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In numerous discussions of President Wilson's project for a league of nations in which the United States shall pledge itself to fight for the prevention of war such sentences as the subjoined find place:

"Difficulties involving the continuance of what was regarded as a fixed and settled policy of the United States are already appearing in connection with the willingness of this Government to enter a world league to prevent future wars."

"The willingness of this Government to enter a world league to prevent future wars" has never been recorded. The United States has never committed itself to approval of the suggestion.

The making of alliances is not the function of the Executive alone; they can be created only by treaty, and the treaty-making power is as much the Senate's as the President's.

No pledge to a foreign nation given by the Executive alone can be binding on this country, and the Senate on numerous occasions has refused its sanction to Executive enterprises, which in consequence of those refusals have come to nothing.

The Executive Department does not yet constitute the entire Government of the United States.

The Unaccounted Calories. Few know food values, lament the food sharps. These wise men regard with sorrow, if not with alarm, the inability or unwillingness of the public to delve into the scientific side of domestic economy.

Even the doctor may not know why he is eating what he eats, for in a report made by a committee of famous food scientists we read:

"It is regrettable that the scientific data regarding food and diet are known only to a narrow circle. The public at large, and, indeed, many physicians are but ill supplied with this knowledge and suffer accordingly."

As part proof of its assertions, the committee "demonstrated that 2,600 words of raw oysters, producing 25,000 calories, could be equalled in heat energy by the more humble home made oyster pie or fried oysters, costing respectively 57 and 77 cents."

We are inclined to believe that an opposition party, if one existed, could afford to let the case go to the people on this very demonstration. Did ever a hungry man order \$3.77 worth of oysters if there was anything else to be had? As for the fried oysters we fancy, without having counted calories, that 15 cents worth of baked beans would supply as much heat, more joy and hardly a worse attack of indigestion.

We will agree with the scientists that mankind is slow to keep up with them. It is hard enough to count collars, let alone calories. The children of ADAM forget whether the protoid is more advantageous than the carbohydrate. They engulf the pumpkin pie without having taken it apart in the laboratory. They spear and devour the fried potato, heedless of its low character. And yet, as HERMAN METZ once sagely said, many of our grandfathers lived beyond their infancy.

It must be that there is a wire between the innards and the brain and the message that goes over it says, "I want what I want and I know it when the eye sees it." This is true not of man alone, but of all animals. Consider the dog: He swallows his beef at a gulp, but he chews a chocolate drop as if he were at a matinee. Why? Certainly it is not instinct, for his ancestors did not eat bonbons. But he knows.

Until the great hour of human uniformity arrives, each man will eat that which his chemistry, as JACK LONDON called it, demands; assuming, of course, that his wife knows how to cook it.

Defence of a Pork Club. Representative FRANK CLARK of Florida defends the pork laden public building bill, saying that as the United States can borrow money at 3 per cent, it is good business for the Government to borrow large sums and erect post offices at every crossroads. At present Government buildings are going up all over the country at the rate of one every four days.

How far does Mr. CLARK's defence extend the Moolton items in the bill now pending? Examination has shown that it does not justify many of the appropriations.

For example, it is pointed out that the first item authorizes the expenditure of \$45,000 for a site and building at Alton, Iowa. The population of this town is 2,908, postal receipts are \$15,210 annually, and the post office there is housed at a rental of \$800 a year. Now 3 per cent, on \$45,000 is \$1,350, or \$550 more than the rent paid. This takes no account of several thousands of dollars which must be spent annually to maintain the Government building; an expense to which the Government is not put in rented quarters.

By Mr. CLARK's own test Alton could not ask for a site and building costing over \$20,000. Three per cent, on that sum would cost the Government \$600, an equivalent of the present rental.

The items which similarly riddle Mr. CLARK's defence of the bill are innumerable. Mr. CLARK has a second line of intransigence. He insists that the bill merely authorizes maximum expenditures. As a Washington despatch to the Evening Post says, Mr. CLARK "refers, politely, to the present policy of the Treasury Department to reduce such expenditures [for Government buildings] despite the opposition of Congress. In the last two fiscal years the Treasury Department has saved the public pocketbook on an average \$1,500,000 by refusing to buy property offered at the price fixed by Congress or by refusing to let bids which ate up the bulk of Congressional appropriation."

Could President WILSON only have bestirred himself to work as effectively for an executive budget as he did for other important measures the Treasury might not be facing a deficit of possibly \$300,000,000, and the Secretary of the Treasury might not have been obliged to warn Congress that in the wasteful erection of Government buildings it is incurring annual charges which the Government may soon be unable to bear.

Dig, Brothers, Dig. The resemblance of this city to a mining camp grows greater every winter. The pride of New Yorkers in their excavations is not less than that of the Romans. Foreigners pay much attention to our skyscrapers. New Yorkers merely pick their way over accumulated hills of odorous substructure, or watch with fascinated eyes the latest process of quarrying in Union Square.

It will never be necessary to dig out New York as Pompeii was laid bare. Were all Manhattan to be deluged by a volcano the inhabitants would proceed to dig their way to air and go about their work, merely remarking to each other that the town looked about as usual. "There would be some grubbing over the work of the Street Cleaning Department."

