county, California, where vineyards thrive and sweet wine flows, where fig trees grow and cast a shade for every man's home, comes this voice:

"Lo, we have listened; listen to us now:
Thou wearest still that name upon thy brow,
The name of Empire that our fathers loathed,
Since well they knew what wickedness it clothed."

Thus the *Courier* of Ceres, the seat of Stanislaus peace and plenty, on much of its first page—and print paper going up by leaps and bounds—calls to us in an address "To New York" by poet ROBERT WHITAKER.

Raising his finger and looking little old New York sternly in the eyes, Mr. WHITAKER says:

"Mark this, Manhattan, known to wider fame
Since thou hast doffed the humble, honest name
And taken title from an English lord
Of hapless family, and of faithless word."

How can a town be held to responsibility for its ancestors any more than a person?

But laying this foundation he goes gravely and severely on:

"Thine are the millions wave-borne to our coast;
And thine the wealth none other yet could boast;
Nor Thebes nor Memphis, Babylon or Rome,
The Rand, the Klondike, or the sands of Nome.

"Yet out of thee no WASHINGTON has come;
No LINCOLN voiced the heart throbs of the dumb;
The country village gave thee BEECHER'S tongue,
And GREELEY'S pen, and songs by BRYANT sung."

That would seem enough of harshness to say to anybody; but it is not enough for Mr. WHITAKER. He only dips deeper into the vitriol and sears the hide of his victim:

"And thou hast given us for such as these
Thy Tweeds and Tammanys, world dregs and lees;
Thy buccaneers, financial, MORGAN, GOULD,
And all that crew by ROCKEFELLER schooled."

Under this rebuke coming over the high Rockies and across the breadth of the continent "let the galled jade wince." How stings the barbed arrow dipped in the yellow sands of the golden San Joaquin valley!

Parting he leaves this message:

"There is no EMPIRE State, and shan not be,
While these UNITED States are truly free;
No State to queen or lord it o'er the rest;
So speaks the spirit of the free born West."

No, never, so long as the cry of "Eureka" rings in the foothills of the Sierras, the great bear growls among the vineyards and fig trees of Stanislaus and the guardian eagle of Ceres shrieks from the Calaveras crags!

Dr. Zimmermann's Charges.

What answer has Britain's Government to make to the statement of Dr. ALFRED ZIMMERMANN, German Secretary for Foreign Affairs, that "hostile submarines" sank by gunfire or torpedoed the German merchantmen Burgermeister, Votmelle, Dorita, Elbe and Hollandia without warning? If this is true lives must have been lost, possibly American lives. England should come into court with clean hands. It would be monstrous if she has been engaged in the practices set forth in Dr. ZIMMERMANN'S indictment. Not even a plea of retaliation because Germany had sunk merchantmen without warning in the "war zone" could be accepted.

It has been said that "by the edict of February 4, 1915, the German Government officially repudiated the responsibilities of civilization and served notice on all merchantmen that they were liable to be sunk by a hidden weapon from an unseen ship without warning." That is what happened in a great many cases. But Great Britain's right to retaliate has not been recognized by neutral Governments, nor has such a right been asserted, so far as we know. What, then, has Great Britain to say about the terrible accusation of Dr. ZIMMERMANN? While it is true that he presents no evidence, does not even indicate the nationality of submarines committing the atrocities, the British Government should nevertheless, for the sake of its good name, publish any information in its possession about the destruction of the German merchantmen named.

When Dr. ZIMMERMANN deals with the attacks of British merchant ships upon German submarines it seems to be in a controversial spirit. He cites no cases, but affirms that "England has repeatedly announced that all English ships ought to be ready to destroy German submarines wherever they find them"—merchant ships, that is to say. "Quite recently Lord ROBERT CECIL in the British Parliament gave expression to this view," declares Dr. ZIMMERMANN. Lord ROBERT CECIL will no doubt make answer himself, but did he advocate aggression or self-defence by British merchantmen? Were they to go round seeking enemy submarines and sinking them? That would be a dangerous and unprofitable enterprise. But to resist visitation and take chances of being shelled or torpedoed, that is another matter. It would not be considered a "crime," as Germany holds it to be, if the enemy ship were a cruiser and not a submarine. About the security of that type of war vessel Germany is sensitive.

