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The Chancellor's Suggestion of an Intimate Conference.

Whether the President waits or not for Count CZERNIN's answer before delivering his rejoinder to Chancellor VON HERTLING, there is no doubt that the rejoinder cannot yet be fully responsive to this suggestion:

"Mr. RUNCIMAN in the House of Commons recently expressed the opinion that we could get much nearer peace if responsible representatives of the belligerent Powers would come together in an intimate meeting for discussion. I can only agree with him that that would be a way to remove intentional and unintentional misunderstandings and compel our enemies to take our words as they are meant, and on their part also to show their colors. * * *

"Discussion in an intimate gathering alone could lead to understanding on many individual questions which can really be settled only by compromise.

"It has been repeatedly said that we do not contemplate retaining Belgium, but that we must be safeguarded from the danger of a country with which we desire after the war to live in peace and friendship becoming the object or the jumping off ground of enemy machinations.

"If, therefore, a proposal came from the opposing side, for example, from the Government at Havre, we should not adopt an antagonistic attitude, even though the discussion at first might only be unbinding."

The Government at Havre is the Belgian Government; King ALBERT's Government.

It would be quite proper and entirely natural for the President to inquire of the German Chancellor whether the preference his Reichstag speech seems to express for an informal conference, "an intimate meeting for discussion" between "responsible representatives of the belligerent Powers," refers to a separate discussion with Belgium concerning the Belgian question—such, for example, as was recently held at Brest-Litovsk with the Bolshevik Russians over the Russian question—or to a general conference, intimate if at first unbinding, with responsible representatives of all the Governments now fighting Germany and her allies.

There is nothing in the speech of the German Chancellor to show plainly that the intimate discussion he has in mind, as a better method than long distance dialogue to test the possibility of a consensus promising an honorable peace, contemplates anything more than response to an individual proposal from Havre. That road to settlement, of course, is out of the question. The Governments opposing Germany in the field must all participate in any intimate meeting intended to discuss the questions of war and peace. A clearer declaration from the Chancellor that he means such a meeting and not merely a series of Brest-Litovsks, beginning with Belgium, would enable the President to reply in a manner befitting this nation's dignity and its loyalty to the other Powers associated with it in the war.

The Reason for the Austrian Dissatisfaction.

The reports from Washington yesterday that the relations between Germany and Austria-Hungary were strained and that the two nations were drawing apart contain nothing that might not have been expected when the recent unmistakable evidences of dissatisfaction in the Dual Monarchy are considered. Austria-Hungary has shown a different attitude to negotiations for peace from that of Germany. She has opposed Prussian aggression against their foes, Prussian rapacity for territory and German domination within Austrian boundaries. She has opposed these because she saw that she was merely being used as a tool in extending the power of Prussia. If she had any doubts at all that the masters at Berlin were determined to have a preponderance of power in Central Europe, these doubts have been dispelled by the treatment of Russia.

Austria-Hungary took a small part in the Brest-Litovsk negotiations after the first meeting. She practically retired, as did also Bulgaria and Turkey, after General HOFMANN showed Germany's hand by his demands for Russian territory. The treaty with Ukraine was more to the advantage of Germany than to that of Austria, for it erected along almost the entire eastern border of Austria and Hungary a German vassal State that would be little else than a financial and commercial adjunct to the German Empire.

By her present advance into Russia Germany is endeavoring further to strengthen her position in the East. Her permanent possession of Courland and the Baltic provinces would give her access to ports that she has long desired on the Baltic Sea. It would make the establishment of a free and independent Polish kingdom impossible; it would make even the Poland which Austria and Germany had so ostensibly planned a mere German province. Germany's dominion in the East would be unquestionably established, while her ultimate success in the war would make all the Balkans and Turkey mere subservient States. Austria-Hungary would thus be left isolated in the centre of a German dominion, her position more dependent and helpless than it is now or was before the war.

This is a condition that appeals not only to the Slavic elements of the Austro-Hungarian population, the Czechs, Slovaks and Serbs, but to the controlling German population. The Slavs may resent the heartless attack upon their racial brethren in Russia, but the Germans resent a Prussian dominance of which they cannot but feel they must eventually become the victims. When in the past Austria has helped Germany fight her battles Austria has suffered. She helped Prussia defeat NAPOLEON, but no sooner was France broken than Prussia resumed the traditional anti-Austrian policy which had been inaugurated by FREDERICK the Great. Again in 1864 Austria aided Prussia against Denmark, but no sooner had Prussia been assured of victory than she turned on her ally and deprived her of her share in Schleswig-Holstein. Germany's treatment of Austria-Hungary in the present war has been recognized even by the Austrians themselves as the treatment of a vassal State by a dominant power.

