

The Sun AND NEW YORK PRESS.

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1917, and fell to 22,900 tons last September.

Cotton importations were 5,500 tons a month in the three years before the war, 5,500 tons in January, 1917, and only 2,500 tons in September, 1917.

The northern neutrals took 1,500 tons of wood monthly in 1911-1913 and 2,500 tons in January, 1917. Last September they got only 150 tons.

Hides and leather importations, which averaged 1,900 tons monthly in 1916, dropped to a trifle of 440 tons last September.

Copper, imported at the rate of 2,700 tons a month in 1911-1913, and to the amount of 1,600 tons in January, 1917, was secured to the extent of 500 tons only in September, 1917.

Since August, 1914, a great dike has been built about Germany, the dike of the Allied blockade. But despite every effort the flow of commerce through the gaps in this dike could be but imperfectly controlled until America entered the war.

Since July we have exported to the neutrals who could directly supply Germany hardly anything, comparatively speaking. We have resolved to let them have nothing except on our own terms; and those terms are such as to preclude the possibility of aid to our enemy.

This has produced a desperate state of affairs in Holland and Scandinavia, notably in Sweden, which is now relying on Germany and might conceivably be forced into the war on the German side. It is a risk which we shall have to run unless Sweden can give us satisfactory guarantees.

What Can We Do for Halifax and Its People?

We do not know yet what opportunity for assistance the disaster in Halifax harbor has opened to us. Competent representatives of the Government in the navy and the Red Cross are in the stricken city, learning at first hand from the imperial, colonial and municipal authorities, and from the inhabitants themselves, what is needed, what they have to meet the emergency, and what should be provided by us. Whatever that may be it will be forthcoming with a sympathy quickened by the common interest that now animates the Dominion of Canada and the United States.

We of the United States cannot look upon this catastrophe as the misfortune of an alien people. The agents of destruction loosed in the splendid harbor of the great northern port originated in this country and were intended for use in the defense of this country against a foe which menaces Canada and the United States alike. The victims of their premature discharge gave their best not less truly for our defence than their own while we reposed slothfully at ease. For two and a half years we were protected by the valor and skill of our neighbor's sons; if we as a nation were slow to recognize the facts of their struggle, we shall not be quick to forget the debt we owe.

That debt we cannot pretend to estimate. Had not the British Empire withstood the onslaughts of the German aggressor, had not the component units of that empire proved loyal and given of their strength at the call of their motherland, had not Canada contributed her magnificent effort to the common cause, what the course of the war and the fate—perhaps already fulfilled—of the United States would have been it is impossible to say. But we know that the utmost cunning and strength of Germany were exerted, in unnumbered open and hidden ways, to detach the Dominion from civilization, and thus to remove from the path of German ambition an obstacle recognized three years ago as considerable, but not visualized in its true proportions until they had been demonstrated under the test of mortal combat.

These men and women and children of Halifax whom it may be our privilege to succor now are more than unfortunate neighbors exciting a philanthropic curiosity. They are our blood brothers and sisters in the struggle for the preservation of freedom that engrosses the whole world; they were pioneers in the fight to release us from the terrorists that prosed our destruction; and if we can aid them to-day, in so doing we shall be repaying a minute fraction of our obligation to them.

New York Is "Easy."

"It was the easiest graft I ever laid my hand to," testifies one of our six months flourished and grew fat every year in the country who could bring himself to the mean occupation of robbing the generous in the name of heroes; to get money to be spent for a soldier, or a sailor, or the dependent kindfolk of the men in uniform, was easier than picking up rocks along the Palisades." New York is exhibited as a "soft" town; its people instead of being "wise" are "rubes." Their minds shut up and their pocket-books fly wide when a tale of distress is told to them. They "unbelt" with an enthusiasm that unseats caution and sends discretion flying out the window.

Apparently there is no defence for the town. The testimony against it does not come solely from those skilled in the gentle art of living without legitimate labor. It is given to every man to observe our careless liberality that invites imposition and puts a premium on fraud. Our open-handedness has been the making of regiments of knaves. No world war was needed to disclose it to those who trade on unquestionable faith and humane impulse. The city's inhabitants as individuals and the civic corpora-

tion itself have, in the technical language of their despoilers, "fallen" for charities that never helped a needy man. A well printed letterhead, unauthorized use of familiar names, and a little enterprise in the loss danger-ous ways of thievery, have been all that was required to tap Father KRICKEBAUER'S change pocket.