The truth is that before Germany began her "submarine warfare" in the "war zone," destroying enemy merchantmen without warning, no British ship owner offered a prize for the ramming of a German submarine by a private ship, and certainly no "official person" ever urged it. Comment is not necessary. It should be noted that the German Government in its communication of May 5, 1916, to the United States dealing with the Sussex case gave the guaranty that merchant vessels "both within and without the area declared a naval war zone shall not be sunk without warning and without saving human lives unless the ship attempts to escape or offers resistance." Therefore if Germany has not violated this agreement any attempt of a British merchantman to sink a German submarine by shell fire or ramming was utterly indefensible.

In England's Extremity.

By far the most distressing news that has come from any of the belligerent nations is contained in the appeal made by BURTON CHADWICK, the British Director of Munitions and Overseas Transport, to his fellow Englishmen to abolish afternoon tea. If it were told that LLOYD GEORGE had tweaked the King's nose the world would not be more astonished.

England under a dictator, England without spirits, England without beer, the Tower of London a moving picture theatre, Westminster Abbey confided to the suffragettes; none of these things would startle the world as much as the suggestion that 5 o'clock tea shall be sacrificed. Mr. CHADWICK, whose felicitous title accurately reflects the importance of his official post, believes that foodstuffs and transport utilities would be saved by the adoption of the course he suggests. But at what a loss! The very backbone of British institutions is threatened by an iconoclast who wants to win a mere war.

Gog and Magog will not permit it. Big Ben will go on strike and strike no more. The novelists of the empire will demand expatriation rather than sacrifice one of their most useful properties. Let Mr. CHADWICK reflect; let him call to mind what interference with tea did to the American Colonies. He is on dangerous ground, and history cautions him to withhold his rash and destroying hand.

Has Operetta Departed?

It begins to look as if a pleasant form of theatrical diversion composed of light music and comic text had disappeared altogether from the stage. Yet operetta, as this blend was called, succeeded for years in supplying much harmless gayety to the world. There is of course a substitute for comic opera, for such a combination of amusing elements is more in demand than ever in this world of woe. But operetta in the shape that it once wore has all but faded from behind the footlights.

It is not difficult to discover the causes for this latest development in the theatre's art. After OFFENBACH and MEILHAC and HALEVY had given the world the immortal series of opera bouffes which form a separate period in the history of the musical theatre, there came in English the creations of GILBERT and SULLIVAN, and they were the most characteristic that the English stage ever produced. Then there were always the sturdy musical perennials that came from the banks of the Wien to complete the three types of operetta that amused the world. In this country one school of musical play was about as popular as the other, and every one was enjoyed without prejudice.

There had long ceased to be the strictness of form at one time characteristic of these operettas when there came as marked a change in the musical side of them. The dance rhythms had always been a mark of the Viennese products, while the music of Sir ARTHUR SULLIVAN bore the unmistakable peculiarities of the English composers. Just as distinctive had always been the music of OFFENBACH. But there was destined to appear in the scores of operettas an element which would prove too strong for any of their musical idioms and finally have its influence in driving this form of musical entertainment from the stage. This of course was the prevailing syncopation.

To it may be traced the decline of story in an operetta text, since ragtime could not even wait on the amount of fiction necessary for even the least pretentious comic opera. The musical comedy in which the text was made more important than the music had its origin in London. But the review which has finally succeeded to the place of operetta and musical comedy came from Paris. So it is really to France that the credit must be accorded for having given the final thrust to operetta.

The review which is familiar enough nowadays to the New York public has survived from the mixture of operetta and musical play. It flourishes inevitably because it was capable of the greatest amount of expansion. It is such a flexible medium that any amount of syncopation may be introduced. There need indeed be nothing but syncopation [illegible] throughout the whole even[illegible]

Without the necessity of telling a story or satirizing some prevailing social mania or burlesquing mythology, there could be ragtime without limit. It could dominate every scene and not a note in the score need be of any other kind of music. Such a form of musical entertainment was found ideal. It suited exactly the present taste for syncopated modes. So the review has come into the field and there it evidently will stay. Who, then, killed Cock Robin? Unluckily it seems to be syncopation that ended the life and popularity of operetta. It is unlikely, moreover, that there will be a renewed taste for this form of entertainment until the modernized echo of the tom-tom has ceased to sound in our ears.

