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TELEPHONE, BEEKMAN 2300.

A Parallel to the Salary Grab of 1873.

The notorious Salary Grab was passed by the Forty-second Congress on the day before its final adjournment, March 3, 1873.

By the time the Forty-third Congress assembled in December the authors of this brazen attempt to fatten on the public treasury had become so frightened that they tumbled over themselves to repeal the law, and many who had drawn the money appropriated by its retroactive provisions restored it to the Treasury.

The repeal bill was drafted, proposed and passed to save the political skins of the men who enacted the Salary Grab. Their action had nothing to do with the merits of the controversy it had aroused. They cowered before the anger of their constituents, and without a word of defence, ran away from the storm their greed had raised.

In October, 1917, the House and Senate passed the war revenue bill containing the joker by which the salaries of members of Congress were exempted from the unjust, inequitable and indefensible "excess profits" tax of 8 per cent. laid on professional incomes and salaries.

In December, 1917, the House voted to abolish that exemption, and to apply the tax to the salaries of its members, and to those of the President and members of the judiciary.

This proceeding on the part of the House is an exact parallel to the Salary Grab repeal of 1873. The members have acted without regard to the propriety of the original legislation, and without consideration for justice, equity or fair play. Panic stricken at the wrath their conduct in October aroused, they have sought to allay public indignation, not by repealing the unjust tax, but by abolishing their own exemption therefrom. By doing this they hope to escape punishment for their attempted outrage, and they care nothing for the consequences of their act to other individuals or to the country.

One Representative told the truth about the repeal of the exemption. Representative LONGWORTH declared that "the force that impels us to commit this atrocity is fear for our own political skins." The facts could not be more succinctly stated; the tax is an atrocity, and the House is willing to submit to it only because its members dare not carry their plan of exemption through in defiance of their enraged constituents.

Surprises in the Soldier Vote.

A comparison of the Mayoralty vote cast by the soldiers with the vote cast at home is interesting. Maybe it is illuminating.

Mayor MITCHEL received 23 per cent. of the votes cast here in town. In the camps, where it was supposed his well known Americanism would help him, he polled 21.5 per cent. of the vote.

Before election it was whispered that MORRIS HILLQUIT would get a tremendous vote from conscripts in camp. In town he polled 22 per cent. of the total vote. In the camps he polled 13 per cent. of the total.

The sharps believed that the soldier voters would consider BENNETT a negligible quantity. In town he polled 8 per cent. of the total vote. In the camps he polled 11 per cent. of all the soldier votes cast for Mayor.

Nobody expected that Judge HYLAN would do better in the camps than he fared in the city. Here, with all the Tammany machinery working for him, he got 46 per cent. of the total vote. In the camps we find his vote was 54 per cent. of the total.

Some political analyst wishing a pleasant winter may take the figures into hibernation.

New Jersey Enrolls More Volunteers.

The New Jersey manufacturers who met in war convention in Newark yesterday to form an association whose object is to give effective aid to the Government in stimulating production of war necessaries have set an example of voluntary cooperation which if followed throughout the nation would reduce to a minimum official interference with the ordinary processes of industry and bring maximum results with the least possible degree of friction. Voluntary cooperation of this kind, inspired by the needs of the country and unhampered by inelastic statutory enactments, is typical of the American temperament.

Through a society of the kind contemplated in New Jersey all the facts of the industrial situation within the limits of its jurisdiction would become immediately available for the information of public officers and the directors of private enterprises. In addition to this, members of the organization, whose knowledge of the general conditions affecting their enterprises is more complete than that possessed by any Government officer, should be sources of expert advice of the highest value not only as to problems affecting their own establishments but also concerning those of other States.

Nothing has been more encouraging in our war with Germany than the freedom with which men of all callings have put their special knowledge and their trade secrets at the service of the Government. The union of New Jersey manufacturers provides further evidence of the enthusiasm of business men to uphold the hands of the authorities in their tremendous task, and to give all that they have for the early attainment of victory.

The Bolshevik Impostors.

GEORGE KENNAN, whose vision of Russia is as clear as any American's and whose memory goes back a long way in the early struggles of Russia against bureaucracy, gives little credit to the Bolsheviki for the overthrow of the Czar's Government. In an article in the *Outlook* he points out that the seed that flowered last winter was sown almost wholly by the bourgeoisie and the nobility. "Partly by accident and partly by aggressive usurpation," the Bolsheviki were able "at the last moment to seize the fruits of other and better men's labors."