That the Austrian people are weary of the war there is no doubt. It is equally true that the powers at Vienna and Budapest are tired of waging a war that promises even in case of victory to result in the increasing power of Prussia and the continued subservience of Austria-Hungary.

Restore the State Convention.

The bill to amend the election law and restore party nominating conventions in this State introduced last night in the Senate by Senator CHARLES D. NEWTON as chairman of the special committee which has been inquiring into the whole question of direct primary nominations provides a reasonable and well guarded scheme for the reestablishment of party procedure in this State on a sane and intelligent basis.

Under its provisions, the electors enrolled in a political party would elect delegates to conventions, and in case they so desired, pledge these delegates to support certain candidates. The roll of the convention would be made up by the Secretary of State and reviewable only by the court. The evils of the temporary roll and its manipulation by the committee on credentials would be done away with and the convention would consist of delegates owing their seats only to the electors of their party, and competent to speak the will of those electors, after due consideration of all the circumstances which should influence them in their conclusions.

This measure, or one based on the experience and knowledge that have produced it, which will accomplish the object it is intended to attain, should be enacted and made operative before the time comes to choose the candidates for State office this fall. The direct nomination of candidates at the primaries, complicated by unofficial conventions for the adoption of informal platforms, has proved a mistake, and an expensive mistake. It has failed to achieve the results that were promised for it. The power of the bosses remains unimpaired. The opportunity of public spirited citizens to impress their opinions on their fellows is circumscribed by the physical or financial limitations imposed on their personal activities. The opportunity for conference and counsel is eliminated. The party voter is reduced to the necessity of deciding whom, of several candidates for nomination, he shall support, without the benefit of the advice and assistance of his associates in distant parts of the State, and his action tends to be swayed, not by statewide needs, but by the accident of local prejudices.

The State has honestly attempted to better its conditions through direct primary nominations. The effort has been fruitless. The thing to do now is to restore the State conventions, and once more establish politics on a comprehensible philosophical basis.

Counsel for a Few Madmen.

Some of the radical politicians associated more or less intimately with the socialistic propaganda in this community are holding meetings to discuss the advisability of organizing in this country a Red Guard to support the Russian revolution. It is not disclosed whether that support is to take the form of attacks on the bourgeoisie of the United States in their homes or of an expedition of revolutionists to the distracted dominions that were once the Czar's and may soon be the Kaiser's.

We should applaud and encourage any enterprise which promised to relieve this country for all time of the revolutionists whose names appear as indorsers of the scheme contemplating the formation of a Red Guard. Undoubtedly their appearance in Russia would be greatly to the detriment of that unfortunate land, but by the time they reached its shores either the Germans, the Japanese or the now bewildered sane men among the Russians would be prepared to receive them in a suitable manner; and if this were not the case, the addition of a few more cutthroats to the population would be a matter of small consequence.

If, however, the design now under consideration by these madmen proposes the formation of a private army in the United States to reduce this nation to the chaotic impotence that has been achieved by the Bolsheviki working in Russia on the foundation laid by a corrupt and inefficient despotism, it is only fair to warn its promoters that such undertakings are contrary to the law of the land. The formation of armies is the prerogative of the State. The constitutional right to bear arms does not include the right to amend or overthrow the Constitution by force and violence, or to set aside its protective provisions through the operations of mobs bent on rioting.

We recall these facts for the benefit of any crackbrained agitator who may judge the present temper of the American public to be as tolerant of disorder, disloyalty and sedition as it has been in the past. There will be no lenity over here for creatures who may endeavor to shoot in the back the brave men who are defending us "Over There."

The Independence of the Board of Education.

We congratulate President ARTHUR S. SOMERS of the Board of Education and his associates in that important body on their announcement that they do not intend to remit to any other persons, no matter how respectable they may be, their official function in the selection of a City Superintendent of Schools.

No matter how high the purpose of any society or association, formal or informal, interested in this matter may be, the fact remains that the Board of Education must bear the responsibility for the choice made, and it would be lamentable, should an unsatisfactory man be selected, to have the officials of the system in a position in which they could take refuge behind an irresponsible society or committee, and attempt to clear their skirts of blame by contending that they acted only as rubber stamps in the transaction.