What music is sweeter than the ring of the skate steel on good black ice? When the red ball is up youth is happy and middle age is young.

In spite of the lack of snow shovellers the plight of the town does not appear to be much worse than is to be expected after a winter storm. Even an old New Yorker six years off the farm may get used to a few inches of snow and adapt himself to it.

Ex-Secretary of War GARRISON is hopelessly behind the times when he objects to United States participation in a "world alliance." Is he unaware of the progress that has been made since WASHINGTON warned his countrymen against entangling alliances? "Mind your own business" is the counsel of a confirmed reactionary.

Saw Belgians driven in herd.—*Newspaper headline.*

Some novelist of the near future may be inspired to the creation of a "character" that will put Simon Legree in the shade.

President WILSON may find himself in a row with the Democrats in Congress over State rights. In spite of the increase of the Federal power the old doctrine is not dead, and the possible effect of regulation from Washington on internal political and social conditions in the States does not appeal to all of Mr. WILSON'S partisans. They have excellent reasons for wishing to maintain the autonomy of the communities in which they live.

We shall be grateful to any psychologist who can satisfactorily explain the workings of the minds of children when they see Santa Claus of the Bell and Kettle remove his beard for some such unsanitly purpose as the insertion of a fresh quid. At what age does the desire to be fooled begin or end?

Senator MARTINE made an impassioned appeal for a "wet" capital.—*Washington despatch.*

Farmer JIM acts as if there had been no election in New Jersey.

Mr. SUNDAY, invited to perform in Newark, declined because Newarkers who want to see his show must either have done so at Philadelphia, Paterson or Trenton, or intend doing so in New York. "When I stand before people who have heard me previously," he said, "it takes the punch out of me." Is this a delicately diplomatic way of saying that the evangelist has given up hope for Newark?

GONZALES NOT HOSTILE.

He Proposed Diplomacy to Bring About the Withdrawal of Pershing.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* In THE SUN of December 13 a quotation from the proclamation of General Gonzales, provisional Governor of Chihuahua, appears under the headline: "General Gonzales to Help Oust Pershing." The actual quotation calls attention to the disgrace of the desecration of Mexican soil by American troops; blames this desecration on the deeds of Villa, and praises the efforts of Carranza, whose "forces have not a single moment ceased to work toward a solution of the same by diplomatic ways, preserving national pride and autonomy."

Judging from the quotation which you gave, this proclamation is a perfectly correct and patriotic appeal to the people of Chihuahua to support the policy of adjusting difficulties with the United States by diplomacy, and thus to secure the withdrawal of the Pershing forces by our Government. It is a position which Mexican and American alike can applaud. Do you regard it as in accord with that high standard of ethics which we rightly expect of a paper of the standing of THE SUN to place over such a news item a caption which certainly gives your readers the impression that the Governor of Chihuahua is planning to help make war on the Pershing force? Surely there are difficulties enough in the way of a reasonable settlement of Mexican difficulties without our newspapers distorting proper official pronouncements in such fashion as to stir up resentful feelings against Mexico.

H. R. MUSSEY.

NEW YORK, December 16.

Virtues of a Model Husband.

From the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

I never fuss,
I never fight,
I always come
Straight home at night.
I always give
My wife my pay,
Nor hold it up
A single day.

I have no lodge,
I have no club;
Perhaps you think
That I'm a dub.
Mayhap I am.
But even so,
It raves me lots
Of fuss and woe.

No crap games
Out behind our shed
With Jim and Bill
And Tom and Ned.
Those good old sports
I used to know,
For wife says
They've got to go.

And, sad to say,
Her word is law,
Or she says she'll
Go home to ma.
Perhaps you think
That I'm too nice,
But I'm for peace
At any price.

WILLIAM D. NIVIN.