The task of building subways is likely to go on for so many generations in this city and to involve so many upheavals that it sometimes seems as if it would be easier to roof over our streets and make a new ground level one story higher. But to do this would deprive us of the greatest pleasure known to children and men—digging.

Disease Germs in Books. The recent epidemic of infantile paralysis has intensified the unwholesome dread of disease germs with which the public mind has long been obsessed. The health authorities are endeavoring to educate the public in the matter of cleanliness, which is inimical to the propagation of these germs. Ablution of the hands before eating has been especially insisted upon in this propaganda. A similar cleansing after soiling of the hands needs not to be emphasized. Unfortunately the majority of people do not realize the importance of these simple precautions, while on the other hand there are many persons with whom disease germs are a bete noir. They see death and sickness lurking everywhere, and like the "thief who sees a policeman behind every bush," they live in constant apprehension of germs. To these timid individuals a recent article in the Journal of the American Medical Association on "Bacteria on Paper Money and Books" may bring comfort.

The SUN has endeavored to present only the most reliable scientific aspect of the subject of germ diseases, because the usual hasty generalizations which continually appear in print under the guise of scientific authority sooner or later redound to the discredit of real progress. An unwarranted scepticism is aroused and the distrust of an obvious misstatement unconsciously becomes magnified into a reactionary indifference to the better contributions of scientific men. The championship of half or conjectured truths inevitably acts in the course of time as a barrier to the very objects which are sought in public reforms, for in the end truth always prevails.

Some years ago THE SUN called attention to the erroneous idea that tuberculosis may be contracted by persons using the telephone mouthpiece which has been used by many others. We showed that the Postmaster-General of Great Britain had the mouthpieces on the telephones under his control examined bacteriologically, with the result of no disease germs being discovered upon them. The Journal comments upon the popular opinion of a few years ago that the handling of soiled paper money was extremely dangerous on account of the bacteria that may adhere to it. The fact is that bank tellers do not share this aversion, nor do they present evidence of exceptional liability to infectious diseases. It has been positively ascertained and published in the Popular Science Monthly that paper money contains

an unimportant factor in the transmission of disease. While clean paper money satisfies our aesthetic sense, it has not been proved that soiled money is likely to become a medium of disease transmission.

With regard to books, it is the custom to disinfect them, when soiled, by exposure to sunlight and air, but it is a fact that the hygienic laboratory of Johns Hopkins has not found germs of diphtheria, for instance, on books coming from homes in which children had been suffering from this disease. The fact is that the majority of bacteria found on books are the same as those found in atmosphere air, and that the color bacterium, which is frequently found on the hands of school children, has rarely been found on the books they handle. There is really no material risk involved in the reissue of books recently read by consumptives, unless the books are obviously soiled, and even then the risks are very slight.

Since, however, bacteria like the typhoid and diphtheria organisms have been occasionally discovered on artificially infected books, there may be good reason for subjecting all returned books to direct sunlight before redistribution.

Practically the danger from soiled money and books is no more obvious than that danger from the mouthpiece of the telephone.

Asleep Since the Marne. A case alike interesting to doctors and laymen is that of a French soldier, described by Professor VEXGA of Bordeaux, who has been asleep since the battle of the Marne.

In the twenty-seven months since that tremendous struggle the soldier has not awakened. His eyelids are closed, his respiration regular, his pulse rapid. Dr. VEXGA says:

"He is sensitive to excitement, such stimulation provoking a weak defence, without, however, interrupting his sleep."

The case is believed to be one of hysterical lethargy. In the period of duration, the sensitiveness to excitement, the weak defence, the continuous sleep, this description might well apply to the symptoms not only of one French soldier but of an unprepared nation of more than a hundred million people, asleep since the battle of the Marne.

Armed Merchant Ships. In the view of Lord CHARLES BERSFORD, the activity of the German cruiser submarines has made England's importing of food and raw materials a question "of unparalleled gravity."

He advocates the arming of merchant ships with guns both fore and aft to resist capture and even to attack submarines. "There may be," he says, "diplomatic difficulties connected with the arming of merchant vessels for attack, but surely these difficulties could be easily surmounted." Evidently the British Government, judging from an intimation that the larger British liners are to make Halifax, instead of New York, their port of call on this side of the Atlantic, does not agree with the Admiral that diplomatic difficulties could be "easily surmounted."

Secretary LANSING on April 27, 1916, published a memorandum to define the position of the United States with regard to armed merchant vessels in neutral ports and on the high seas. Prior to that date, on January 13, the United States Government had permitted the Italian liner Giuseppe Verdi to sail from New York with two 3-inch guns mounted aft, on the understanding that they should be used only for defence and not to attack a submarine while the liner was being warned. Mr. LANSING's memorandum admits the right of enemy merchant ships "to arm for the purpose of self-protection," and he says that "a merchantman entitled to exercise the right of self-protection by an enemy warship, otherwise the exercise of the right would be so restricted as to render it ineffectual."