The societies that attempt to direct charitable disbursements into proper channels have long sought to reform the giver who asks no questions. The newspapers have urged their readers to inquire before they handed over their cash. But the impulse to help is so strong that these agencies have been able to accomplish little of reform in a habit that springs from the most admirable of qualities, and is perverted to the worst of purposes. The swindlers are resourceful, suave, persistent; they have artfully turned the efforts to curb them to their own advantage by representing themselves as the victims of an insolent charity "trust." Every error of judgment, every instance of tactlessness on the part of faithful almsgivers, official and unofficial, has been ammunition for the parasites they struggle to suppress. No honest man could possibly be as tactful as one of the "we boys."

Begging letters, long the product of specialising artists, have attained a standardized perfection no other literary monuments can boast. Their factory is subtle and penetrating. It fills the most alert into a state of infantile self-satisfaction. The form of appeal adopted by the most respectable societies is not more convincing than that employed by the utterly disreputable. Indeed, the fruit of the knave's ingenuity is likely to be more artistic than the appeal of the righteous board of trustees. There are no secrets among charity stimulators; the bad profit from the experiences and expedients of the good; often the good are too absorbed or too conceited to take lessons from the scamps. And citizens who should know better lend their names, sometimes at the bottom of a check, to confidence inspiring visitors, with a prodigality that is astonishing.

The war, the magnitude of the demands made on all, rich and poor, conspicuous and obscure, the psychological effect resulting from unprecedented spending and giving, the ingrained, ineradicable disposition to help, a thousand factors besides carelessness about money and lack of time to investigate, work together to smooth the path of the unprincipled. Their victims are not gullible by those who profit from their innocence; rather they follow a natural, a laudable prompting of benevolence.

We must preserve the excellent characteristics on which the contemptible frauds fatten, and find a way to suppress those who abuse them. That way lies through the District Attorney's office and ends in the State prison; we hope to see traffic on it greatly increased in the near future.

Where Willful Waste Makes Woful Laughter.

In making moving pictures of a comic order three kinds of pies are used, one solid and two edible. The solid pie is made of upholstery and is used for long shots, but even on the long shots the closeup, showing the fill, is made with real pie. The two varieties of edible pie are custard and blackberry. Custard is more splashy; blackberry, by its color, photographs more vividly.

These facts, among others, are imparted by a writer on the technique of cinematography who describes the profusion in which pies are used in a passage condensable as follows:

"The outside world has no conception of the importance of pie in a comedy. . . . When it is realized that at least ten pies are thrown to record a perfect hit one may realize the custard condition of the set after a furious bombardment of five or ten minutes. . . . The whole place is ankle deep in pie."

In figures, then, a half dozen hits means sixty pies.

Blackberry pie requires for its making blackberries, sugar, a little flour; and pie crust with shortening in it as well as flour.

Custard pie takes eggs, milk and sugar as well as pie crust containing flour and shortening.

We do not believe Mr. Hoover will find that the comic results justify the movie men's wastefulness.

The Russian Armistice.

The armistice which became effective yesterday along the Russian front will apparently not prevent the transfer of German troops to other fronts. There is nothing to indicate that such an understanding was entered into by the parties to the negotiation or that the Bolsheviks attempted to enforce such a provision.

The proposal of an armistice upon such terms was fantastic enough to show its origin. The Russian official communication thus frankly tells its reception by the Germans:

"The enemy delegation declared that our conditions for an armistice were unacceptable and expressed the opinion that such demands could be addressed only to a conquered country."

In reality the Germans were kindly indulgent of Bolshevikian caprices in permitting Trotsky the illusion that he was carrying on an international negotiation. Any other of the belligerent nations through familiarity with the German estimate of an agreement would have demanded a stronger security than mere signatures to "a scrap of paper."

How large a force the Germans still have on the Russian line is a ques-

tion. They have had such a complete understanding of Russian conditions for some time and have been able to exert such a control over affairs at Petrograd that they have been steadily withdrawing troops for service on other fronts. Troops from the Eastern armies are being employed to hold positions in Belgium and France. The invasion of Italy was made possible by the withdrawal of German and Austrian armies from the Russian frontiers. One of the effects, however, will be to release the German prisoners now held by the Russians. Many of these were sent into Siberia and their transportation from those points under the present conditions in Russia will necessarily take considerable time. That these and the remnant of the Eastern Army will eventually be whipped into a new force to confront the Allies seems not improbable.