THE PERILS OF FREIGHT.

Ship and Rail Difficulties Inhibit American Enterprise Abroad.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Recently and frequently there have appeared references to the fact that American manufacturers are not obtaining South American trade. This is attributed to an unwillingness to meet conditions to which they are accustomed. It is said that the American manufacturer will not make the merchandise as the South Americans wish it made, and insists on selling it according to American methods; that American firms will not extend credit and do not pack or crate merchandise properly for shipment.

Now we are manufacturers of merchandise which is badly needed in South America. We are willing to extend credit, we are willing to ship properly; but we cannot do business because of the freight conditions. We made one shipment and tried to secure freight rates. After the freight rates were secured the English Government seized the vessel and the freight rates were raised about fifty per cent. Then the ship sailed about a month later than the time specified, and in the meantime the car containing our material became mixed up in one of the many embargoes which the railroads are putting on and taking off continuously.

I am writing this letter because I think that the failure of the manufacturers of this country to take advantage of the South American trade is due almost entirely to the lack of American or competitive bottoms; and if these existed the other conditions would be satisfactorily met. One can receive correct information as to the financial standing of South American firms through the National City Bank, and there are few merchants here who will not extend credit to good people even though the term is longer than usual.

LAURENCE OTTINGER.

Federal Parquetry Manufacturing Company.

NEW YORK, December 16.

SHOE PRICES.

Government Embargo on Leather Would Cut Two Ways.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* All this talk about a Government embargo on leather, rubber and other supplies is nonsense. The great law of supply and demand is prevailing. One firm has 30,000 dozen of glazed kid coming through its factory. This kid is a low quality, normal price 15 cents a foot. An English firm has made an offer of 70 cents a foot for this kid stock, and that will doubtless prevail because nobody on this side up to date has seen fit to meet this price. There are four customers for every skin, instead of one as in the old days.

This is a seller's market, with the law of supply and demand in control, and inflation of prices such as never before seen in this country, the civil war times being nothing in comparison.

Government embargo talk is absurd because if we were to put an embargo on leather we could not secure any skins, rubber or other supplies now coming from abroad. Embargo is a two edged sword and America would be the greatest sufferer.

BEACON HILL.

BOSTON, MASS., December 16.

SCHOOL JANITORS.

Is the Contract System Responsible for Unsatisfactory Cleaning?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* I agree with "A Mother" in regard to the poor janitorial work of our city schools. This has been a common complaint for years. The teachers know from actual experience how far short of satisfactory the work of the cleaner is.

But then what can you expect? Your readers may not know that the janitor receives a lump sum for the janitorial work, he to hire and pay the sweepers out of this sum. The net result of this queer arrangement is that the janitor hires the cheapest help he can get. The natural result is that their work on the whole is exceedingly unsatisfactory. Add to this the fact that not one school has a vacuum cleaning system but uses the old fashioned rag and feather duster and it is easily explained why the seats from the settling dust are dirty.

FATHER OF TWO TEACHERS.

NEW YORK, December 16.

REAL AMERICANISM.

It Spoke at Carnegie Hall, and Is Not Found in Cautious Neutrality.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* It seems, from the mass meeting at Carnegie Hall to protest against the deportation of the Belgians, that the real American love of humanity and justice is not completely subsidized by the attempts of the Government to remain neutral.

RALPH DANIEL.

ARLINGTON, N. J., December 16.

A Friend of the Sparrow.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* There is a suspicion that apartment dwellers on Morningside avenue and likely enough elsewhere in this thoughtless town are feeding the pestiferous sparrow, which might otherwise be starved to death in this fortunate snowfall, providentially sent perhaps for that very purpose. At the present moment the hunger driven birds are feeding from a dish on the fire escape near me, and the confession must be made that "our folks" have been guilty with others in weakly taking pity on the feathered abominations.

Of course the sparrows which swarm in the park opposite at other times were allowed to breed without the slightest interference when their nesting could have been prevented and their increase stopped. But what of that? Is it not our bounden duty to take every advantage of this opportunity to decimate their numbers by slow starvation? Away with sickly sentimentality!

