

The Sun AND NEW YORK PRESS.

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Telephone, BECKMAN 2200. Give These Powers to the President. Senator Fletcher has introduced in Congress a bill empowering the Government to commandeer and to build houses for artisans employed in shipyards, to control transportation lines serving these plants, and to establish barred zones for their protection.

The grave emergency in the production of shipping which has been caused by lack of housing facilities for workers in the yards has been graphically set forth this week by HENRY L. FLETCHER, president of the Newport News Shipbuilding Company, which is not able to produce to its full capacity simply because it cannot shelter the men it needs.

One great obstacle to quick construction of ships has been the impossibility of obtaining sufficient labor at the yards, and this has resulted largely from the impossibility of furnishing living quarters for the men who are needed. Many of the plants are situated far from residential quarters, and the facilities for travel to and from them are insufficient.

Admiral Bowler testified that while the yards could not get workers because the workers could not get homes, in some instances summer cottages, at most occupied only a few months in the middle of the hot season, could be adapted for tenants if they could be obtained. In numerous cases the owners of these cottages would unquestionably be glad to turn them over to the Government, but the transfer could be better managed under a statute providing for their use.

In other cases no houses exist and at such places the Government would be badly handicapped if it could not build appropriate shelter for its men.

The maintenance of transportation lines to the shipyards, managed primarily for their benefit, would allow workers to live in nearby communities, and to travel from the plants to their homes under the best conditions, unimpeded by local traffic, which, important to individuals though it might be, should take second place when the necessities of the war are involved.

The imperative necessity of these sections of Senator Fletcher's bill which affect the protection of the shipyards from spies, from fire hazards, and from other perils arising outside their limits, is apparent. Under the authority they would grant the President could acquire in the neighborhood of a shipyard whatever land might be needed for the safety of the plant, and police it efficiently by military or civil guards. The Government would thus be able to look after its interests inside and outside these establishments without clashing with the local authorities or with private individuals.

The powers sought in this measure are natural incidents of the shipbuilding programme on whose success depends the felling of the U-boat menace. They are essential to the proper prosecution of war against Germany, and Congress should not hesitate to confer them on the Executive Department of the Government.

A Southern Statesman to Southern Statesmen. Representative JAMES C. CANTRELL, of Kentucky has appealed to his colleagues from Southern States for support of the woman suffrage amendment on grounds that should touch the minds and hearts of all.

He wastes no time or thought on the merits of equality at the polls, or on the desirability of prescribing at the national capital qualifications for electors in the forty-eight States. He is not concerned with the reasonableness or logic of the arguments advanced by the proponents and opponents of the amendment. Such considerations enter not into his computations. The stern realities of life are his meat and drink, and as one statesman to other statesmen he cries:

"Representative CANTRELL pointed out that ten Southern States now in control of thirty-one of the sixty committee chairmanships in the House. Four of these ten States control eighteen of the thirty-one chairmanships. That the South would like to keep this control goes without saying."

And on the desire of these ten States to keep their thirty-one out of sixty House chairmanships Mr. CANTRELL holds his edifice of persuasion. If the Democrats from the ten Southern States vote against the suffrage amendment, the committee chairmen from those ten States are likely to lose their jobs; consequently, it is the high moral duty of the Democrats to vote for the amendment.

We congratulate the women who are laboring diligently for the suffrage amendment on the fact that they are not responsible for the Kentucky Representative's blow in their behalf, although we are reluctantly compelled to admit that he knows the men to whom his burning words are addressed.

Libel Suits Where There Can Be No Allegation of Malice. In a case in which THE SUN happens to be concerned, the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court in the First Department, all five Justices concurring, has handed down an opinion of general interest to newspapers trying honestly to print what is so, and only what is so.

During the infantile paralysis epidemic of summer before last this journal published in a list of new cases reported by the Health Department the name and address of a certain child. There seems to have been either an error of fact or a mistake of location. A mattress maker at the same address brought suit against THE SUN, alleging negligent, careless, wrongful and untruthful publication, "specifying injury to his business and claiming damages therefor. The counsel for the defendant demurred to the complaint. The plaintiff procured an order for judgment on the pleadings, and the defendant appealed. The Appellate Court reversed the order for judgment solely on the ground stated as follows by Mr. Justice SMITH:

"We are of opinion that the complaint wholly fails to state a cause of action in the failure to state that the publication was made maliciously and with a willful intent to injure the plaintiff's business. All the damages sought in this action are damages to the plaintiff's business. In fact, that is all the damage that could be sought, and it is perfectly evident that the plaintiff could not truthfully allege, if he would, that there was any malice or willful intent to injure his business. It was apparently a pure mistake and for the damages accruing therefrom the party is without a remedy. Hovey vs. Rubber Tip Pencil Company (57 N. Y. 119). In that case it was held that to maintain an action for a libel injurious to plaintiff's business it must be shown not only that defendant's publication was not justified in fact but that it was with malice or a willful purpose of inflicting injury. As the complaint contains no such allegation the motion for judgment on the pleadings should not have been granted and the order should be reversed."