By making terms with the Bolshevik Government for an armistice Berlin has practically opened the way for the negotiation of a separate peace and a control of the Russian situation. The overthrow of the Bolsheviks may defeat these designs, but the power of Russia as a military factor in the war would seem even then to be greatly reduced. The allied nations have, however, not been taken by surprise. They have been preparing for such an emergency and they have the strength to meet it.

LA FOLLETT left the Senate chamber, New Jersey, today.

The atmosphere must have been greatly improved by his withdrawal.

It is a pleasure and a satisfaction to learn that the Government not only authorizes purchasers of thrift stamps to write their names upon the faces of the stamps but, in the case of the more valuable war savings stamps, urges such endorsement.

Every purchaser of a thrift stamp should attach it to a thrift card and write his name on the face of it.

Every purchaser of a war savings stamp should immediately attach it to his war savings certificate, writing across the face of the stamp his name and the number of his war savings certificate.

Where redemption of war savings stamps at a particular post office would not be likely to cause great inconvenience, war savings certificates should be registered.

The poor neglected burglar! Here was about every one else in the world, from the distasteful prince to the oil and steel king, credited with elevating the high cost of living. The burglar pined unaccompanied, an outsider, neglected, unung. No better than a mere consumer. But by energy and close attention to business he has thrown off his handicap. He is rated with the scratch men now. The cost of burglary insurance has increased 10 per cent.

When a city's administration becomes so bad that its policemen threaten to strike for better moral conditions of labor, an old problem, once considered mildly humorous, assumes a serious aspect. Many of these people look respectable and intelligent, mused a stranger, watching people pass the corner of Broad and Chestnut streets. "I wonder why they don't go to New York to live."

A North Dakota woman who publicly declared that "women who raise their voices are no better than pigs" is being gravely prosecuted in a Federal court on charges of sedition. It is not an inspiring spectacle. The ponderous machinery of government grinding away at the cases of mere cranks while murder and arson still flourish! Will the Department of Justice please send out a sleuth or two to impound misguided persons who aver that the earth is flat?

Did those robbers expect to get away with \$50,000 worth of silk when a blind man can see \$2 worth half a block away?

We are about to see the birth of the E Pluribus Unum Railroad Company.

Building a fence of voluntary ostracism around Senator LA FOLLETT serves better, by way of repudiating his utterances, than dragging him through a dozen trials. There is the same distinction between disloyalty and unloyalty as there is between treason and desertion. La Follette is hardly disloyal. In Washington he can be regarded as an offensive neighbor; surely not as a dangerous one.

The temperature at Saranac Lake was 15 degrees below zero yesterday, which is warm in comparison with the temperature of the Senate chamber when Pompadour Bon LA FOLLETT wanders in.

It is officially reported that there is still room in Washington to shelter 3,000 more soldiers. This is not to be construed as an invitation to hungry job hunters to journey to the capital.

The annual report of the Librarian of Congress contains the information that the requests received from members of Congress "for information along the lines of economic, statistical and historical inquiry have followed closely the subjects of prevailing interest before Congress." The more we read official reports, the more we wonder why the conservationists in Congress do not suppress them in the interest of national economy.

Three California pacifists have been convicted by a jury consisting of nine women and three men of holding an unlawful assembly and disturbing the peace. Obviously some women are eminently well qualified to perform the duties of a juror.

If New York can be of service to your stricken community, do not fail to command us—Acting Mayor DOWNING to the Mayor of Buffalo.

There will be no partisan dissent from this utterance of the President of the Aldermen.

A Senate unanimous for a necessary act in the war for freedom accurately represents the sentiment of the American people. How many the lone objector in the House represent?

One almost suspects that the regenerated Senator STORRS carries a pistol and a bowie knife.

MR. BURLISON ANSWERED.

The Complaints of the Post Office Employees Not Forth.

TO THE EDITOR OF THIS SUN—Sir: Mr. Burlison, the Postmaster-General, has assumed an attitude toward the employees with regard to their belonging to organizations that are affiliated with the American Federation of Labor that is wholly unjust. He intimates that practically no reason whatever that the employees of the postal service would strike if they could not succeed in getting that which they are desirous of obtaining in the line of compensation and justice.