Let public meetings be held in every sparrow infested locality to protest solemnly against the present evil practice of feeding the proscribed creatures in the time of their need. Why were they created, anyhow? I have never seen the sparrow guilty of wrongdoing, but the cry has gone out against him, and is not that sufficient?

JACOB A. HAEKSTRA.

NEW YORK, December 17.

A Kansas Confession.

From the Emporia Gazette.

Before you comment upon the backwardness of Arkansas, consider the Central Branch of the Union Pacific, which runs through northern Kansas. The first vestibuled train was run over that road last week, and at most of the towns the band was out to meet the train.

Noncommittal.

From the Marysville Banner.

Those who know Edward Tillinghast will be interested to learn that he has resigned from the orchestra. He made it what it is.

BY FORCE MAJEURE.

A New Scheme of Salvation and Reform for Free Men.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Two things have happened this week which constitute a curious commentary on the temperament of the American public. One is the incorporation of a man for the purpose of saving souls, the other is the favorable report of the Senate committee on the bill for nationwide prohibition. Taking these remarkable incidents together the plan appears to be to impose upon us the Sunday and Bryan type of Christianity by means of force majeure.

In the name of the gentlest and most tolerant of all men we are to be harangued in language unfit for use among clean people on the horror awaiting us if we do not subscribe to the doctrine of the incorporated evangelist. In the name of the Nazarene, so poor that He had no place to lay His head, we are asked to contribute to the building of a tabernacle large enough to hold a huge multitude, each one of which will in turn be expected to help line the already swollen pockets of the rich soul saver. Surely, paying for the privilege of hearing yourself cursed, of listening to slimy, filthy objurgations, appears to be a bit of unwarranted extravagance in these days. At a time when it costs so much to live I scarcely feel justified in paying any one for telling me how much it will cost me to die, if I don't die according to the constitution and bylaws of the incorporated evangelist. And I don't feel as though I wanted to do anything like that.

Fortunately there is escape from the maledictions of Mr. Sunday. I don't have to go to his tabernacle, not yet. But from the other feature of the latter day scheme of salvation, should it be put into effect, there is no getting away. That unique personality known, I think, as the Demon Rum, who according to no less impeccable authority than the Hon. Richmond P. Hobson, slays yearly more victims than succumb to all wars, epidemics, accidents and natural deaths, I believe it's something like that, is to be knocked on the head and forever put out of his horrid game. This is the thing I balk at, quite unavailingly, I know, yet I balk. Why? Because I am so wretchedly depraved that I drink as much as a cocktail or a glass of wine or a bottle of beer two or three times a week at dinner.

And the worst of it is, I enjoy it. I don't care a hoot for the opinion of such scientific experts as Professors Bryan, Sunday, Hobson, Sheppard and the rest. I'm willing to admit that they know all there is to be known on the subject of prohibition and that they want to make this country dry only for my good and the good of my fellow unregenerates, but I'd rather stay bad. If indulgence in my unnatural appetite ultimately lands me in the place Mr. Sunday pictures in classic language and with vivid picturesqueness, I know I'll be in the company of a bad lot of folk, mostly the worldly men and women who have done nothing better than give us books to read, philosophy to study, science to harness the forces of nature, sculpture and paintings and music and poetry to stir our sinful emotions, medicine to cure our ills, all damnable things which the incorporated soul saver says are only fit for hell; but I'm not scared. I'd rather be in the company of those lost ones than in Sunday's or Bryan's. Honest to goodness I would. I'd rather spend a year with John Fiske or Mark Twain or Jim Riley or Raphael or Dr. Murphy or Heinrich Heine on the ragged edges of a dead world than fifteen minutes with all the professional evangelists and congressional reformers that ever lived.

I am not prepared to eliminate my reason, my judgment, my desires, my inherited tendencies, my beliefs and substitute Billy Sunday and national prohibition. Utter annihilation would suit me better.