The present small Board of Education was created to centralize authority and establish accountability. If its acts merit applause we want to know whom to applaud; if they deserve censure, we want to be able to censure the delinquent individuals.

If, for example, the board should induce Dr. JOHN H. FINLEY to come back to this town as manager of the most important educational institution in the world, we should want to congratulate it on a triumph of administrative enterprise; and we should not like to be told that in reality some outsider deserved the credit for such a notable contribution to municipal well being.

The Lost Lightship.

On the first day of February, 1918, the Cross Rips lightship in Nantucket Sound broke away from her anchorage in consequence of the pressure of the drifting ice and was driven before a westerly gale eastward out to sea. The vessel has never been seen or heard from since her disappearance in the ice fields east of Nantucket. Search has been made for her by revenue cutters and other Government craft, but in vain. There were six men on board and they had provisions enough to afford subsistence for two months, so there is a possibility that they are still alive; but it is announced that the authorities of the Lighthouse Department have about abandoned all hope of finding the lightship or her crew.

Strangely enough, here was a vessel well known to be exposed to just such a danger as that which befell her, yet which was unprovided with the obvious safeguards requisite to prevent such a disaster. The Nantucket *Inquirer and Mirror* says:

> "She had no power, no masts, no sails—nothing except a little piece of a jib which could be rigged to the forward stay; nothing with which to help herself when she broke adrift and assist in keeping on a course or working her way back to the coast."

There was no wireless equipment on board and the last word from the crew was the message signalled by flags to the lighthouse on Nantucket: "We have broken adrift and need help!"

The Cross Rips lightship has long been one of the best known lightships on the New England coast. The vessel is familiar to every visitor to Nantucket. The steamer from New Bedford usually brings her the morning papers from the mainland, which the purser tosses on the deck of the lightship as the vessels draw near one another; but the package sometimes goes into the sea.

It would be interesting to know why the Government neglects to provide for the safety of a lightship like this, when it might be done with little trouble and inconsiderable expense. The men engaged in such service ought to be protected to the utmost, no matter what the labor or cost. Every lightship liable to get adrift should be furnished with sufficient power to propel her to a place of safety in case of accident, and with masts and sails and compasses, which may be utilized if need arises. Here there appears to have been a neglect to take any precautions whatever against a form of misadventure that was obviously liable to occur. Isn't there anybody at Washington whose duty it is to look after such matters? The crew of the Cross Rips lightship deserve protection just as much as those who are serving us in the army and navy; and if they have lost their lives in order to avert danger from ours, their sacrifice is no less worthy of honor.

We have intimated that the breaking away of the lightship ought to have been anticipated. The fact is that a similar accident occurred to a light vessel on the same station fifty years ago. On December 27, 1866, the Cross Rips lightship in Nantucket Sound parted one of her two cables; the other broke the next morning and the vessel was blown out to sea. Fortunately, however, the lightship was provided with a mast and sails in those days, so that the crew were able to navigate her to some extent; but she sprang a leak which compelled them to abandon her on the third day, when they were taken off by a ship bound from Boston to New Orleans. They had been given up as lost when word reached Nantucket of their rescue in February, 1867.

Some similar bit of good fortune may have befallen the crew of the lost lightship of 1918. In any event, the facts we have mentioned demand the immediate attention of the Government.

Mr. Browning's Gun.

The light and heavy Browning machine guns operated on the Congress Heights rifle range this week for the instruction of Congress and the public generally appear to have the advantage of comparative simplicity and to function satisfactorily. They are said to have stood up in a most gratifying manner under severe tests made by ordnance experts at the arsenals, and the War Department regards them as the most efficient arms of their kind yet produced.

Mr. BROWNING, the inventor of these pieces, is an authority of the highest reputation, whose devices have already been proved in sport and in war. The public is justified in expecting from him improvements on the guns heretofore produced, not only because of his previous experience, but also because he has had at his disposal the knowledge acquired in a great war in which machine guns have been used under conditions and to an extent hitherto unprecedented. The observers present at the demonstration in Washington were particularly impressed by the few parts used in the guns and the ease with which they could be taken down and reassembled, only one tool being used in the process, and most of the work being done with the aid of a cartridge. Few parts make for ease in production and standardization, and the fabrication of these weapons in great quantities is now going forward.