I wish to say that time has proved that no body of organized men have refused that course unless they were underpaid or not treated justly, and were forced to do so to secure just treatment and compensation from their employers. It is just the truth of the matter that we are now forced to make ends meet on the same salaries we were receiving five years ago, while the employees of the Federal Government in the departments in Washington have been allowed 10 per cent. increases in salaries up to \$1,200 a year, and 5 per cent. in salaries up to \$1,800, and the knowledge that postal clerks are not as well treated as they might be has caused Mr. Burlison to assume such an attitude toward us.

If Congress should even consider Mr. Burlison's request that the anti-labor law be lighted to permit Congress for a consideration of their wrongs be repealed, then we may assume that we are merely automatons, with no sense of justice or of citizenship, absolutely unprivileged and dominated by an autocrat worse than that which we are fighting in France. Democracy begins at home and the right to belong to the letter in every Government department.

Postal workers are humans, not chattel slaves, as Mr. Burlison seems to consider them, and the question of their privilege to belong to organizations affecting their welfare, the right to tell their troubles to Congress and to petition the United States Congress for a consideration of their wrongs is not an answer, and they wish it understood that no personal ruling issued by him will affect their privileges and rights in such matters.

The parallel he draws between postal clerks and soldiers is rather ludicrous. He says that we are paid three times as much as they are. Possibly so; but they are also provided with clothing, food, dental and medical care and various other necessities that cost us money. There is only one thing that we may possibly not be required to give which the soldiers, brave and without thought of our own safety, are required to give. The strain imposed on postal employees during the present Administration has been too great, and because we are taking necessary steps to have this strain relieved, presenting only truths to the Congressional committee, Mr. Burlison claims that we are making unreasonable requests, but that they are true any body can ascertain by investigating.

The public must know that a \$9,000,000 or \$10,000,000 surplus in a department that should be run entirely for the service of the people cannot fall seriously to the ground, directly or indirectly, through the fault of postal employees.

The truth has been presented, and because Mr. Burlison was unable to effectually gag that truth he has assumed an attitude toward his employees that does not sound well for the postal service of the United States.

R. H. GEDDER, Railway Postal Clerk, New York, December 7.

THE DUTCH SHIPS.

Their cargoes are not to be lightly seized.

TO THE EDITOR OF THIS SUN—Sir: Referring to the eighty-seven Holland owned vessels now in our harbor and loaded with grain, etc. for Holland.

When the embargo was placed on these vessels it was understood that they would be permitted to sail under our supervision. This offer was refused.

It was then suggested that the cargoes should be unloaded in our harbor. This idea did not meet with approval.

Then the subject of selling the cargoes was discussed. This proposal was also rejected.

Clearly looks as if there is no one in this country who has title to or absolute control of the cargoes, or if there are they will allow the cargoes to rot before permitting them to be taken over by us or our allies.

Within our harbor there have about seven hundred thousand tons of products, mostly grain, worth perhaps \$125,000,000, undoubtedly purchased with German money, and now owned by certain Germans in Holland.

Is there any good reason why we should not capture this "ammunition" and let the question of title abide events?

EDWARD E. JOHNSON, New York, December 6.

THE TYPED INSULT.

A Dip Into the Psychology of "Dictated but Not Read."

TO THE EDITOR OF THIS SUN—Sir: In it senseless, a mere posturing affectation? Or is it a deliberate insult?

I refer to the "Dictated but not read" subscript we find on certain business letters. What is the idea? If it means I haven't edited this text for spelling and punctuation lapses, then it's a mastery over and its even more frequent use.

If it means I can't be held responsible for possible unclear exposition, then the letter is pure waste and might as well have been written at all.

But if it means I cannot be held responsible for anything said or unsaid herein—and that is surely what this postscript would be—then ultimately to express the writer itself is worse than waste, an instrument ripe for the service of vicious purpose.

No, we, however, react thus seriously: Do we, accept the letter, act on it with confidence, and if we notice the subscript at all pass it as at least irrelevant to the content question, then it is this custom a feeble affectation or is it the flick of a whip which coils a message of careless contempt?

BILLY P. REASON, WASHINGTON, Pa., December 6.

Getting at the Facts.

A brief conversation yesterday with "Uncle" John Cooper convinces us that he is not, at this time, contemplating another venture in matrimony.

WHEN VENUS BUMPED US.

My, What a Compression That Was Thanksgiving Day!

TO THE EDITOR OF THIS SUN—Sir: One of the most interesting principles in agriculture was exhibited on Thanksgiving Day when the planet Venus bumped the earth.

The earth had just passed between Jupiter and the sun the day before, so that it was still under the tremendous repelling force of Jupiter trying to force the earth down toward the sun. Just then the planet Venus came around the curve east of the sun and began moving toward the earth.

The earth was caught in that pocket between the three opposing repelling forces—the giant planet Jupiter above, the sun below and Venus advancing toward the earth at an orbit velocity of about twenty miles a second.

For about an hour when the stress was greatest the earth was squeezed like a sponge. It squeezed the sap up through forest trees and out the limbs like sprinkles of rain, especially in localities of low barometric pressure. This principle would have swelled the buds and started a new season's growth if it could have lasted.

This demonstrated in a way the principle published in THIS SUN two or three years ago that agricultural growth would be greatest during periods when repulsion is increasing against the earth by means of planets in certain positions causing the earth to move toward the sun, provided there would be a sufficient number of rains during that period, which is usually not the case.

Hence growth can be made more rapid by putting plants in a glass room and forcing air into the room and out through a spring valve that would allow the air and pressure to be increased and regulated to the proper amount and degree of compression, thus starting a new department in agricultural science, whereby products can grow so fast that you can see them growing.

D. A. N. GOVERN, KANSAS CITY, Mo., December 4.

LOYALTY OF TEACHERS.

Have These Accused Shown That They Are Incompetent?

TO THE EDITOR OF THIS SUN—Sir: In relation to your editorial article entitled "Loyalty Pledges" in which you strongly and properly criticized the action of the Teachers' Union in asking President Wilson to "franchise a loyalty pledge that all true lovers of democracy may take without violating their consciences," I am taking the liberty of asking you to enlighten the situation by a further expression of your opinion on the following points:

What is the Teachers' Union and why are teachers permitted to form a union?

Has the Board of Education any powers of supervision over teachers in respect to their shall teach and the methods used; and if so, why has this board permitted the Teachers' Union and other teachers in the employ of the city to create and develop disloyal conditions such as now exist because of their action?

Have not these teachers illustrated that they are incompetent to teach loyalty to the country; and if so, should they not be summarily dismissed?

Can anybody properly teach anything he does not believe or professes not to believe?

Does not the action taken by the Teachers' Union constitute "leading aid and comfort to the enemy"?

GEOANN M. WOOD, New York, December 6.

ANTI-DOG STATISTICS.

Fido Reduced to Barrels of Flour in Continent Wide Parade.

TO THE EDITOR OF THIS SUN—Sir: I concede all the good qualities that have been attributed to the dog from time immemorial, yet I feel that it is a great wrong to feed dogs in these days of enforced economy.

I name ten statistics as a fair average daily cost of the care and feeding of a dog. This means \$28.50 a year. Multiplying this by 5,000,000, the estimated number of dogs in the United States, gives the enormous amount of \$142,500,000 spent annually upon dogs, 99 per cent. of which are not only useless but a nuisance to the community.

At \$15 a barrel, 12,166,666 barrels of flour could be purchased for this sum of money. These barrels, if placed on trucks, twelve barrels to each truck, would make a line of trucks 2,880 miles long. A barrel of flour weighs 196 pounds. Allowing a pound of flour to a loaf, consider the number of loaves of bread that could be made from that quantity of flour.

The dog carries disease in his hair and death in his teeth.

The only good dog is a dead one, for his skin can be made into good warm gloves.

J. T. M., New York, December 6.

THE PUZZLED TEACHERS.

A Little Awkward in Their English When They Ponder Loyalty.

TO THE EDITOR OF THIS SUN—Sir: In a recent number of THIS SUN there was a statement that the teachers' union of the city of New York had voted to call upon the President for "the annunciation of an attitude toward" certain "official problems."

This is calculated to arouse a sentiment of pity, first, for our poor overworked President, and secondly, for the poor children who have to depend for their instruction in the use of good English upon the members of the teachers' union.

C. E. B., HOORON, December 6.

The Patriot Child.

After you pay for his milk. After you pay for his spuds. After you pay for his roof. After you pay for his fuds.

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