No theology of "Schrecklichkeit," no "be it enacted" type of virtue has any attraction for me. I refuse to be made good with a club. I decline to acknowledge the soul saving trust as the arbiter of my fate here or hereafter. And I hate to think that my country, boasting the first real democracy, is seriously thinking of following the example of Russia, the greatest of autocracies, in telling us that we are not fit to exercise our individual judgment, that we can only grow strong by having temptation taken away from us. That theory is so shallow, so saturated with sophistry and so un-American that I dread to think of what will happen if it is crystallized into law. And that calamity seems imminent. What a pity!

W. V. HIRSH.

NEW YORK, December 16.

FAT MEN.

Beloved Creatures, It Is Asserted by Their Defender.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* I saw this statement in THE SUN the other day: "No one loves a fat man." Wrong. The fat man is generally the most beloved of men. Why? Because he has a good heart. Unlike your lean man, there is nothing sour or stingy about him. And then his laugh. How joyous and refreshing it is!

"Oh, but," I hear some one say, "that is all very well, but it only regards the fat man in his relation with other men." Wrong again. While the ladies may pretend to laugh at the fat man they secretly adore him. After all, it is not a fine exterior which excites love so much as a good heart, and woman with her infallible instinct can discover the latter beneath a mountain of flesh.

Finally, I wish to repel the charge with the scorn it deserves that the fat man is lacking in sentiment. Byron, the most amorous of poets, was a fat man, as was also Balzac, the philosopher par excellence of love.

DEFENSIO.

NEW YORK, December 16.

The Efficiency Movement in Missouri.

From the Sheldon News.

The other day when a fire broke out in Sheldon the fire engine was found fenced up in the jail yard and could not be got out without tearing the fence down. And when the engine was finally gotten out and the water turned on the hose had several blowouts, but otherwise the apparatus was in good serviceable condition. The building? It burned up.

Tickers.

Tick—tock—tick—tock—
Dull—runs—the—clock—
No—risk—no—knock—
Tick—tock—tick—tock.

Tick tick tick tick tick tick tick,
Big bull market booming quick;
Life is joy without a kick,
Tick tick tick tick tick tick tick.

Tick tick tick tick tick tick tick,
Big bear market crashing slick;
Life's enough to make you sick,
Tick tick tick tick tick tick tick.

Tick—tock—tick—tock—
Dull—runs—the—clock—
No—fun—no—stock—
Tick—tock—tick—tock.

McLANDBURGH WILSON.

WHAT A PEACE MADE IN GERMANY MAY MEAN TO THE UNITED STATES.

Shall America Face the Facts or Feed on the Unfounded Aspirations of Ignorance and Illusion?

It is a fortunate thing for the United States that the Entente Allies are too proud not to fight. If before 1914 England had been too proud to fight the first stride toward the world dominion of Prussian militarism might have been diverted to Latin America. We and our Monroe Doctrine should then have borne the onslaught of German efficiency, with results sad but easy to picture. If Albion had cared to be perfidious perhaps she might even have staged that drama and then precipitated the European struggle, using us as a first line and a diversion. But no, we have sat safe and sound while the Allies fought our battles.

What if the Allies should make peace now on some basis even remotely resembling the German proposals? What would be the effect upon the safety we so excessively prize and so foolishly fail to safeguard? As bad as possible. Germany, armed to the teeth, would be able to overthrow the Monroe Doctrine and to take what she chose of Latin America by an effort hardly perceptible in comparison with her marvellous achievements in the present war.

In such event why should the Allies care what happened to us? We have sat through this war with a detachment incredible alike from the point of view of natural sympathy and that of obvious self-interest. We did not do or even say anything when Belgium was burned at the stake, the fire touched off with a "scrap of paper." We did not do or even say anything when the laws of civilized warfare and even conventions signed by us and by Germany were violated. We only shrieked over a cargo of cotton or any other little material interest. We used to talk loud to Belgium about Congo atrocities, to Peru about Putumayo atrocities, even to Turkey about the Armenians; but Germany was a first class Power. Naturally there cannot be much respect or affection for us among the peoples of the Entente Allies.

We have been kept out of war. But at what price? In the submarine affair we have talked, aye, most abundantly. But when our last word of warning has been precisely violated, still we do nothing. It is as if a man were kicked in the face and then entered into discussion, perhaps calling in an expert physiologist to determine whether the blow was exactly a dictionary kick. All we have endured from Germany is too well known to need recapitulation. And the Germans dislike us too.