We shall not indorse the statement so frequently repeated that the Browning gun is the best machine rifle in the world; it must prove itself in service. But we have no doubt it is a good gun, probably as good as any, certainly better than older models, and we hope that a tremendous number of them will soon be on the western front speaking to the Germans in the language that Berlin cannot misconstrue.

It appears from the Russian situation that a Bolshevik government is one that is unwilling to protect those who do not subscribe to its doctrines and methods and incapable of protecting those who do.

The poet RABINDRANATH TAGORE has been remembered here as a philosopher who demanded a good stiff fee for giving us the opportunity to hear him denounce materialism. Perhaps the Department of Justice may be able to provide a less amusing cause to bear him in mind.

Survey of the conspirators in this country who easily filled their pockets with German money does not inspire confidence in the judgment of the Kaiser's agents in picking subordinate plotters.

The coming in of March is more lamblike than lionlike, and the dread date of the great blizzard approaches.

IBID.

Another Call for Information as to This Much Quoted Authority.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* On Sunday I read in THE SUN certain quotations attributed to "Ibid," in a letter on Rabelais and John Bartlett, and today my daughter, a student in the public school, asked me who "Ibid" was, she having come across him in reading.

I told her that I knew little of these high matters, but would ask you, who of course know everything.

BRICK TOP.

STATEN ISLAND, February 28.

The Antiquity of "Shoo Fly."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* The song "Shoo Fly" was sung by the schoolboys in Newark during the war. I remember it very well while attending the high school in that city in 1863-64. Those who ascribe its origin to 1869 should set their clocks back a bit. G. F. WEEKS.

WASHINGTON, February 28.

TRADE BRIEFS.

Electric trolley systems, harbor improvements and shipbuilding plants are being planned in Stavanger, Norway. American supplies will be needed and the Foreign and Domestic Commerce Bureau, Custom House, this city, will send to interested firms a list of names and addresses of engineers and constructors.

The embargo on exportations of foodstuffs to the West Indies has been removed from certain articles. Limited quantities of oats, corn, condensed milk, cheese, pork, beef, cottonseed oil, lard compounds and oleomargarine may now be shipped when proper applications are made.

Trade journals and catalogues have been asked for by Consul-General O. Bie Ravndal, Nantes, France. A commercial reading room will be established at the consulate.

SENATOR SMOOT'S FAST DAY PLAN.

Courteous Suggestions of Other Plans Curtailed Its Exposition in Full.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 28.—Able and experienced, Senator Smoot of Utah usually puts over anything he starts, but he failed in his recently suggested national fast days following a rule, as he explained, of the Mormon Church which designates the first Sunday of each month as a day when the members of that church shall eat neither morning nor midday meals. The Mormon Church, Senator Smoot explained, gives what is saved by these fasts to a church relief society. He said that "good physicians testify" to a general health improvement noted as a result of fast observances. He pointed out that a statutory monthly fast day, saving two meals at an estimated cost of fifty cents for the two, would save the people of the nation $50,000,000 monthly. The Utah Senator had proceeded thus far in his exposition when he yielded for an interruption by Senator Borah of Idaho, and then for half an hour or more there was an interesting discussion in which Senators from East and West courteously expressed opinions that other things could and should be done before even a part day fast a month should be made obligatory on all people.

Senator Borah spoke for improved transportation, asserting: "We have 4,000 carloads of potatoes in our State that will perish within the next thirty or sixty days if means are not found at once for their transportation." He added less specifically, "There is also any amount of corn that is rotting and wasting throughout the country."

Senator Smoot agreed as to the lack of transportation, but thought labor shortage a great if not an equal evil, saying: "When I was last home I rode through miles of apple orchards and saw carloads of apples which had been frozen on the trees" for lack of labor to pick them.

Senator Gallinger of New Hampshire was in favor of soldiers' furloughs in planting and harvesting times for those who would volunteer to help farmers, but he suggested another remedy which stirred up the Pacific coast Senators. "But," he said, "I have another thought, and that is to get rid of the senseless opposition to Oriental farmers and let us have some of those men brought here; not coolies, but real farmers from China." He "presumed opposition of labor unions would make that impossible."

Senator Jones of Washington was at once aroused. "I do not feel," he said, "the necessity of carrying out the suggestion of the Senator from New Hampshire. Independent of labor unions, I am not in favor of that proposal and will oppose it very strongly until we get into more desperate straits than we are in now."