The attempt made in 1825 to establish a constitutional government was backed almost entirely by army officers and nobles; most of these Decembrists went to Siberia. The revolutionists of the period which ended in the assassination of ALEXANDER II. were in large part educated men and women; some Socialists, but not Socialist-Anarchists.

This group, including TCHAIKOVSKY, DOLGUSHIN, KROPOTKIN and CATHERINE BRESHKOVSKY, enlightened the Russian people and made 1917 possible. The workers in the mills and factories played no important part until ten years ago, when the first Workmen's Council was organized; "and even then," says Mr. KENNAN, "they were an injury rather than a help to the movement." Certainly it was not they that formed the characters of the soldiers who won the revolution of last March. Nor was it men like TROTSKY, for he and the other Socialist-Anarchist leaders were hiding in Switzerland and America, "squabbling among themselves about socialistic doctrines." The respectable elements of the revolution had nothing to do with the Bolsheviki:

"Every sane party, class and group stood aloof from them. Do the Socialist-Anarchists number among their adherents any of the older revolutionists—any of the men and women who have really done something for Russian freedom? Not one, so far as I know. Prince KROPOTKIN, VERA FIGNER, CATHERINE BRESHKOVSKY, LEO DEUTSCH, HERMAN LOPATIN, VERA ZASULITCH, GEORGE LAZAREF, NICHOLAS TCHAIKOVSKY and VLADIMIR BOURTSEV are all in Russia, but they shun Bolshevikism as if it were the plague. Some of them have spent almost as many years in prison or in exile as the leaders of the Socialist-Anarchist group have lived; but they are too respectable for association with LENINE and TROTZKY."

Mr. KENNAN believes that the Provisional Government had a legitimate right to rule, for it had a mandate from the Duma, "the only body that even approximately represented the nation." But this rule the Bolsheviki overthrew "after deceiving and bedevilling the soldiers, the workmen and a part of the peasantry with promises of peace and free land."

Thus a great nation has been compromised by liars, looters and repudiators who never earned even a small share of the credit for the revolution; who were skulkers when the real Russians put themselves in the face of danger. Is it likely that such an impostor Government will last long enough to betray Russia into a violation of her international pledges?

The Lack of Good Coffee Houses.

The one article of food that the war has not made more costly is coffee. There is no shortage of the delectable bean. New York nearly always has a million or more bags tucked away. Brazil could send us a boat load of coffee every day if we needed it. As it is, usually half a million bags are on the sea, bound to this port.

Good coffee comes in raw at about eight cents a pound. Roasted and ground, the grocer hands it over the counter for twenty cents, taking a fair profit for the broker, the jobber, the roaster and himself. The price of coffee, as compared with its comforting qualities, is nothing. It makes the nervous nervous, the strong stronger. Chilled firemen prefer it to spirits; heavy spirit drinkers avoid it as they would poison. The policeman refuses to march until he has had a breakfast cup.

The New Yorker in search of liquid stimulant can drop in almost anywhere and buy almost anything except good coffee. We have dram shops, soda counters, orange juice emporiums and tea rooms, but no coffee houses are found except in the foreign districts. A ghost of the seventeenth century, investigating Manhattan, might think that we had as ruler CHARLES II., who considered coffee houses dangerous; people talked and thought too much in them.

There are Greek coffee houses in Madison street and Second avenue, and Jewish coffee houses in the Grand street neighborhood. Perhaps there are some Syrian coffee houses downtown. It is unromantic to say so, but most of these places do not have good coffee. Americans make better use of the berry than any other people, literature dealing with Paris and Constantinople to the contrary notwithstanding. The American who has studied coffee demands a liquid rich with coffee saturation, but so clear that the bowl of a spoon will shine through the brew. This he may spoil with milk or enrich with cream. Mr. HOOVER need not speak to the coffee connoisseur about sugar, too much of which ruins the flavor.

Such coffee as we have described is not to be had in the American business districts of New York, except when it is bought as part of a meal. The best restaurants make good coffee, but they would be surprised, not to say annoyed, by a patron who ordered coffee alone. The cheap restaurants, where the spender of five or ten cents is welcome, sell what pretends to be coffee, but if it ever was coffee too much boiling hath made it mud. The best that can be said of the dairy lunchroom coffee is that it is hot. In all that district south of Brooklyn Bridge, where work a million people, many of whom must yearn for non-alcoholic stimulant, there is not an out-and-out coffee house to serve coffee, not as the proprietor thinks Americans should have it, but as Americans like it and want it.

Kitchin's Badly Executed Offensive Operation.

The accounts of the vote in the House of Representatives on Representative LONGWORTH's proposal to repeal the 8 per cent. "profit" tax on salaries all draw attention to Field Marshal CLAUDE KITCHIN's behavior, but differ somewhat as to the nature of his verbal orders.

According to one version General KITCHIN "rushed up and down the Democratic side shouting to his colleagues to sit down." Elsewhere we read that the commanding officer of the House majority shouted:

"Stand up, boys; the Secretary of the Treasury needs the money!"

The possibly bewildered private in the ranks may have repeated after the Psalmist:

"Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising; thou understandest my thoughts afar off."

However, since it is essential to the success of American operations, even in the House of Representatives, that a commander shall not issue confusing and conflicting orders, or orders causing confusion in the minds of his men and causing them to take conflicting action, we would suggest that KITCHIN be removed from his command and replaced by a silent, heavily armored and forward moving legislative tank.

The Hindenburg Catacombs.

The thirteen mile Hindenburg tunnel trench extended from Bullecourt northwest to the Scarpe, east of Arras, was forty feet underground and had an entrance from the trench system every thirty-five yards. Russian prisoners of war dug it. To employ prisoners of war at such work is in violation of all except the German rules of war.

From the main corridor small rooms opened with bunks for 20,000 or so men. The whole place was lighted by electricity. Electric fans freshened the atmosphere. Of course there was no danger from shell fire. Hot meals were served. For officers there were special rooms with beds, electric reading lamps, call buttons, writing desks. Boots to be polished were left outside the door. Pictures could be put up on the walls to make the place more homelike.

The tunnel was carefully mined and protected by concrete machine gun emplacements. In point of luxury it considerably surpassed life on a U-boat; in respect of safety it seems to have been better also. The capture of it without its destruction is a feat surpassing the capture of a submarine undamaged.

This tunnel is chiefly interesting as an example of German adaptability. Our enemies seem to be so comfortable underground that we need have no scruples about putting as many as possible there.

The Navy Wants Men.

In all parts of the country, and particularly in the inland States, German propagandists are energetically spreading the report that the navy does not want any more men. Sometimes the effort to discourage recruiting takes form in the declaration that "active recruiting has been discontinued." In other cases it is asserted that only men particularly qualified for special branches of the service are being accepted.

All statements of this kind are false. The Navy Department is diligently seeking recruits for every branch of the service. The same opportunities that were offered to men six months ago are open to them now; the requirements of the navy call for thousands more from the same high class of qualified citizens which has hitherto supplied its wants.

In origin the reports likely to discourage enlistment are pro-German. They are innocently repeated by citizens unacquainted with the facts, and heedless of the injury they may cause. As they are entirely false, no person should circulate them. If those to whom they are repeated will report their substance and give the names of their bearers to the Navy Department, their authors will be found and prosecuted; and in this way the German propagandists in this country may be thwarted and punished.

Somebody has been telling untruths about General PERSHING, to the General's great annoyance; and we should like to be present when the victim of these falsehoods catches their author.

A number of fist fights at the polling booths, several arrests, wholesale challenging of votes, and an alleged attempt to "stuff" a ballot box were among the exciting features of the day.—*News despatch from Boston.*

The modern Athens still knows how to make an election interesting.

A man who didn't know his age and so registered, and who is now in the National Army, turns out to be 40. And like as not he looks and feels ten years younger by this time.

Every time the Emergency Fleet Corporation gets a new general manager Uncle SAM murmurs to himself a line from MARLOWE's "Faustus," ever so slightly altered:

Is this the pace to launch a thousand ships?

The Food Administration counsels an old fashioned Christmas dinner. This is rather hard on the remodelled appetite.

GOVERNMENT OWNERSHIP.

The Cocksure Statements of an Advocate Examined Briefly.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Two newspapers of this city, discussing Government ownership of railroads, undertake to enlighten us on the condition of the transportation lines.

One paper says editorially: "Every subsidised sheet drawing its cheap pay in the shape of an advertisement appropriation or a hatful of free transportation ran to the help of its railroad masters."

Why does the editor cast a slur upon journalism? He is declaring that some newspapers are subsidized. Does he mean to say that his own paper is upright, unsubsidized and free in mind and thought?

Continuing he says: "They (the railroads) know very well that they cannot stave off Government ownership for many years. But they know that there are still millions to be got if they can stave off Government ownership for a little while."

If this statement be true, then why did the railroads offer their services to the Government? How can they earn millions when offering their services to the Government when they are losing net income and ask for an increase in rates in order to meet their obligations and keep solvent?

This editor knows what an enormous sum of money it would take to purchase outright every transportation line in this country. He also knows that the burden of meeting operating deficits would fall on the people in the form of taxes. Yet he says that the burden of debt and the burden of taxation are staggering. Does he wish the burdens to decrease or increase?

"Of course, we would not have the holders of bonds and stocks robbed of what is theirs; pay them a fair price based upon the actual investment their inflated securities represent," he says.

But the people of the United States have enough to do to provide the Government with money to carry on the war. MORGAN MAYO.

NEW YORK, December 19.

OIL BURNING FURNACES.

One That Is Used in California But May Present a Fuel Problem Here.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* In THE SUN you say editorially:

An oil burning device, that could be adapted for use in a furnace that had been primarily designed to produce steam or to heat water by burning coal, would be a boon to thousands of people just now. We heard of such a thing recently, but have not yet been able to find out where they are manufactured or marketed.

I saw three such devices in the Palace of Machinery, San Francisco, in 1915, and investigated all of them. One of them is a well known California product and well recommended. It costs about $350 to install. It is connected with an electric motor of small size which takes the crude oil from its source, a pipe, and reduces it to very fine vapor dust, whence an electric spark ignites it. The fire can be regulated.

I have seen it work and would have bought one and brought it East if I had been able to buy the crude oil here at a reasonable figure. I could not, so I dropped the whole thing. But the oil burner is here and is used in California, where oil is cheap.

I consider it a capital machine and wish I could get rid of my messy coal furnace. I should think that there would be no trouble at all to get the address of these concerns through the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce.

HOLLIS, December 19. H. V. B.

WHY WAIT TO ECONOMIZE?

Let's Be a Little Drastic in Anticipation of Federal Restrictions.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* If coal is scarce, why temporize by silly little measures, such as turning off a few signs for an hour or even two nights a week? If economy will help win the war, let us get down to rock bottom at once, not a year from now.

Let us close all the bars and restaurants (except the modest little "lunch" rooms) at 9:30 every night and we shall save coal, food and other things in amounts worth while. The theatres could be asked to begin earlier, say 8 o'clock, and the "movie" houses to close earlier.

We need not wait for national prohibition in these matters. Let us adopt reasonable restrictions now.

With industries shutting down for lack of fuel and the poor dying of pneumonia, why heat the dance halls until after midnight? Let us burn only necessary lights every night and use our energies to the best advantage all the time, allowing only reasonable amusement and relaxation. SAPIENTIA.

NEW YORK, December 19.

The War Spirit in Michigan.

From the Pewamo News.

Mr. Matt Miller of Pewamo and Miss Hazel Loveless of Muir were married Wednesday. Although Matt ain't got to us with a wedding cigar yet, we'll go right on and say we wish he and his charming bride the best of everything in this world and hope they may be permitted to enjoy many years of martial happiness.

ITALY'S SPIRIT UNBROKEN BY DISASTER.

No Minimizing of the Defeat, but Praise for the Men Who Fought in the Ice for Two Years.

The subjoined letter has been received in this city from Silvio Villa, a member of the firm of A. P. Villa & Bros. of 88 Madison avenue, who left New York more than a year ago to join the Italian army.

MY DEAR FRANCIS: I know that you and my other friends in America must be thinking of me often in these days, while apprehending the news of the events on our front. I like to let you all know what my feelings are, or, better, what are the feelings of the Italians in these tragic days.

We have not lost our heads. Under the violence of the blow that has struck us, the whole nation has reacted, and we are to-day facing with calm a situation that is just short of being desperate. We have faith we will overcome it. We have a good army, strong allies and a determined will to win.

It is a question of time and nerves. I suppose there will be some doubt abroad about the nerves of our soldiers, after the sad episode that has caused the collapse of our eastern front. Still, you can count upon them to do their duty, as they have done for two years—as they have done the very day of the defeat, outside of the few for whose momentary failure we are all suffering to-day.

I never boasted about the deeds of the Italian army in her glorious days. I can do it now, when a dark cloud threatens to dim her glory. The men that stood for two winters the ice of the Alps or the horrors of the Carso, that took Gorizia and the Bainsizza, deserve some indulgence, even if a few of them have failed. Even for those few I wouldn't be too severe. Perhaps we asked of them endurance beyond the limit of human power. Last winter hundreds of soldiers were taken from the trenches with frozen feet, some frozen to death, some ill beyond recovery from exposure. So the winter before. Two years of sufferings similar to these may break the fibre of the strongest.

Our enemies knew it, and took all the advantage of it. They got at our men with their insidious means, used the unfair arms with which they have won most of their battles, poisoned the minds weary from the long sojourn in the trenches, deluded them into the notion that peace was coming, that everybody was going to be friends, that all would be home for Christmas. When the time was ripe they threw off the mask and struck.

Their victory was easy. Our defeat was terrible. By a miracle, it didn't mean the irreparable loss of the whole army. By a miracle, and through the magnificent way our soldiers of the Third Army fought. They battled for three days, in several points routing the Austrians, till they had to retire, lest they be caught in the rear by the Germans rushing through the wide gap in our Second Army at their left.

I can't go into account of the events now. You know them as well as I. You will know more by the time you get this letter. What I can say is that, rather than crying upon the disaster, we are collecting all our will and our forces to stem the enemy for the time being, with the hope of eventually pushing him back. I am not going to brag we will do it—I know we will fight for it. Our men will be worth tenfold more on the Venetian plains, defending our soil, than on the rocks of the Carso.

Our allies have come to our help with an admirable solicitude—with true fraternal spirit. If on the other side they have the Germans, the Turks and the Bulgars, we have the French and the English, and hope soon to have the Americans.

I have asked to join the British contingent at our front, as they need officers with a good knowledge of both languages. I hope to have a favorable answer soon. Not that I care more to fight with the English than with the Italians, but because I think I could do better than many others in the position I have applied for, while many others can do better than I in the position I have now. In any case, I will do my duty, as I have done so far—like everybody in Italy is doing.

My heart is full of bitterness—such bitterness to which no other bitterness can compare. Still I am going through this terrible trial with unshaken confidence that Italy will cancel the memory of this sad page of her history. The blow has destroyed in one day one hundredfold what two years of sacrifices had won for us. Still, the two years were not lost, as they showed the world what we could do. They are a good promise for what we will still do.

I wish you would tell these things to our mutual friends. I would like to write to them all, but I can't in these days. Yours cordially,

SILVIO VILLA.

BRESCIA, Italy, November 7.

Hilliard, Cowley, Manchester.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* The missing name of the third man saved from the Lexington is Captain Samuel Manchester, first pilot of the Lexington, holding a captain's license. He was pilot and captain of Sound boats for many years afterward. I went to Newport with my father the next summer on one of the other boats of the line, and Captain Manchester, who knew my father, pointed out to him the place where the Lexington took fire.

Some of the cotton in her cargo was shipped by the firm of which my father was a member and part of it was picked up, days afterward, on the north shore of Long Island. A. M. CAHOONE.

BROOKLYN, December 19.

The Great Changers.

Knicker—What's the news to-day?

Bocker—We have a new cook and a new manager of the Ship Board.

The Old Mill.

From the Richmond Times-Dispatch.

Grinding the same old grind,
Doing the same old do,
Working away at the same old work
And hustling to get it through;
Breathing the same old air,
Drawing the same old breath,
Living the same old sort of life
To end in the same old death.

Loving the same old wife,
Eating the same old food,
Chewing the same old piece of lint
When I feel in the same old mood;
Singing the same old song
To the same old mob out front—
And from every old day to the next old night
Doing the same old stunt.

Wearing the same old clothes,
Walking the same old way,
Saying the same old how-d'ye-do
That I said but the other day;
Reading the same old rot,
Writing the same old rut—
Scorning the thoughts of the other chap
With the same old pills and fut.

Oh for the good old days
When there was something new!
But, then, I suppose in the good old times
There were many old bothers too!
So, come! Let us quaff the cup
To its merry old dregs, my friend!
Let's journey along with a laugh and a song
To that last dodgasted end!

HENRY EDWARD WARNER.

A NEW RED CROSS BUREAU.

Crippled Men and Boys Helped to Employment at 311 Fourth Avenue.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* The Red Cross Institute for Crippled Soldiers and Sailors has opened an employment bureau for crippled men and boys at 311 Fourth avenue. This is not a bureau for all handicapped persons. We deal with cases of amputation, paralysis, Pott's disease, hip disease, &c. The bureau has been organized to cope with the entire cripple problem in New York city, and is anxious to have registered on its books all male cripples who are out of work.

It is our hope that the general public will be sufficiently interested in what we are doing to call to see the bureau. We are located on the northeast corner of Twenty-third street and Fourth avenue. We hope that the readers of this letter will refer all crippled men who are out of work to the bureau.

If any one is interested in employing cripples, will he please telephone us at Gramercy 14677 Employers will find that this bureau is run in a businesslike way. We are not trying to impose on the public workers who are unemployable. We hope to be able to supply employers with help that will prove permanently satisfactory. We want you to give us a trial. If we haven't the worker of your specifications we will tell you so.

The Government is preparing to give vocational training to those of our fighting men who are returned disabled. It is more important than ever to know just what work in any establishment could be performed by men with leg or arm injuries. In placing industrial cripples we shall gain experience which will help us to deal with war cripples. In this job we want to have the earnest cooperation of every citizen of New York city.

GERTRUDE R. STEIN,
Employment Secretary.

NEW YORK, December 19.

BOYCOTTING GERMANY.

Is the Threat of Post-Bellum Punishment Inadvisable?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* President Wilson has made himself a world leader and world spokesman to a greater degree than any other man in history. The schoolmaster in politics has the whole world at his feet and paying strict attention to his lesson. It is highly important—the fate of civilization itself depends on it—that his teaching be for justice and righteousness altogether.

His speech to Congress—and to the world—is beyond praise or criticism except in one particular, which is the threat of placing Germany in an economic Coventry in case peace should eventually be made with her present masters still in power.

A boycotted Germany would be an oppressed Germany, with the oppression coming from outside. Nothing can be better calculated to hold the German people as a unit in supporting their present masters than oppression from without.

The roots of this war lie too largely in oppression of this sort. As I pointed out in my letter indorsing Lord Lansdowne's letter, Germany, a small, poor country, needing supplies and markets abroad and finding them under other political control than her own, essayed to transfer them to her own control by conquest. She should be taught that greater commercial freedom is the only way by which she can get what she needed.

It is not true that the German people as a whole are in love with their Government, but while they look upon it as their protector they will fight for it. A commercial boycott will hold them together, sullenly biding their time for revenge, which is all too likely to come in the dreadful social and economic conditions in all lands which will come within ten years of the war's close.

As an economic boycott would in itself be a bad thing, I cannot see the wisdom of holding it as a threat over Germany's head. STEPHEN BELL.

MILLBURN, N. J., December 19.

AN OFFER TO HELP.

And a Discussion of Barge Possibilities in Moving Freight.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* As most of the public press and printed papers of our line are filled with reports and complaints against the railroad congestion, it occurred to us that in view of the widespread demand for assistance to relieve this congestion, either the State of New York or the Federal Government would supply money or barges for the new barge canal or inland waters.

If such a thing were contemplated the writer wishes to offer his personal services without any recompense whatsoever, to do any work that might be assigned him in connection with this proposition, or any other that would tend to relieve the conditions.

Approximately 14,000,000 tons of freight annually pass through Albany on the railroads, and most of the time of moving a freight car is lost from Albany to New York, as they come all the way from Detroit to Albany in approximately the same time. In this connection it also may be interesting to note that a barge could navigate from Buffalo to New York, carrying cargoes of hundreds or of thousands of tons of freight, and arrive at New York in less time than it takes a freight car of fifty tons or under to make the same journey, and the barge would have the better of conditions when it arrived in the harbor, as it could go alongside of a steamer or other destination or continue as far south as Norfolk, Va., or as far east as Boston or into Maine without shifting cargo.

Another thing to be considered is that 80 per cent. of the exports and imports of the country pass through the port of New York, most of which have to go over the railroads, and this condition has the relative aspect of the neck of a bottle that becomes clogged up while the rest of it is free and undisturbed.

If a barge of 1,000, 2,000 or 3,000 tons, loading approximately twenty, thirty or sixty freight cars, as the case may be, or take, for instance, 100 of such barges, were to load at Buffalo, it would turn back to the west thousands of freight cars ready for reloading, and these surplus cars would very quickly break up any congestion around the port of New York, as the freight cars would never have reached the point of congestion, and so move in an ordinary smooth manner.

Of course it need not be said that at this time it does not look as if we could put sufficient barges on the new canal or the Hudson River for them to become congested.

Concretely it would be possible if necessary to build 100 barges in one hundred days which would move approximately 10,000,000 tons of freight from Buffalo or Albany to New York.

CULLEN BARGE CORPORATION,
Edward F. Cullen, President.

NEW YORK, December 18.

A PUBLIC WORK FOR CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES TO UNDERTAKE.

An International Reclamation Scheme for After the War Settlement by American and Canadian Soldiers.

Overseas papers bring the news that the British Columbian Government and the Idaho Legislature are combining to carry out an interesting reclamation project by which a valuable tract of rich bottom land in the lower Kootenay Valley, at present subject to an overflow in summer, is to be rendered fit for farming by war worn soldiers of Canada and the United States. The tract consists of some 70,000 acres, of which rather more than half lies in the State of Idaho, while some 30,000 acres is in British Columbia, as the 49th parallel, the international boundary line, divides, so far as the flag is concerned, contiguous areas.

An examination of the project discloses what is probably the most remarkable physiographical situation on the North American continent. Rising in the heart of the Canadian Rockies at about 6,800 feet, the Kootenay River for the first 250 miles, in which it falls more than 5,000 feet, is an unnavigable torrent. After piercing the Purcell range in deep canyons, it emerges at Bonners Ferry 1,800 feet into the lower Kootenay Valley, and changes its character entirely, for it becomes a stately, slow flowing stream some 500 or 600 feet in width, winding in great S bends through the sixty mile long valley, at the end of which it empties into the Kootenay Lake.

This is a beautiful fiordlike sheet three to four miles wide and sixty-five miles long, flanked, as is also the valley, by steeply rising mountains, some of which attain around the lake an altitude of 10,000 feet. From Bonners Ferry down to the lake the valley is flat as a billiard table, and this is the tract to be reclaimed.

It owes its existence to much the same land forming process that created the Nile delta, for it consists for the whole sixty miles, with a width of two to three miles, of the richest possible alluvial deposits brought down from the Rockies by the river. Its level is but slightly above that of the lake, the land forming process still going on, for each recurring summer freshet lays a new layer of deposit on the "billiard table" floor of the valley, at the same time pushing terra firma further and further into the limpid waters of the lake, which is of great depth. With the exception of a fringe of fine cottonwood trees along the banks, the land is clear from side to side, ready for the plough.

Of its extraordinary fertility as well as of its great depth there can be no doubt. On unsubmerged patches Indians and half breeds have for many years grown crops of oats and wheat, where without any fertilizers whatever and with the most primitive implements they get crops of 100 and sixty bushels respectively, while more than thirteen tons of potatoes to the acre is officially reported as an average crop on Kootenay bottomland. Even larger crops are expected as soon as the six or seven weeks overflow in July and August is prevented.

This is caused by the vast masses of winter snow in the huge catch basin drained by the river. When these masses melt the lake rises from twenty to twenty-five feet above its spring level, thereby causing the inflowing river to back up and to cause a similar rise of the latter's level which covers the tract from end to end with some feet of water sufficient to prevent settlement.

Nature has very considerately furnished ready and radical means to prevent the overflow. Kootenay Lake has but one outlet, which lies about a mile west of Nelson, the flourishing capital of West Kootenay, as this part of the province is called. Here where the lake merges into the outlet a side stream, called Grohman Creek, has deposited in the course of ages banks of stone and rock which it has brought down from the heights of Mount Grohman (7,550 feet), thereby narrowing the outlet. From this point the outlet river is a series of cascades and rapids which make it quite unnavigable; in fact it descends in the next few miles no less than 350 feet. Hence by removing the constricting banks, or, in other words, by widening and deepening the outlet for a distance of 200 or 300 yards, it is as self-evident as that water will run out of a bowl if you cut a notch down to a point below the level of its contents that the lake level can be sufficiently lowered to prevent the lower Kootenay River rising to any harmful extent.

The work consists of nothing more than the removal in time of low water of material only a part of which is submerged, and as there is now a railway within 200 yards of the spot the necessary mechanical appliances can be got there cheaply.

Very different were the conditions a generation ago when I attempted to carry out this work with very primitive appliances, for Kootenay had then no railways. It was in 1883 that I obtained from the British Columbian Government a concession for the British Columbian tract, for which I was to pay $1 an acre when made available for settlement. After spending some thousands of pounds in obtaining expert advice and commencing the widening work at Grohman Creek the usual fate of first discoverers overtook me, for I realized, to use the Western vernacular, that "I had bitten off more than I could chew." The English company to which I turned over my concession, misled by incompetent advice, abandoned altogether the widening of the outlet and expended very large sums in erecting great chains of dikes along the river banks, by which they expected to prevent the overflow. They proved, as anybody acquainted with the local conditions could have foretold, worse than useless, for not only did the water rise as usual on the land behind the dams by seepage, but they held it there rather longer than usual. This occurred about twenty years ago, after I had returned to England; the land has since, in consequence of this failure, reverted to the Crown, and as I refused to have anything to do with the diking nothing has been done since, though the whole district has experienced a truly marvellous development.

Where in 1882, when I first accidentally strayed into West Kootenay in quest of big game, not a single house or white settler existed in a country much larger than Switzerland, there were before the war half a dozen lakeside towns, scores of mining camps, six railways, many steamship lines and quite a large white population. As explained, the fact that the site of the reclamation work is in British Columbia, while the larger areas of land benefited by it are in Idaho, makes the cooperation of the two Governments advisable. This was hitherto unattainable, but to-day, when the United States of America and Canada stand shoulder to shoulder in fighting a common foe, unity also in lesser affairs has at last been reached. May the success of this scheme, in which, I would like to add, I have no financial, only a platonic, interest, be a happy omen and serve as an incentive for further cooperation to the common weal.

