

The Tri-Weekly Courier



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WHIPPING THE DEVIL AROUND THE STUMP.

When we read in English newspapers that the time has come for such weak and inexperienced diplomats as Sir Edward Grey to take back seats while naval men apply the law of the sea, we naturally expect another batch of those orders in council from which the British government from time to time manufacture international law for neutrals.

This process began immediately after the war broke out, by the British notice that certain parts of the North Sea were mined so that neutral vessels must keep out. It was continued by British definitions of blockade which have grown steadily more drastic. It was carried forward by orders for taking neutral vessels into port on suspicion of carrying contraband. It was especially revealed in the British announcement some months ago that the coasts of the North sea were in condition of blockade. Every one of these orders was contrary to the principles of international law which were accepted by Great Britain herself down to the beginning of the present war, and every one was contrary to the interests of the United States.

Now comes the cool suggestion that Great Britain will announce an "actual blockade," and then we shall see what will happen to us! At the start we may safely assert that the British have not the slightest intention of declaring a genuine blockade, because that would mean the stationing of ships outside the German ports at such points that vessels attempting to go in or out of those ports would be likely to be captured. Inasmuch as during a year and a half, neither the Germans nor the English have ventured to send out into the North sea squadrons of more than half a dozen vessels, and only two or three times, nobody can believe that the British naval authorities will now risk their first class ships where within four hours of their arrival at their stations they would attract a flotilla of torpedo boats and submarines. Perhaps the English only mean that they will issue a "paper blockade," declaring certain coasts of their enemy closed, just as they did a hundred years ago. Then they could capture and confiscate American vessels and cargoes found anywhere on the seas if bound in or out of those ports. Such an "actual blockade is not a likelihood; it is not international law; it is not civilized warfare. It is simply a device to break up a certain kind of American commerce, without going to the expense and danger of the genuine blockade which alone would justify such captures.

There is at present, next to no direct trade between the United States and the German ports; and therefore it seems likely that the talk about "actual blockade" is really meant to cover an absolute prohibition of American commerce to neutral countries in articles desired by the Germans. John Bull advances a step in his system of regulating the commerce between the United States, Holland and the Scandinavian countries. An "actual blockade" of the coasts of Holland or Sweden would be a virtual act of war, although those powers might not choose to accept it as such. Hence it seems probable that the British authorities have in mind neither a "paper blockade" nor an "actual blockade," but an order that no American shipments shall be allowed to go to neutral countries if it is likely that they will find their way through to Germany.

Another way of whipping the devil around the stump is by calling every-

thing useful, contraband. The United States government from the beginning of the war has accepted the doctrine that genuine contraband of war may be captured if bound to a neutral power, with a probable destination in an enemy's country. Our government has therefore been remiss in not protesting more directly and vigorously against the British expansion of the list of contraband to cover rubber, foodstuffs, cotton and many other articles which might be used by an army, but in all probability will be used by the civil population. If the British government intends to put everything useful on the contraband list, it will lay the cap stone on an edifice of disregard of American rights. London talks sagely about precedents found in the action of the United States during the civil war. It talks in vain. The only precedents are the captures by United States vessels of ships, mostly British, which were carrying genuine contraband, intended to be delivered eventually in a Confederate territory, though routed through a neutral country. That principle has not been denied in the present war. What the British are trying to do, without right or reason, is to stop non-contraband goods from reaching Germany by any channel.

Why should such goods not reach Germany? We have an established international right to ship non-contraband, either directly to any port of Germany that is not actually blockaded, or indirectly through a neutral port. We

do not get that right from Great Britain or from Germany or from the Hague conference. It is part of our character as a sovereign power which is not obliged to go to war with either Great Britain or Germany, or to be treated as though we were at war. Being at peace with all the belligerents, we can trade with them all.

Great Britain thinks that the comparatively small amount of American products that reach Germany is an offense which must be punished by creating new principles of capture. Then what about the vastly greater amount of material, both contraband and innocent, which is sent to Great Britain? It is our neutral right to ship contraband goods anywhere subject to the danger of capture; and to ship non-contraband anywhere without danger of capture. If President Wilson's administration should fail to make that clear to the British government, it would give up one of our clearest and most essential rights. It is not for John Bull to destroy our commerce because it is inconvenient to him that his enemies should receive such supplies as food stuffs, cotton and non-military manufactures.