Thus the Appellate Division squarely affirms the just principle that in an action of libel upon plaintiff's business or place of business it must be alleged and proved that the publication was made with actual malice and with a willful intent to injure. The opinion has an obvious bearing upon the large class of damage suits for libel which are based on innocent if mistaken statement and with which every newspaper publisher in this town is more or less familiar.

The Money Value of Education. At the request of the Federal Commissioner of Education Dr. A. CASWELL ELLIS, professor of the philosophy of education, University of Texas, prepared the manuscript of a pamphlet published by the bureau under the title of "The Money Value of Education." The purpose of the publication as stated in the introduction is to give people an understanding of the extent to which "the wealth and the wealth producing power of any people depend on the quantity and quality of education."

One of the features of the bulletin are a number of charts, one of which purports to show how education increases productive power:

"Massachusetts gave her citizens seven years schooling. The United States gave her citizens 4.4 years schooling. Tennessee gave her citizens three years schooling. Massachusetts citizens produced per capita \$260 per year. Citizens of the United States produced per capita \$170 per year, and Tennessee citizens produced per capita \$118 per year."

In making this comparison between the extremes here shown, Massachusetts and Tennessee, is it a logical economical conclusion to make that the difference in the producing power of the citizens of these States is entirely due to education? There is a vast difference between the industrial conditions in the two States; between the number of manufacturing establishments, the amount of capital invested and the importance of the trade centres in Massachusetts and Tennessee. The author confesses in his text that it is "very unfair" to attribute this difference to differences in educational systems, but the misleading thing is that people are more likely to read the conspicuous parts of his charts and not read his qualifying limitations.

Another chart shows that "Less than 1 per cent. of American men are college graduates, yet this less than 1 per cent. has furnished 55 per cent. of Presidents and 36 per cent. of

members in Congress." Another one is to the effect that "With no schooling of 5,000,000, only thirty-one attained distinction," while "with college education of 1,000,000, 5,708 attained distinction." And another says that in a certain class of work positions demanding only reading, writing and arithmetic pay \$982, while positions demanding a college or technical education pay \$2,400.

We shall not quarrel with these figures. But as the bulletin is directed to the money making value of education, it might be asked, is it the high moral duty of the Democrats to vote for the amendment?

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labor when we entered the struggle. But the actual necessities of the case were not comprehended until our own errors and mistakes enforced them on us.

What the President has called on Secretary Wilson to do is to reform his department and align it with the needs of the army, the navy, the nation. The new establishment will include a countrywide system of labor exchanges, all under one direction; a plan for the adequate training of workers, an agency to direct the supply of labor to the industries essential to the public welfare, instruments for the adjustment of disputes and machinery to safeguard workers at their tasks and in their homes.

Through the intervention of the Department of Labor it will be possible to prevent the waste that now occurs because men of one trade are idle when they might be employed at another, and because industries hampered by lack of workers are unperformed of the market in which their wants could be met. The extravagant idleness characteristic of seasonal trades can easily be modified, if not done away with. There are many occupations now producing luxuries that can be diverted to necessities with profit to employers, employees and the country.

Only now are some citizens awakening to the fact that in this war the whole power of the nation must be exerted. We cannot win victory in the conflict unless every atom of our energy is directed to one end. Mobilizing man power means more than putting armies in the field. It means that in all forces and shops, on all transportation lines, on all farms, the unified strength of every American will be exercised under competent guidance to the achievement of a common purpose.

The Government has commandeered prunes, but as it is taking only the large and middle sized ones boarding house stores are safe.

One charity pirate has been sentenced to a term in the penitentiary, and in consequence the cash of the generous is considerably safer than it has been.

A traffic official doubts if the heightened demurrage charges will cause some men to empty freight cars of goods consigned to them, as they are "able and willing to pay higher demurrage rates just so that they may keep their goods in freight cars. By doing this they do not have to bother with warehouses." Still, however raising the rates will not solve the problem, evulsion has often been successfully resorted to.

Torpedo fired by U-boat pierces Red Cross painted on British hospital ship—Newspaper headline.

The Red Cross is a shining mark for the Hun.

Mississippi may be proud of its Legislature for having been the first to act on the nationwide prohibition amendment to the Constitution of the United States. The lawmakers took only fifteen minutes to approve the proposal after it had been laid before them. This was quick action, but some States may prefer to have their Legislatures earn fame for thought rather than for speed.

Col. ROBERT M. THOMPSON having eliminated himself from the presidency of the Navy League, JOSEPH S. DANIEL will now be asked to allow his hundreds of thousands of members to work unimpeded for the welfare of the country's bluejackets.