Senator Jones had a novel and strenuous plan to avert the labor shortage evil and the Chinese immigration evil as well. He wanted Congress to "devise something" which would compel men who now attend theatre matinées to hike to the farms and help to plant and harvest. "If you stand in front of some of the theatres in this town," said the Pacific coast Senator, "and other cities you will find hundreds and possibly thousands of men coming out of those theatres, spending their time in the afternoon doing nothing."

Senator Smoot announced that he had drafted bills to force matinée idlers and others of their kind to go to work, but upon submitting them to "the best lawyers I could reach" he learned that "the Constitution will not allow that to be done, under the prohibition against involuntary servitude."

Finally it was recalled that the Senate had passed and the House had in committee a bill "authorizing the Secretary of War to grant furloughs to soldiers with pay," a power he does not now have. It was thought that if this bill became a law soldiers in cantonments would eagerly volunteer for farm work at the prevailing high wages paid for such labor.

An interesting discussion, surely, in which several other Senators besides those mentioned here took part, and nothing more interesting was revealed than the courteous way the Senate has of sidetracking a subject it does not want aired.

LINCOLN'S BEARD.

An Incident of His Trip to Washington to Take the Oath.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* I have a word to add to the information, previously recorded in THE SUN, concerning President Lincoln's beard wearing. The same point has been treated in the newspaper before, but I have never seen the following fact stated. Mr. Doyle has told your readers of the first appearance of the beard as in February, 1861.

If you will refer to any newspaper which was issued at the time of Lincoln's first inauguration, containing an account of his journey to Washington for that purpose, you will find this incident related as having occurred while he passed through New York State.

Somewhere between Buffalo and Albany, I cannot remember the name of the place, he stopped to make an address and inquired whether a young lady whom he named was in the audience. She was pushed forward by the crowd and then he told her that while his election was pending he had received a letter from her advising him to grow whiskers as an improvement to his countenance, and she would see that he had taken her advice.

It might interest your readers if you would copy an original account of this incident. HENRY T. BLAKE.

NEW HAVEN, Conn., February 28.

Willing to Serve as a Spy.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 28.—Uncle Sam can have the services of a perfectly good spy if he wants them. Peter Rivers, aged 17 years, of Maple Lake, Minn., says so.

Writing to United States Marine Corps headquarters, Peter said among other things: "I'm too young to be a sea soldier, but I can be the best spy you most ever saw. Send me along a spy's badge and a Colt's .45, and Ill go right to work. I've read history, and my only regret is that I haven't nine lives like a cat so that I could give them all to my country."

In expressing appreciation of Peter's offer of service the Marine Corps authorities advised him to keep on playing "Hi Spy" with the boys of Maple Lake several years longer before tackling the business seriously.

Harbingers of Spring.

From the Hot Springs Sentinel-Record.

Droves of automobiles have come out of their holes and are honking merrily a promise of early spring.

WHERE "THE SUN" WAS BORN

Historical Data and Pictures of Old Houses Called For.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* The paper I selected to read after leaving school and on "going to work" was THE SUN. That was in the '70s, and I am now still at it. In the last Sunday's history I see that you were at 222 William street in 1833. I find from a business transaction at hand that my father lived and did business at 222 William street in 1859 and thereafter, and there one of his family was born. Some time ago I passed there to look at the building, and found a new one had been erected on which there is a bronze tablet stating:

> This building was erected in the year 1896. The dwelling house erected and occupied by William Rhinelander in 1763.

Did this house stand at 222, and when was it razed? Where can I get a picture of it? I also find on the Rose street side a tablet stating:

> This building stands on the site of the Rhinelander Sugar House, built in 1763, and used by the British as a prison.

When was the Sugar House torn down and how much of the block did it occupy, and where can I get a print?

W. H. WIRTH.

NEW YORK, February 28.

BEER AS FOOD.

Results of British Government Inquiries Among Hard Workers.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* The editorial article in your issue of February 25 entitled "Bread and Beer" would appeal to all reasonable persons if it were not for the fact that it is based upon the mistaken premise that malt beverages are, to all of us and under all circumstances, luxuries, and that the materials that go into the making of such drinks are actually "destroyed," to use your own phrase.

It is true that to some of us beer is in the class of those luxuries which may be given up when there is the need for conserving the materials out of which it is made. But to certain persons beer is a positive necessary, and this fact ought not to be ignored or slighted in any consideration of the measures necessary to enable our country to do its proper and efficient part in the war against Germany.