A course that displeases all parties is sometimes pointed to as therefore a justly impartial one. We are not interested here in academic questions. We are interested, and our Government ought to be interested, in this question: Is it safe to let the end of this war find the United States without a friend in the world and with its prestige quite destroyed? A thousand times, no!

In our extraordinary detachment and indifference to the fundamentals of our real future interests, we are yet always responsive to considerations of humanity and world peace. The German peace proposals are focussing attention upon those ideals. Now it is well to take particular note of one thought that runs through the official and unofficial discussion of peace by Germany.

It is the thought that Germany must be free in her evolution. Does this not mean evolution by sabre on land and by submarine at sea, by the mailed fist, by blood and iron when it suits the dominant purpose? If not, what does it mean? In the case of the individual and within the nation evolution still proceeds by the laws of nature. That force may rule is still a law of nature everywhere. Germany in this war is passing through some real evolution. The Germans no doubt well know it, for they are no less admired as about the only people who lay aside cant and hypocrisy and face hard facts. Victory in this war will be the result of the opposing forces acting in nature's evolution. Which way can the United States best afford to see the resultant fatefully point, to world dominion by the spirit of Prussian militarism or by that of Anglo-Saxon and French liberalism?

Here is our vital concern. And with the millennium so distant and human nature still so human and natural we too must accept the fact of evolution with possible use of force as one of its laws. Not by Hague courts nor by a worldwide federation are we likely to establish permanent peace after this war. Rather may we hope to do it by entering a coalition of those most like-minded with ourselves and seeing to it that our coalition shall possess a preponderant a potentiality that it shall impose the ideas of justice in which we believe.

So, too, for the ending of this war is not by a frigid and aloof neutrality that we serve peace and humanity. Rather should we hasten the end by breaking the vicious equilibrium of the struggle; by reaching an understanding with the Entente Powers and thus throwing the moral and economic aid of our country on the side where our interests lie; by breaking with those leaders who have so lawlessly killed so many of our people and who still threaten us.

Thus we should gain the Entente nations as our friends. With them we could form the nucleus of a league for peace which should have the power to eliminate from the process of international evolution the unjust use of force. With them we could form an entente which should safeguard our post-bellum interests. In this way we should recognize our prestige, make friends we shall surely need hereafter, hasten the end of the war, lay the foundations for a real practical league of peace, safeguard our future safety and interests and at least stand up in the open for the ideals we believe in.

HUNTINGTON WILSON.

WASHINGTON, December 16.

THE DYING YEAR.

Let Cheerful Thoughts Herald the Advent of Winter.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* It is now mid-December and soon our sun will enter the sign of Capricornus; winter will really begin. Colder weather and the first snows have already appeared, and the last flower has disappeared weeks ago, while the last leaf is to be seen only on hedges and bushes.

Gone, almost wholly gone, is the verdant vegetation of springtime and summer, and we are as yet hardly accustomed to prewinter's landscape, so drear and barren. Of course this barrenness and its dreariness are somewhat relieved by the perennial verdure of a few trees, and even already in spots the bareness and deadness of lawns and meadows are covered over by a white cloak of snow. And a little later, after the first heavy snowfall, when a beautiful, soft mantle lies deep upon vale and hill, sparkling like multi-myriads of minute diamonds beneath the fiery splendor of the sun, we shall for a while at least forget the living verdure of the past in our admiration and enjoyment of the lifeless though exquisite whiteness of the future.

But at present we feel that the "melancholy days" have come, although frequently some perfect day dawns, when sunshine and air seem pleasantly unseasonable. Christmas, too, is close at hand, with its festivities and cheer, and then, New Year's Day, with its many good resolutions. The shortest day of the year is near by, and afterward the sun begins to ascend from its southern depth—somehow the thought of its rising a little higher every day is encouraging, particularly during the disagreeable weather which will presently visit us.

But the season of winter has not yet really arrived—it is still mid-December—and we should make the best of this end of fall ere the more "melancholy days" of January, February and March come to depress and chill us.