The white hat band which identifies the cadet fliers of the army bears no relation whatever to the white feather with which pacifists adorn themselves.

Red Tape has tied up the income tax blanks, and the only blanks are in the remarks of the internal revenue collectors.

Geneva says that crowds marched through the streets of Berlin, Leipzig and Essen shouting: "We must have peace! Any time enough Germans feel that way about it they get it."

"ALRIGHT." An Inexhaustible Combination That Creeps Into Letters.

To THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—Sir: There is a very alluring combination of letters in the word "ALRIGHT," through correspondence, that passes for a word and is continually justified by its sponsors through an illogical comparison. I have been accused of all degrees of old fogeyism for expunging it from the transcripts of my dictation for the last ten years. It has the nice little "a" at the end, should like to see it welcomed and fed on milk and fish or taken out upon suitable waters with a rock and a bag and sunk without leaving a trace.

The inexhaustible word that I am glaring at with some preference for the latter procedure is "alright." In letters from the large engineering and manufacturing corporations it appears now more frequently than does the expression "all right." Strangely enough its users point to the word "already," yet they do not write "already" when they mean "all ready." It is a trap, or is down? Can thumbs down kill it?

CHARLES H. WILSON. NEW YORK, January 9.

Arkansas Notes the Progress of Science. Bates Correspondence Reel County Record. There are a few things scientists or inventors have made improvements on in 200 years. Such as arandaverdous addele, crooked hand holds for ploughs and grandmother's apple dumplings.

The Locomotive Prophet. From the Atlantic Constitution. I told you what the times would be, and But it's still up hill-up hill I prophesied the world would end But the old world's rolling still!

War or weather, it's just the same—Keep a fallin' down Turn up trumps in the old life game An' the other faller's still!

Oh, tell me what When a fellow drops When his prophesy Won't come true!

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ARE OUR BROWS LOW? Or Do American Theatregoers Rebel at Self-analysis?

To THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—Sir: Ever so often a play of intellectual merit is brought to New York production in a real art spirit. The reviewer, called in appreciative as a rule in the presence of a worthy effort, accord the performance its due of praise; the Drama League and literary bodies hasten to add their indorsement; the people who compose what has become known as the theatre cut all over their afternoon tops and dilate on the particular values of the play; some make an after dinner speech and some one else writes an article, all to the effect that at last there is hope for the serious drama. So the play runs a few weeks and then is withdrawn at a feeling of certainty that this about the betterment of the theatre set? Certainly, not very far! For this sort of thing has happened time and again.

These thoughts have been aroused by the letter recently printed in THE SUN from Mr. Herbert Brenon about the unfortunate fate of the play "The Torch" of Henri Batallie, "Les Flambeaux," known to us in English as "The Torch"—one of the most powerful and thought compelling pieces of literature that I have ever read or seen upon the stage, a drama indeed so fine and sweeping in its logic and philosophy as to be almost a fiction, which speaks of an unforgettable, Mr. Brenon's point, too, should be carefully considered, for "The Torch" was withdrawn from the stage after a run of four weeks, and the word of Mr. Brenon will be listened to attentively, almost with a feeling of awe, by men of artistic vision who have redeemed the motion picture from utter banality.

Of late many readers of THE SUN have been enraged in the interesting and worth while pursuit of calling attention to existing wrongs in the theatre. A case in point is the one which may be considered as significant. One of the so-called "commercial" theatrical producers, in collaboration with a serious actor, undertook the American production of the Batallie tragedy for no other reason than that they considered the play so fine that they wished to present it to the American public. In a more recent issue of THE SUN, the intellectual judgment of the New York theatregoing community. And the play failed? Why? Perhaps because of that fatal note of American theatregoers an unhappy ending. Perhaps because many theatregoers became possessed with the idea that the play was too "highbrow" for them. Who can say? Yet the play was dramatic throughout; it had a real "punch"; and even for those who confessed to being unable to discover "what it was all about" there was an abundance of things to be learned from the play. Well produced, and in the main parts splendidly acted.

I believe that one of the chief reasons for the failure of "The Torch" lay in a certain native American characteristic—the opposition, generally subconscious, to the idea of a serious play. It is a fact that the American rebels at self-analysis, or to a reflection on his own elemental emotions or on his basic weaknesses, which after all are only the basic weaknesses of all humankind. No characteristic of the American mind is more striking than this inclination to indulge in introspection. And this probable cause for the rejection of Batallie's tragedy makes its failure all the more interesting. The outstanding characteristic of this play is its searching and poignantly appealing philosophy. The basic thought of this play is that the only way to find a thoughtful man or woman who attended a performance of "The Torch" was able to escape a trend of thought on incidents, experiences or emotions in his or her life which this powerful sermon on the conflict between the ideal and the real, the noble and the ignominious, who are not entirely devoid of feeling, hope that Germany and Austria will win this war. Much as they try to disguise it, one of a discerning mind can easily detect it.