I have before me a bulletin of the Bureau of Labor Statistics in this country, reprinting the reports of the several commissions which, under appointment of Premier Lloyd George, investigated the causes of "industrial unrest in Great Britain" last summer. It is a singular and striking circumstance that almost all of these commissions find that the shortage of beer is one of the chief causes of unrest among the men who are digging coal, building ships, making shells and running railroads, and doing other vital war work in the United Kingdom.

The commissions discussed the shortage in the several districts at great length, and with as much gravity and sympathy as they discussed such questions of housing, food, hours of labor, shop systems and the like. In the strongest terms they put before the Government the necessity of securing an adequate output and equitable distribution of malt beverages in order that the workers of the United Kingdom may be enabled to perform their very necessary services during the war period.

The patriotism of the British wage earner cannot be brought into question. He has signalized it in a hundred ways and by a hundred sacrifices, but he has found that beer is necessary if he is to endure the quadruple strain which war has put upon him, and his Government, recognizing this fact, has permitted a material increase in the restricted output of malt liquor for his benefit.

The workers of the United States are engaged on precisely the same tasks as the workers of Great Britain, and their necessities are precisely similar. If we take away from the wage earner the beverage which enables him to endure long hours before a furnace filled with molten metal, or to carry heavy loads or drive ponderous machines at top speed, we may be certain that his physical strength will give out under the strain, and to that extent our output of war supplies be diminished.

Work of this character cannot be done with ice water, tea, coffee or milk. A great amount of liquid is demanded by the systems of men thus engaged, but it must not be such as to cause cramps in the stomach or nausea. Beer is the only liquid which satisfies the thirst and causes no disturbance in the digestive system. Moreover, when it is taken with food it imparts to unappetizing viands a zest which enables them to be assimilated and digested. The worker knows his need for beer, and he should certainly be consulted before the advice of a lot of stall fed office men to do away with it is accepted.

HENRY ST. G. YOUNG.

BROOKLYN, February 28.

The Salvage Corps.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Will you kindly answer through the columns of your paper whether or not the Salvage Corps, or the fire patrol as they are called, are considered a part of the New York Fire Department?

JOHN F. POOLE.

BROOKLYN, February 28.

The Salvage Corps, or fire patrol, is maintained by the fire insurance underwriters, and is not a part of the Fire Department.

"The American Spirit Speaks."

Thirty miles south of the Scilly Isles,
Indefinite spot, in a freezing sea,
That's just where the Jacob Jones went down:
Torpedoed December 6th was she.

A damned poor chance for a getaway,
Amidships ripped by a blast from hell;
But as Jonesy dipped, the boats swung clear,
Floating about on the ocean's swell.

Some never got a chance to swim for them,
Shot, shocked or trapped was their finish. Say!
I ain't so sure but to get it quick
For ending it all's the nicest way.

"Cap" Bagley was last to jump the deck.
Gee! but 'twas cold in the icy sea;
We both struck out, but I tell you straight,
It didn't look good for him or me.

All in, the "Cap"; but a good old mate
Swam with him; lucky, a boat was near;
Hauled him aboard, gasped, spluttering brine:
"Say, Cap'n, where do we go from here?"

Bitter throughout, but in places right,
For he called the turn, did Kipling, when,
Summing American spirit up,
These phrases dropped from his British pen:

"Enslaved, illogical, elate,
He greets th' embarrassed gods, nor fears
To shake the iron hand of fate
Or match with destiny for beers."

EDWARD FALES COWARD.

WHAT ENGLAND HAS DONE FOR FRANCE SINCE WAR BEGAN.

An Enumeration of the Most Important Work of British Individuals and Societies, Also of Government Activities.

To our sister republic France the sympathy of the whole great American Republic went out abundantly long before we became her ally. But to England, our mother country, to whom we are bound by ties far more intimate than those of a similar Government, the sympathy of the United States has been extended in full measure only since our entrance into the war. France received the support of American sympathy and American money, both in the United States and on the part of Americans living in France, to an extent hardly yet realised, and for this reason it will be interesting for Americans to know what England also has done for France.

At the beginning of the war the French Embassy was besieged with requests to aid the French wounded, and as a first result the Comité de Londres de la Croix Rouge Française was formed with the French Ambassador as president, but with the great majority of workers English. "France's Day" was celebrated on July 14, 1915, with a collection of £22,484, on the same day in 1916 with £100,351, and in 1917 with £176,000. These sums, however, represent only a part of the great contributions made through the committee. Motor cars were given in large numbers, individuals maintained, at their own expense, canteens in France, and more than 7,000 English subjects have gone to France to work for the French wounded and destitute.