Obviously the initiative in attack may be taken by the armed merchantman, as Mr. LANSING understands the rules of warfare sanctioned by international law. But no stress need be laid upon the words "certain of attack" in the paragraph last quoted. Consider the relation of this statement, "the only means of avoiding loss is by flight or successful resistance," the following: "If the hostile character of the property is known the belligerent warship may seize the property without exercising the right of visit and search, which is solely for the purpose of obtaining knowledge as to the character of the property."

Mr. LANSING's interpretations justify a German submarine commander in torpedoing without preliminaries, except due warning and opportunity for escape of crew and passengers; and also justify the merchant ship captain in anticipating "capture" by attacking the submarine. "An armed merchant vessel on the high seas," to quote one of his headings, presents no great difficulty; but what about an armed merchant vessel in neutral ports? With a gun aft she is armed "for the purpose of self-protection," as the Italian liner was. Doubtless the ruling would be different if she carried a gun at the bow also. Mr. LANSING in the following statement seems to have anticipated the new British policy:

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MR. WILSON'S NOTE. Some Citizens' Opinions of the Administration's Statesmanship.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—Sir: It seems to me that American public opinion should express itself instantly and overwhelmingly so that England, France, Russia and proud Japan need not feel that the American people have so far lost their senses as the news from the United States would seem to indicate. Putting the opening of mail on a parity with the sinking of American citizens in torpedoed ships is characteristic of the lack of balance that has always attended the administration of the Jeffersonian doctrines.

RAYMOND SPEARS. LITTLE FALLS, DECEMBER 23.

Democratic Secretaries. TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—Sir: It is inconceivable that any Republican Secretary of State could have made the execrable blunder which lies at the door of Secretary Lansing in his statement that this country was on the verge of war, thereby precipitating a liquidation of stocks of such magnitude as the country has hardly ever seen before and bringing ruin to thousands of men and women.

It is true, as has often been charged, that the Democratic party is destitute of such diplomatic ability as the position of Secretary of State calls for.

First we have Bryan, who made his great office ridiculous in the eyes of the world. Next Lansing, with his indecisive tongue, and who treated service to the country now would be to hand in his resignation. But who next? Is there any next, bearing the brand of Democracy, capable of occupying the position of Secretary of State?

What a relief if President Wilson were to name a few months before the surrender at Appomattox. The extracts are taken from the famous speech delivered at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, October 7, 1864.

WOODBRIDGE RILEY. PUGH KEESLER, DECEMBER 25.

FROM THE LIPS OF SCHURZ. A Protest Against a Patched Up Peace That Retains Its Timeliness.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—Sir: For the benefit of Bryanites unconscious of their Bryanism, and for those who care for the dove of peace, the American eagle, would you kindly print the enclosed remarks of Carl Schurz?

They were uttered as a warning against a patched up peace and as an answer to the efforts of the desperate Confederates a few months before the surrender at Appomattox. The extracts are taken from the famous speech delivered at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, October 7, 1864.

WOODBRIDGE RILEY. PUGH KEESLER, DECEMBER 25.

Yes, incredible as it may seem to all who are not initiated into the mysteries of American politics, the idea is seriously entertained to carry out that third line of policy of which I spoke before—to invite the slave power back into the national organization, offering to it that supreme and absolute control of our national destiny which it cannot insure its permanency in the Union; and, admittedly enough, this programme has been condensed into a single euphonious sentence which is well apt to serve as the campaign cry of a party. It is this: "The Union must be restored as it was."

"Did you ever hear of a great war that left a country in the same condition in which it had found it? Did you ever hear of a great revolution which left the political and social relations of the contending parties as they had been before the struggle without which it cannot arise upon mutual confidence can be restored when that confidence has been drowned in a sea of blood. Do you really think you can ever restore the confidence in a man between two detected companions one of whom has been detected in an attempt to rob and murder the other in his sleep?"

"For our opponents, it seems, history has no intelligible voice. We have only to shake hands with the rebels and the past is blotted out. We have only to act as if nothing had happened and all will be as it was before something did happen. This is their promise. I appeal to the people. If your leaders promised you to revive all those fallen in battle and to gather up the blood spilt on so many fields, if you were capable of the stupidity of the victims, let them go into the open trap of the jugglers glory in the reputation of the folly. But a man of sense cannot permit himself to be gulled by so transparent an absurdity without despising himself. I call upon you to vindicate the fair fame of the Americans as an intelligent people."

J. S. JONES. NEW YORK, DECEMBER 25.

Kaiserthum in the White House. TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—Sir: Are we to hide our faces in shame for ourselves and our country because we have a "Kaiser" acting as President of these United States? Is he superior to the rest of the world? Is that fair?

Why do we send Congressmen and Senators to Washington? Are they our representatives or do they just go there to give their votes to pass the measures this "Kaiser" thinks will make his name famous on history's page?

Are not our representatives stand back of this "Kaiser" when called upon by him to do so after he has sent notes to other Governments without consulting them? Why does our "Kaiser" write notes and declare them to be the American people's sentiment when he knows that neither they are or not?

HENRY MARION HOWE. BEDFORD HILLS, DECEMBER 27.

A Look Ahead. TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—Sir: I submit that: