

THINGS THAT NEVER HAPPEN



A Real Amercian Reply To Unjustified Saracasm

FROM THE JOURNAL

BENNIE'S REPLY

BENNIE GREENBERG BIDS FAREWELL TO CITY; HE GOES WEST

Bennie Greenberg, who since 1887, has been trying to utopianize Devils Lake by conquering its numerous sociological ills and other things, has left here for other worlds to conquer.

Bennie came into the Journal office and bade us a fond farewell. He was not happy over the prospect of shifting his mortal coil from Dakota to California (he's going to the land of the setting sun) and we could almost detect a vagrant tarr in his small eyes as he extended his hand to us for a parting clasp.

"I'm going west," said Bennie in broken English, which, however, was better, grammatically, than is generally heard about here, "and I want you please to say in the Journal that I thank all my friends for all their kindnesses to me. Tell my friends, and my enemies too, that I wish them all the joys God can give them, and that I wish them a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Goodbye."

Then Bennie went out. And when he had left we got to thinking of the man, his slight figure, his piercing eyes, and we wondered what the mission of such a little man. He is a Socialist of the Marxian school, was always handing out Socialist literature, was the local authority on all things Socialistic and naturally leaned towards or upon the tenets of the Nonpartisan League.

Yet, Bennie has a heart as big as a mountain, as his enemies will admit. Could he have seen the real light of American civilization, felt the inspiration of Washington, Hamilton and Lincoln without beclouding them with Marx, Russell and Mills, he would have been a more useful member to this American community. He was always ready to extend a helping hand to even an enemy, and would have gone any distance to give a word of cheer to a sick friend.

But, as a Socialist, he never could get the real American viewpoint on government or society, and thus he elected to remain without the circle of us Americans who think the constitution good enough and powerful enough to guarantee us real liberty.

Now, Bennie has gone west. He was, undoubtedly the most familiar figure in the city because everybody spoke to him and he ways always ready to converse on anything. He was justice of the peace, and for reelection to this office was defeated last month. He was studying law, and it was a common sight to see him toting a heavy law book under his arm. We asked someone once, where his court room was and we were told that he carried it around with him, and whenever we saw him passing by with a big book under his arm, we would say to ourself, "There goes the judge, the court room and the law," Bennie believed in concentrated jurisprudence.

The court house and city hall will miss Bennie, because those who have been in the habit of meeting him will lose a chance to gibe him about his peculiar ideas and ideals. But Bennie never worried much about these jibes.

He has gone west and has taken with him his propaganda, and while we might miss his personality, we shall not miss nor regret overmuch the man's mission here. However, he has our best wishes with an added wish that some day he might come around to the American idea of free government.

Parents' Caprice.

It is no wonder that during infancy and early childhood life's lessons are so difficult for the small beginner when the laws which govern them must seem to him just or unjust, consistent or inconsistent, according to the knowledge or the caprice of the adult administering them.

TO MILFORD H. GRAHAM Editor The Journal DEVILS LAKE, N. DAK.

Dear Sir and Friend:

I have just read the article on front page of the Journal of December 4th, and I trust you will give me an opportunity to be heard in answer to the farewell which you have so kindly given me.

I wish first to thank you for the kind words you have said of me, even though you have mixed them with a little bitterness. Perhaps you did that thoughtlessly and under the idea that "little man with the stooping shoulders" never would see them and that it would not matter, anyway. So I forgive your cruelty and take to myself the warmer, kinder thoughts in your words: "Bennie has a heart as big as a mountain * * * He was always ready to extend a helping hand, even to an enemy, and would have gone any distance to give a word of cheer to a sick friend."

That is a good blessing for any man to have leaving a town where he has lived for over thirty years. It is all that your own prophet, Jesus of Nazareth, demanded of his followers, and I, who am of his race, feel happy that I have measured up to that standard in the eyes of his followers. It is a good Christmas thought—and I have tried to make my year an entire Christmas.

I know you will not permit me to discuss my political beliefs, though you criticize them and call them un-American. Therefore I will write no defense of them. I wish to be no cause for offense to any man. I will only discuss other matters in your article concerning me.

You say: "We wondered what the mission of such a little man," and express surprise and curiosity as to the motives for any thoughts and actions. Of your own Jesus of Nazareth the people asked: "What manner of man is this?" I am in no way an equal of his, save in desire for right and to help my fellow man, but I take it as a compliment that men should be curious concerning me. It shows that perhaps I have made some think.

How should you ever know the workings of the mind of a man like myself. Born under the tyranny of the Czars, of a race hated, despised, persecuted and slaughtered, I escaped from that land of horrors and came to this Land of the Free, so that I might in my small way—help to build up this nation. Not many of my race take to farming, because there is no land they can call their own and they have been hounded and penned up in ghettos in the cities for so many generations that they have lost the instinct for cultivation of the soil. I was an exception—I went to farming and plowed and reaped and became, as I thought, an American.

Now you tell me I am not an American. You tell that because I wish through my political beliefs, to make more people happy that I am without the inspiration of Washington, Lincoln and Hamilton. Yet I have read as much of Lincoln and know more of him as a man, than I have of the great German Marx. Lincoln was of the people, a man who was big enough to feel for "little men" like me. He taught me that our republic would end unless we changed the system and prevented the great growths of wealth which now afflict us. I have read him—and I believe in him. I have read also Washington and Jefferson and I hold with them. Indeed I read them before I ever read any of Marx writings. If it is un-American to believe as I do and speak and work as I have done in Devils Lake—then Lincoln and Jefferson and Washington were un-American, for they taught me my first ideas of freedom of thought and speech and religion.

You make fun of me because, as justice of the peace, I had no office, but made my law books and the street my office. Yet Abraham Lincoln, when a poor lawyer, made his tall hat his office and kept his law papers there. Probably some mocked him because he had no office and was compelled to make his hat serve as a filing cabinet. Probably that, too, was un-American.

You say I am going west. You say it in the same tone and with the same words that our soldier boys say it when they speak of the killing in battle of a comrade. "He has gone west." I may be dead to you, and death may meet me any day—but the words I have said and the good I have striven to do will live after me and after the gibes you have flung at me are forgotten.

You say I was defeated for reelection as justice of the peace, and rather smile over it. You could have been kinder, this Christmas time, to have told the truth and to have said: "he went about telling his friends and the voters that he did not want it and that he expected to leave for the coast to be gone until next summer, at least, and for that reason he failed of election." It would have been a little more decent to the "little old man with the big heart."

You have put me "outside the circle of Americans who think the constitution good enough and powerful enough to guarantee us real liberty." Perhaps I am where you put me. Perhaps I am where I put myself—a supporter of that constitution as the guardian of my liberty, but not a worshipper of it. "Thou shalt have no other God" still stands, and there is no human document that we may make a fetish of and fall down and worship. Our constitution has been changed repeatedly to meet changing conditions. It is not perfect—it is being perfected. If I suggest that it stands still as the nation and the world grows—am I un-American? If I propose changes to it that I believe will make people happier and better—am I a blasphemer of sacred faith in the Constitution only because it grows and anything that grows has the divine spark of life in it and for it I would lay down my life. That may be un-American, but you will remember that I am a little man, with stoop shoulders and small piercing eyes, and therefore unable to do as much as the powerful and the wealthy and the great to protect and cherish it. Yet—what more can a man give than his life?

Thanking you and wishing you a Merry Christmas and Glad New Year, I am,

Yours sincerely,

B. GREENBERG.

In Regard to Style.

If a person admires a particular method of arranging words, that arrangement will occur naturally in his own diction, without malice aforethought. Some writers unconsciously fall into the mode of expression adopted by others. This illustrates a similarity of disposition, and is not imitation. As a style, when it is natural, comes rather from the heart than the head, men of similar tastes and feelings will be likely to fall into a similar form of expression.—Edwin P. Whipple.

Youthful Joys.

If dryads ever chose special dwellings it must have been within the boles of walnut trees. If the tree was unknown to old Hellas, then the gods forgot something essential to the happiness of youth. If the ancestors of Pericles and all the heroes of the golden age did not betimes go adventuring for walnuts, acquiring burrs and stone-bruises, then they never knew the joy that comes to the Middle Western lads, who each fading year bear home their treasures to spread on the old kitchen roof to dry.—Exchange.

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The Gardner

STEEL MILLS SLOWING DOWN

Workers Are Beginning to Feel the Effects of the Recent Readjustment in Prices.

Workmen employed in a number of the smaller independent steel plants in the Pittsburgh district are beginning to feel the effects of the readjustment in steel prices. Working time is being cut.

Heretofore laborers employed twelve hours a day have been working on an eight-hour day basis—that is, they were paid at the regular rate of 46 cents an hour for eight hours and time and one-half for the remaining four hours. The man who worked these hours received \$6.44 a day, and the man who worked ten hours got \$5.00 a day.

With the extra time cut off, all laborers will receive pay for eight hours' work at 46 cents an hour, which means a reduction in income for the twelve-hour men of 42 per cent and for the ten hour men of 27 per cent. This class of labor constitutes about 49 per cent of the men employed in the average steel mill.

Some reduction in the working forces in drafting rooms were reported from a number of plants.

IN OTHER FIELDS OF LABOR

Notices were posted that the cotton mills, Lowell, Mass., employing upward of 20,000 persons, would run halftime.

Wages of six thousand employees of the Schoolfield plant of the Dan River Cotton mills, Danville, Va., have been cut 25 per cent.

The unemployed in New South Wales are said to number between 15,000 and 20,000, mostly unskilled workers.

In the petroleum industry of the United States but 4 per cent of the total amount invested is held by foreign capital.

Temporary cessation of buying is the reason given by officials of the Studebaker corporation (South Bend, Ind.) for curtailment of their working force by discharging 2,000 men.

Through the reduction of working hours, from 55½ per week to 48, output in the Lancashire (Eng.) cotton mills has declined from 12 to 15 per cent.

The Canadian Trades and Labor congress, composed of unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor, has a membership of nearly 200,000.

Miss Jeanette Rankin, who was the first woman representative in congress, is now making a tour of the country, endeavoring to bring about the passage of minimum wage laws.

Wages of the employees of the New England Telephone company will not be reduced at the present time, according to the report of a committee representing the workers which has been in conference with company officials.

After standing idle for two weeks, cotton mills, including the Lorry, Gastonia's largest mill, and the Armstrong chain of fourteen factories, resumed operation at Gastonia, N. C., on greatly reduced schedules of working time.

Government terms of 20 per cent increase in wages have been accepted by striking miners in the Coahuila (Mex.) regions and the men have returned to work. The men had been out two weeks.

The National Watch company at Elgin, Ill., posted notices in its factory that on December 21 its employees will be paid a bonus amounting to 10 per cent of their year's wages. The company will distribute about \$500,000 among 4,000 employees.

Approximately 1,200 men employed in the New Jersey plants of the Thomas A. Edison allied industries at West Orange and Silver Lake, N. J., have been laid off, the company announced. Reductions were necessary, it was stated, "in keeping with the general business trend throughout the country."

Twenty-five hundred employees of the Menasha (Wis.) Woodware company have been thrown out of work by the complete shutdown of the plant due to lack of orders. Paper mills have begun to lay off hands. In each instance lack of business is given as the cause for the suspension of operations.

In a movement to reduce expenses the Ontario & Western railroad has made known officially that approximately 100 motive power employees will be released. Between sixty and seventy of these are to be dropped from the payroll of the shops in Middletown, N. Y., and the remainder at Norwich, where the company maintains shops.

The upward trend of factory workers' earnings in New York seems to have come to a halt in July, at least temporarily. The final tabulation of the 1,648 manufacturers' July reports submitted to the bureau of statistics shows an average weekly earnings of \$28.49 for the month of July. This is a decrease of 28 cents from the June average, and is the first decrease reported since last April and the largest since last October.

The average number of wage earners employed in Massachusetts during 1918 was 719,210, as compared with 708,421 in 1917. The average yearly distinction as to age, sex or skill, rose to \$944.65 per capita, as compared with \$793.23 in 1917.

Announcement was made that within three weeks Rochester (N. Y.) factories making women's shoes, now idle, would reopen at full capacity to fill orders for spring stock. The factories employ about 23,000 men and women, more than 20,000 of whom have been idle for about two months.

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Dance One, Dance All, Usher Out The Old and In The New

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