Furthermore, about twenty-five hospitals, with a total of nearly 3,500 beds, have been equipped by Great Britain and managed by English staffs; three Sections Sanitaires Automobiles have been equipped for the French front, working so successfully at Verdun and elsewhere that several of the motor drivers have received "La Croix de Guerre," more than 200 canteens have operated in the war zone and more than 500 motor cars and ambulances have worked in all parts of France for the transportation and alleviation of French wounded. Besides these ordinary cars and ambulances the "Comité Britannique" (as it is now called) has provided thirteen specially constructed automobiles equipped with X-ray apparatus, and two fitted as dental ambulances, for work on the French front, besides one bacteriological automobile laboratory, and forty "bains-douches," which provide eight men at a time with a hot shower bath. In addition to this the "Comité de Londres" acts as the central bureau for the despatch of food, clothing, &c., from England to French prisoners in Germany, and of comforts through "Le Paquetage du Combatant" to French soldiers in the trenches and to French sailors who are guarding the Channel.

Quite as important as the above fields of activity is the relief of the civil population in the occupied and reconquered provinces. To this end the comité has installed and equipped a hospital of 300 beds, has sent and is sending large funds to aid various French societies in giving immediate relief to the refugees, has despatched numbers of fruit trees, and is making an enormous effort to combat the ravages of tuberculosis among the French soldiers by equipping a hospital and colony, permanently endowed, for the treatment of such cases. The French Flag Nursing Corps, which provides fully trained English nurses for French military hospitals, is entirely maintained by the Comité Britannique.

Next to the work of this Croix Rouge committee perhaps the most important effort has been made by the French War Emergency Fund, with the Duke of Connaught as its president, and with the primary object of helping the French military hospitals. This "Fund" has sent about £163,000 in money and £75,000 in gifts to supply French soldiers with necessaries and comforts they would otherwise have gone without. The delegates visit the hospitals and verify the actual needs before sending supplies, which include beds and bedding, clothing, surgical instruments, drugs, dressings and hospital requisites of every kind. In this way 1,200 French hospitals have been supplied with a total of more than 17,000 bales containing nearly a million and a quarter articles. Latterly the "Fund" has begun reconstruction work in a part of the Somme district comprising thirty villages officially placed under its care by the French authorities. Houses have been built and furnished, and articles of clothing, as well as seeds and farm implements, have been supplied to enable the peasants to resume life on their own soil.

Among the many efforts of England to express her sympathy for France—too many indeed to enumerate—may be mentioned the relief committee of the Society of Friends, the convalescent homes and maternity hospitals, and the numerous smaller societies through which English men and women have given in a hundred ways their thought, time, work and money for the relief of France since the beginning of the war.

All the contributions above mentioned may be summed up as the heartfelt expression of sympathy of English people for the French, but far more important have been the services rendered by the English Government on behalf of the nation, the British national effort, naval, military, economic and industrial, which represents Great Britain's contribution to the common cause of the Allies—a contribution by which France, of course, has enormously benefited. The mercantile, commercial and industrial activity of Great Britain, on a scale so prodigious that figures lose all meaning, has rendered immense services to France. Indeed, without it France could not have continued the war, for she could not otherwise have been furnished with the supplies she most needed. Between August, 1914, and December 31, 1917, sanction was granted to the French Government through the "Commission Internationale de Ravitaillement" for goods of various kinds to a total value of more than £228,000,000.

The above, though not a gift to France like the work done by the English committees of the Croix Rouge and the War Emergency Fund, may be fairly considered as a service rendered to France by Great Britain, a service of the greatest magnitude and of immeasurable importance.

This simple statement of fact is presented to the public by an American, who, while recognizing the splendid service and noble sacrifice which France has made to the whole cause of the Allies—a debt which can never be forgotten nor repaid—realizes at the same time, from a careful study of the subject, the magnificent generosity, both national and personal, voluntarily incurred and cheerfully undertaken, which England has shown to France on a scale unparalleled in the history of the world.

MONCURE ROBINSON.

NEW YORK, February 28.

THE SPEEDWAY.