They belong to the great underground Hun army that invests in a mechanical which will be more difficult for the other side. Each knows how to do his bit and he does not need to be armed. The Technically extracted foreman of a shop that repairs and rents out auto trucks knows how to bang up the trucks and the repair outfit, and he knows how to do it. The same is true of people of this breed holding responsible positions in many other lines of work, where effective administration strengthens our arm for war. It is their bit to render everything with which they have to do as ineffective as possible. Many institutions who have this sort in their employ would do well to sort themselves as to where the hitch is in their establishments and put none but native Americans on guard.

An acquaintance having a large amount of capital invested in a mechanical plant was lamenting the fact that he did not seem to be getting anywhere with a large volume of accumulated work. I called his attention to the fact that he had a superintendent of Teutonic extraction. He was not long looking into the matter, and at that point and made a change, after which his sidetracked work went out with a rush—also some Teutonic help that the new American superintendent did not consider essential to the well being of the establishment.

It is the danger above set forth that the underground, unarmed Hun sympathizers do their bit to paralyze our industries when they are not burning up or blowing up our plants and committing other crimes against our people and our country. Ultimately we found out what the Hun did for us, and we are doing for us, and it is about time we should realize what this underground army is doing for us. They will persistently do their bit against us as long as we permit them to be in positions where they can. It is a far reaching subject that American business men will do well to look into—and soon.

ZEB GAINES. GOOSE CREEK, L. I., January 9.

A Bright Future. From the Atlantic Gazette. Remember the fall stamp, Don't you cry, You'll be a war bond By and by.

A Kentucky Treasure Trove. From the New York City Times. J. B. Hopp cut a tree from his place last week and procured a large can full of honey. He also cut another tree this week, but did not find as much in it. In view of the fact that sugar is so inaccessible to the people, finding the tree with considerable honey is a little fortune, since honey to the most of us is a very agreeable substitute for sugar syrup.

The Winner. From the Atlantic Post-Intelligencer. Sing and be glad, though fate may frown And fortune back your shins; The devil has a cunning trick. That's why he wins.

As Francis Shakespeare Said, "Look Up, Freeze Up."

To THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—Sir: It appears that our ever welcome epistolary Charles H. Wilson has become a poet and astronomer. Astronomy may be, I believe in, the germ of poetry. My own revered Strathmury bard, Wilibald, of himself saith that while he doth not from the stars his judgment pluck yet he thinketh he hath astronomy.

No doubt he had it. And may it not reasonably be supposed that by frequent stellar exposure, at such times respiring the breath of heaven, commonly yeelp divine afflatus, which exhalation of the gods come down past the stars and mayhap toucheth them—may it not be the case, is it not logical to deduce, that that in he be contracted poet?

I agree heartily, in the main, with what our Newton poet saith respecting winter; but the other evanescent while gazing raptly into the beauteous eyes of night through a telescope I freeze my ears.

DECATUR, Ill., January 9.

DILLON'S MILK PLAN. Approval of a Store System That Might Save \$45,000 a Day.

To THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—Sir: The suggestion of ex-Commissioner John J. Dillon for a committee appointed by the Mayor to demonstrate the cost of milk delivery through stores deserves more consideration than it has yet received. His figures show a definite saving to milk consumers of three to four cents a quart, and his experience and knowledge of the subject lend a feeling of certainty to his estimates. The saving to consumers of the city would be not less than \$45,000 a day, or more than \$15,000,000 annually. The fact that Mr. Dillon is willing to back the experiment with \$5,000 of his own money is sufficient evidence of his sincerity and conviction. This matter is of vital importance to the people of the city.

A CONSUMER. NEW YORK, January 9.

STORE DOOR DELIVERY. Let Business Men Record Their Opinion on a Proposed Innovation.

To THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—Sir: The Government, apparently, is considering the necessity for putting into effect the system of "store door delivery" as a war measure, and this demands consideration at once by every house that receives freight.

It is a system for the local delivery and collection of freight by the railroads from pier to store door for consignees, and vice versa, for an equitable trucking charge in addition to the rail freight charge. Delivery would be made to store door of consignee immediately upon arrival of freight at pier without first sending "arrival notice." It would reduce congestion at freight terminals caused by the present method of sending arrival notices with consequent delay of one or two days in removal of freight, and by having all trucks carry capacity loads at all times.

Much can be said in favor of instituting this system as a patriotic measure at this time, but it is not without its disadvantages to some houses. The undersigned believes that, under normal conditions, each consignee should be free to choose between "store door delivery" and the present system.

We request that some great advantage to the nation by adopting the system under existing conditions, we urge that every business house call in its shipping department at once and carefully consider if it could adjust its business to this proposed system.

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