Galvanizing with compressed air. An important new development in the field of galvanizing iron is a machine that does the trick by means of a combination of high heat, compressed air and powdered zinc. The apparatus consists of a shell shaped chamber which holds thirty pounds of pulverized zinc, a special spraying nozzle and a tube for introducing the compressed air.

The nozzle is built with a tube within a tube. Through the inner aperture spurts a stream of zinc dust driven by a twenty-five pound pressure of compressed air, while the outside tube carries a current of gas that burns with a hot flame. When gas and metal meet, the zinc particles atomize, blowing through the air in the form of microscopic melted droplets. Striking the cold metal to be coated, this current of what might be called zinc fog instantly chills and condenses, adhering perfectly.

Such a device is expected to be especially useful for putting a zinc coating on ironwork that has already been set into place, as well as in renewing the zinc on old structural work where it has been worn off. Owing to its light weight and flexible connections it can be carried into the most awkward and inaccessible places.

Dry seed corn offered. W. B. Barney, state dairy and food commissioner is warning the farmers of the state that they must beware of seed corn that is being offered for sale by certain speculators. These men are taking advantage of the seed corn shortage to buy up 1914 corn wherever they can find it and offer it as seed corn at high prices without taking the trouble to determine whether it will germinate or not. It is up to the farmers to see they do not get "stung."

We are living in an age of specialism. The man who can do one thing well advances faster than the man who can do a number of things but is not expert in any one of them. The "jack of all trades" has had his day. It would be interesting to hear what the Iowans in California think of California storms and floods. It would be especially interesting if these same Iowans knew we are having here the kind of weather they left here to seek.

Managing the City

By FREDERIC J. HASKIN

THE CHANGE IN PENNSYLVANIA.

Reading, Pa., Jan. 19.—In Pennsylvania commission government has been most thoroughly tried, for it was imposed upon twenty-nine cities by an act of the state legislature. Reading is a typical example of how it has worked.

You should not get the idea, however, that commission government was forced upon the Pennsylvania cities without any initiative on their part. Municipal government in this state was particularly cumbersome before the change, as is attested by the fact that forty-two cities, having a population of more than 10,000, had remained boroughs rather than adopt the clumsy municipal machinery provided by state law.

All of the Pennsylvania cities were awake to the disadvantages of the old system. As long ago as 1910, the cities of the third class, which includes all of those with less than a hundred thousand population, held a convention at Williamsport and organized an Allied Civic Bodies Committee for the purpose of studying municipal reform.

The constitution of the state of Pennsylvania prohibits special legislation, and this makes it impossible to pass a law which would leave the adoption of commission government optional with the cities. If the change were going to be made, it would have to be a sweeping one, compelling all the cities of a certain class to change their form of government. After several years of agitation, such a law was passed in 1913. Twenty-nine cities of the third class, including all those in Pennsylvania except Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Scranton, were thus summarily placed under commission government in December, 1914.

The Pennsylvania law provides for a mayor and four commissioners elected at large on a non-partisan ballot. The other city officials, with the exception of the comptroller, are chosen by this commission. The state act also provides for an initiative and referendum, but there is no recall and no civil service board.

This wholesale change has been emphatically a success. Under the new form of government, Reading has attained a new municipal efficiency, and what is more, a new municipal spirit.

If you visit this city some June, for example, you will witness one of the most interesting displays of municipal common sense and civic righteousness that has ever been staged in America. The people of Reading, like people everywhere else in the United States, had been reading a lot about conservation for several years before the commission government law was passed. Now they have acted on their information. Instead of sitting down and pining because the magnificent hills surrounding the town were denuded of trees a generation ago by hungry lumbermen, they have undertaken the job of reforesting them. The city commission runs a nursery where young trees are raised, and every June the school children of Reading go out in the hills

and plant them. Thousands of trees are planted every year, and by the time school children of today are grandfathers and grandmothers, the hills, at the present rate, will again be beautifully wooded.

Reading was rich and easy picking for railroads and street railroads under the old form of government. The thirty-three city fathers used to give exclusive and perpetual franchises to those who could master control, throwing away forever the right to use streets and public spaces. Every street car extension and every right for track or siding granted by the commission is now limited to twenty-five years.

Under the old system all city supplies were bought by contracts made as a result of recommendations by committees of the council of thirty-two aldermen. The recommendation of the committee could be accepted, or it could be rejected with a huge row in council personal quarrels, vote swapping and petty politics as an aftermath with a good chance for no contract at all. Under the commission, all purchases for the city are made through a central purchasing office, for which one of the commissioners is directly responsible to the whole commission and to the town. The result is a better quality of supplies at better prices.

A council of thirty-two members was not the only cumbersome body under the old form of government. There was an independent health board, an independent park board and an independent water works commission. These boards were usually composed of politicians, selected as a reward for political services. When the clumsy council was not busy with internal quarrels it often spent its time scrapping with the boards, till the poor citizen was hopelessly bewildered.

The commission government charter provides for a health officer, a superintendent of parks and a superintendent of water works. Each of these officers comes directly under one or another of the commissioners, who is held responsible by the voters for the work of his department. A competent doctor with a competent assistant is at the head of the health department and men specially qualified have been chosen for the other positions.

Since the commission started operations a new reservoir for the city water system has been put in. A new pipe line for augmenting the supply has been laid and water rates have been reduced. Plans are being made for a municipal slaughter house and a municipal hospital. A garbage incineration plant, owned by the city but not used for several years by the old council, has been put to work, and rates for collection of garbage have thereby been reduced. The rates for public lighting have been cut 10 per cent. Muddy, unsanitary alleys have been paved and hundreds of connections with sewers have been required. Viaducts across railroad tracks have been built and more than 100 squares of asphalt, brick and macadam paving have been laid.

Such are the principal results of two years of commission government in Reading.

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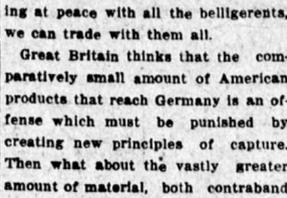
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To build new church. Story City, Jan. 25.—Emanuel Lutheran church here adopted plans for the building of a new church to cost \$25,000. Money for the church, which will be completed in a year, has been collected.

Dinner Stories

A gentleman in New Orleans advertised for a man to do chores around the house and the advertisement was answered by a colored man.



"Are you married?" asked the prospective employer. "Yes, suh, I's married," replied the applicant, "but mah wife is out of a job. Dat's why I's got to shif' foh mahself."

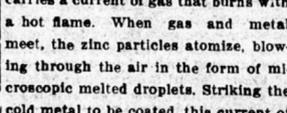
Ellihu Root was discussing in New York the recent constitutional convention. "But there was one group," he said — "happily it saw reason later on — but one group there was which had about as true an idea of self sacrifice as Smith."

"Smith's wife said to him one evening, anxiously: 'I know, John, dear, this high cost of living is terrible, but do you really think we can get along without a servant?'"

"We'll have to," Smith answered, firmly, "unless I get a raise. Why, hang it, if the worst comes to the worst you can do the cooking for yourself and I can get my meals at a restaurant."

A school teacher complained to the head master that on the previous evening he had seen one of the older boys flirting with a young lady. The head master accordingly spoke to the boys of the senior class in severe terms on the impropriety of such conduct and wound up by saying that, out of consideration for the parents, he would not name the culprit; but invited him to come into his private room at the close of the lesson. That afternoon six crestfallen boys presented themselves at the private interview.

Jeff says: To the ministers of finance of Turkey, Germany, Austria, Hungary and Bulgaria: I see you are discussing finances. If you need a representative in this country to send the money to, I am yer man — send it to me.



Evening Story. Uncle Joe's prize beauty. By Jane Osborn. (Copyright, 1916, by the McClure Newspaper Syndicate.)

When Dave Brown left his office in the big city for a day or two to revisit the old home town of Hardy's Corners he always made tracks for the one-room headquarters of the Hardy's Corners Weekly Gazette, where his Uncle Joe Brown, with the aid of a single office boy, performed the entire operation of getting out the local news sheet, all the way from circulation boosting to running the press.

"Well, now," began his uncle in his characteristic drawl, "if you really want to help out a mite you might hitch up the old nag and take a turn out the pike to see the girl I've picked for the winner of the beauty contest. You see, it's this way: Subscriptions have been kind of falling off since the rural free delivery brought the city papers around every day and for some years I've got to do something to help give things a boost. So I hit on the idea of having some contests of interest to the women folks. I've got a due bill on the dry goods emporium here for some advertisements they have owed for going on two years and I'll have the winners take out their prizes that way."

"Well, the contest is coming along fine—especially the beauty one—and I've got a drawer packed full of pictures of pretty girls from all around here—only all of them aren't so pretty."

"I've about decided on the winner. I stopped around to get a good look at her after she'd sent in her photo and, honest, you couldn't see a finer looking girl if you spent a lifetime looking. She's a regular old-fashioned, kind—beautiful eyes and—oh, well you've got to see her to know. I've picked her, and in the next number of the Gazette, that comes out on Saturday, I'm going to announce her winning, with a picture of the girl, and the same afternoon we're going to have the girl and some of her friends come down and blow them off to a course dinner at the hotel and then take them on a joy ride."

"Now, suppose you go out this morning and see the girl and tell her she has got the prize and take the due bill on the emporium with you, and, if you could, you might take her to the emporium and have her pick out a pretty dress and hat and other fixings for the prize. Be sure to get something pretty and kind of showy so when folks see them they will sort of give the Gazette a boost."

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The Kind You Have Always Bought Bears the Signature of



In Use For Over 30 Years.

when you go to get the horse and you'll find the name of the girl on an envelope with the due bill. Let's see—you'll find them in the family bible in the sitting room.

"And, say, take a tip from me," added Uncle Joe, "there isn't much better kind of girl going when it comes to picking a wife than regular old-fashioned, bright-eyed, pink-cheeked country girls. If I wasn't so old I might be sparking around this beauty winner myself. Now don't let the grass grow under your feet."

Sally Bunn—that was the name on the envelope—came to the door herself when Dave Brown called at the farm house on the pike. Sally Bunn came straight from the kitchen and her hands and plump arms were covered with flour and her face was flushed with the heat of the oven. But somehow at that first glance it never occurred to Dave to think that this really could be Sally Bunn. True, she was a nice little girl, bright-eyed and clear skinned, but not at all the type of girl he had in mind when he listened to his uncle's eulogy. Somehow Dave had felt convinced that the girl his uncle would select as the beauty would be of the peaches-and-cream variety of blond—a veritable Marguerite, with braids of molasses candy hair.

And, besides, Sally Bunn, though she was much impressed by Dave Brown's city clothes and city manners, was also mistaken. She took him for a book agent and had all but shut the door in his face when he said that he had come from the Gazette to see Miss Sally Bunn.

"I'm Sally Bunn," she said, and Dave tried to cover his surprise. "Fine! I've come to tell you that you have won the prize in the contest," he said. "My uncle, who owns the paper, asked me to come and tell you. Am now I am going to ask you to let me take you to town to select the pretty dress and hat and things that you have won."

"How perfectly wonderful," cried the girl, clapping her floury hands. "May I pick out just what I want? How wonderful!" And, bubbling over with delight, she led the way to the best room.

Dave suggested that Sally should take her mother or sister or some one as a chaperone on the errand, but Sally explained that she was the only daughter of Farmer Bunn, who was a widower. She and the maid of all work, Aunt Mandy, were alone in the house, so she would have to go without a chaperone.

"But I don't in the least mind, for I know just what I want. Oh, how perfectly lovely it is that I am to have a new dress and hat and things! You know father is really quite well off for a farmer—but he is old-fashioned and he doesn't like to have me spend money for new dresses. I have to make them all for myself. You see, he is like the old folks, and he says it will be all the more for me to have for a portion when I am married, only I shall never marry any one, I'm sure."

"I don't at all agree with you," Dave replied, and then as he watched the girl he realized that in truth she was more than passing comely. "The only surprise is," he reflected, "that that thick-skinned old uncle of mine should have had sense enough to discover it."

Before they started out, Sally insisted on serving Dave with a dainty mid-morning luncheon of gingerbread and milk, strawberries and cream, and they climbed into the old buggy and started off over the country road on what was the most exciting shopping tour of Sally Bunn's experience. "I just dote on pretty clothes," she said simply. "Tell me, do you think pink or blue would be more becoming?" And as Dave studied her coloring to find the answer he assured himself that no girl he had met in the city could compare with this simple country maid.

"A wonderful housekeeper"—she had prepared the luncheon with her own capable hands—"plenty of money and as pretty as a picture," Dave said to himself. "The old man certainly was right."

Then the girl at his side interrupted him. "Why was it that you seemed so surprised when I said I was Sally Bunn?" she asked. "You didn't seem to think that I could have won that prize."

"It wasn't quite that," laughed Dave.

Dr. D.E. Graham. Hours—9 to 12 a. m.; 1 to 6 p. m. Ennis Office Bldg., Ottumwa, Iowa.

Iowa Cafe

will move Feb. 1st to New Location 124 East Second St. Across from Courier.

Dr. Burt La Force

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