Estimates of cost vary. Whatever it is will, so it is stated, be shared pro rata. In the hands of the Idaho Government $600,000 (£120,000) has already accumulated through the beneficial United States land laws, and this is to be Idaho's contribution. When reclaimed the land will be worth at the very least $100 an acre. It is intended that every soldier-settler shall have the chance of acquiring his plot out of profits on generous conditions. Considering the extraordinary fertility of the soil the homesteads need not exceed twenty acres, with adjoining hillside forest land on a more liberal scale. Hence some 3,500 soldiers will find most desirable homes in a beautiful country, favored by a really fine climate (altitude 1,800 feet, twenty inches rainfall and no harmful summer frosts) which will enable them to raise bumper crops for which the numerous mining communities near by will furnish the best of markets.

Except for a few weeks when mosquitoes are bad—they will probably disappear after reclamation—I know no drawback to as good a country for a white man as I have come across in wide travels.

In one respect, if I may add a personal note, the financial loss I experienced a generation ago had satisfactory results, if not for myself, at any rate for British Columbia. When I began negotiations with its Government for my concession some wealthy foreign capitalists had already rushed a private bill through the local legislature of British Columbia by which they were to receive in return for building a twenty mile narrow gauge railway—it was to remain their property—besides other valuable rights a huge land grant of 750,000 acres. This grant took in every yard of land around Kootenay Lake as well as the British Columbian part of the overflowed bottomlands. Their bill had already been twice read and was on the point of receiving final sanction when my baby scheme popped up, and in spite of fierce opposition the foreigners had to retire.

What has since turned out to be one of the richest mineral districts in North America was, so to speak, saved to the Province and to individual exploitation by its people.

WILLIAM A. BAILLIE-GROHMAN.

BOXLEY ABBEY, MAIDSTONE, November 30.

SCRAPPLE.

A Careful Description With a Mystic and Dedicatory Close.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Scrapple is very nice fried in slices of about half an inch in thickness, or mixed with potatoes (white), about two-thirds potatoes and the remainder scrapple.

Take all the useless parts from a pig's head, add the lungs, liver and heart to the carefully cleaned meat, put into an iron pot over the fire with enough cold water to cover it. Let it cook rather slowly until the meat seems done. If the liquor seems too rich add more water and remove the meat.

Take off all the skin and chop the rest not quite so fine as mincemeat. Put back in the liquor and when it boils up again stir in cornmeal until it is about as thick as mush. A little buckwheat is an improvement. Cornmeal burns easily, so great care must be taken while it is cooking not to let it scorch.

When the meal is in add salt and pepper to the taste, a little thyme, sage and summer savory. Cook about half an hour and pour into pans to mould it.

[1682. To Celestial Wuchow, in gratitude for Strayed Arrow.]

KWANGTUNG.

SOMEWHERE IN CONNECTICUT, December 19.

Called Back.

From the Clarksville Democrat.

Joe McCarty, the man that died a time or two last year, is much alive and will farm on the big farm next year.

The Late White Way.

The Great White Way is black.
The Great White Way is blue.
The Great White Way is back
To 1492.

DICTATED BUT NOT READ.

Does the Phrase Throw the Letter Outside the Law?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* It would be interesting to hear from some lawyer as to the legal effect of the unbusinesslike "Dictated but not read." If my recollection is not at fault, the question came up a few years ago in a trial court in this city. As I remember it, in the case then on trial it was essential for one of the parties to prove that a letter to a certain effect had been sent. The letter was offered in evidence but was objected to by opposing counsel on the ground that although each of it was stamped "Dictated but not read." The court sustained the objection, holding that the letter had not been proved and the party relying on it lost his case.

Whether the question has ever come up in an appellate court I do not know, but it would seem clear that the letter in this case was good law. Signing a letter and using the words in question is equivalent to saying: "I am signing this letter, but as I am not sure what is in it I don't really know whether I mean what it says or not." It is as if the sender was trying to place the recipient in the position of being bound by something which does not bind himself.

I should like to ask any defender of this practice whether, if he received a letter accepting an offer in a transaction of some magnitude, and stamped "Dictated but not read," he would be willing to consider the deal closed. If a prudent man, would he not be likely to ask "Then please sign another letter which you have read"?

Let us have done, then, with this erroneous and slipshod way of carrying on business correspondence. W. H. W.

BROOKLYN, December 14.