CHARLES NEVERS HOLMES.

NEWTON, MASS., December 16.

The Main Point.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* John E. Bruce, referring to the habit in Southern States of presuming a negro guilty until he has overwhelmingly proved his innocence, is reminded of a story where a colored minister was convicted of a crime merely because he happened to be in the vicinity of the place where it was committed. As there are, however, two sides to every case, I am also reminded of a story along the same lines.

A watch was stolen from some one, and suspicion at once pointed to a negro; he was arrested and tried for the offence. At the conclusion of the hearing the Judge ordered the prisoner to stand up, and fixing his eyes on him he said:

"Discharged for insufficiency of evidence." The bewildered darky asked, "What did you say, Judge?" And his Honor in the same judicial tone repeated, "Discharged for insufficiency of evidence."

"Well," exclaimed the negro, "do I have to give up de watch?" J. E. S.

NEW YORK, December 16.

Training the Old Idea.

Old Fashioned Parent—If you aren't good Santa Claus won't come.

Modern Child—If you aren't good I won't believe in Santa Claus.

Hard Winter Sure.

From the San Francisco Chronicle.

When Anson Peake, an old woodchopper of Marysville, split open a hollow stump at his camp near here the axe brought to view a cluster of rattlesnakes, thirty-five in number, all coiled together. Pioneers say when rattlesnakes coil up in big bunches it means a hard winter.

SAILORMEN'S STRIPES.

Misconceptions Regarding the Uniform Insignia Corrected.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—Sir: I was painfully surprised at an article in THE SUN replete with misinformation as to the rating badges and distinguishing marks worn by the enlisted men of our naval establishment. To attempt to correct the most startling misconceptions and to furnish information of a more trustworthy character.

Chevrons are laid down, not up, as stated.

"Landsman" does not refer to the seagoing abilities of the man so designated, but is the lowest rating of a [illegible] artificer branch of the navy [illegible] and corresponds with that of apprentice seaman in the seaman branch.

There is no grade of "able seaman" in our navy, nor are any of the grade seamen entitled to the letters "A. B." which are peculiar to the merchant marine and the British navy.

Aspiring and ambitious petty officers who become warrant officers are denied the somewhat doubtful privilege of living with the "junior officers in the wardroom" for two most obvious reasons: first, they are members of a separate mess of warrant officers; second, the junior officers are as much out of place in the wardroom as the snipes would be in the cabin.

Ignorance of the details of an [illegible] plex organization is altogether pardonable in the lay public, but [illegible] a purveyor of what should be [illegible] information.

NEW YORK, December 17.

TRAPPING THE SPARROW.

Safer Than Shooting, for Both Humans and Song Birds.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—Sir: The New Jersey Audubon Society is [illegible] right in opposing an "English sparrow shooting week" for boys. As you say, few people can tell an English sparrow, particularly the female, from a native sparrow, unless they study it closely. And the English sparrow is the wiliest of birds. Having been shot at he is always after on his guard. Furthermore, he is rarely to be found in fields or anywhere away from the vicinity of houses, barns, stables, &c. In such places only persons of skill and mature judgment should be allowed to use a gun.

We have for two years had an English sparrow trap on our place for the satisfaction of knowing what it accomplished we have kept count. In 1915 there were [illegible] English sparrows, and in 1916 225. Now and then a house wren has been caught and released.

Instead of being overrun by a dirty pest, our bird houses were occupied all summer by bluebirds and wrens, a delight both to eye and ear.

A.

GREAT BARRINGTON, MASS., Dec. 16.

Impending Tragedy in Father Time's Jurisdiction.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—Sir: Many who depend on insurance agents, patent medicine companies, grocers, butchers and other philanthropists for a living will be disappointed this year. The increased cost of paper is causing business men to refrain from distributing these costly advertisements.

Their non-appearance will be felt after January 1, when we shall be able to gaze at the walls of our homes and not be reminded that Cutup Charlie is patiently waiting to be paid. Longtalk the insurance agent will be around to-morrow for his annual collection.

The high cost of paper is a tragedy bearable.

D.

NEW YORK, December 16.