To What Extent Could It Be Made More Useful to the People?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* "F. H. V." advances one good reason why the Speedway could not be used by general traffic, namely, the nature of the roadbed would not permit the carrying of heavy traffic, trucking, motor buses &c. He states: "In a very short time the roadbed would sink and the road be put out of repair."

Although the "Speedway bill" provides for the opening of the thoroughfare to general traffic, I don't think the word "general" is intended to be interpreted literally. How can it be? Others besides "F. H. V.," probably Assemblyman Amos himself, the introducer of the measure, realize the Speedway is no place over which to have heavy trucks and wagons rumbling. Certainly, the roadbed would soon crumble under the weight of traffic of this description, and rather than have this happen it would be better to keep it closed to all but harness horses.

But the Speedway could be used with profit and pleasure by automobilists who are now barred. If opened to pleasure cars only there would be little danger of the roadbed sinking. Its beauty would not be detracted from by this class of automobiles. Even the rocks that form the cliff on its north side, which "F. H. V." mentions, would be in no danger of being shaken out of their places; the vibration would not be sufficient.

Heavy trucks, either horse drawn or motor, have no place on the Speedway and never will have place. But there is no good reason why harness horses should monopolize it. The time has arrived when it should be thrown open to pleasure vehicles of every description. Why delay: it will be opened sooner or later, why not now? W. H.

NEW YORK, February 28.

The Migrations of Tony.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Mr. Frank Dumont is in error when he says that Tony Pastor left 201 Bowery for Tammany Hall. Tony Pastor left 201 Bowery for 585 Broadway and left there for Fourteenth street.

ALPHONSUS L. POOLE.

SHEEPSHEAD BAY, February 28.

Price Fixing as to Cotton.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Poor "Beacon Hill"! Does he not know that the Southerners now in power in Washington are running things to please themselves? Where has he been all this time? R. L. M.

NEW YORK, February 28.

A False Idea Corrected.

From the Marathon Independent.

An exchange in speaking of the prospective rise in the price of maple syrup and sugar says without doubt it is due to the high cost of feeding the maple trees. The poor fish that wrote that undoubtedly thinks that maple sugar grows on trees like hickory nuts.

OUR COMMON SPEECH.

All Draw From the Well of English Defiled or Undefiled.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* In "The American Tongue" in THE SUN Mr. Richard P. Read treats of these "important particulars":

> Borrowings, spelling, pronunciation, split infinitive, voice inflection, idiom, great systems of slang, dialects and localisms.

Mr. Read's "borrowings" and other "important particulars" are in all great English dictionaries, including "Webster's Dictionary of the English Language," therefore his "important particulars" do not form part of an "American" language.

Like all eminent lexicographers, Webster gives credit for words and phrases borrowed from other languages.

"Spools of thread" were and are sold in every British town.

Webster gives "honor" and "color" with and without "u"; "humor," he says, "is written also 'humour.'"

For pronunciation, besides his own authority, Webster shows several other authorities, including Smart, Walker, Cull and Cooley.

The American philologist, author and critic Richard Grant White does not "regard the split infinitive with [illegible] horror." White says, "English is a grammarless tongue"; "grammar is an absurd and useless study." He believes it is the duty of [illegible] "to promptly split" such purists as the lovers of Lindley Murray, the Philadelphia Quaker grammarian.

The greatest writers in the English speaking world did and do use the split infinitive. Walter Scott says he "never learned grammar."

What has "voice inflection" to do with the name of any language? And "difference in idiom"; Webster tells us that "the great idioms of the language are everywhere the same."

According to Walter Savage Landor "every good writer has much idiom." "Great systems of slang," to quote your correspondent; Slang—great? Richard Grant White says, "slang is low, coarse and vulgar."

If he could do it, wouldn't it be better for Jack to borrow $5 from Jim than to "give him a touch" or to "touch him for five"? Of course if Jack does borrow money from Jim, Jack may forget it, nevertheless the borrowed money is Jim's money.

So it is with words. Borrowers may use them, but the borrowed words belong to the language or languages from which they are borrowed.

As to "dialects and localisms," a Texan uses two English words when he boasts of the possession of "two [illegible]." The Yankee horseman who says, "[illegible] father learned me to ride a [illegible]" [illegible] laughs at Murray and uses "[illegible]" [illegible] "o" in horse.

The cockney cabman merely mispronounced a few words when he asked his feeble "fare," "Wich orrespital wud ye loike t' be tuk to in case o' haccident?" JOSEPH L. HODGINS.

BROOKLYN, February 25.