

# AMERICAN PEOPLE GREAT SPENDERS

Millions of Dollars Thrown Away for Trifles That Ought to Set Nation Thinking.

## SOME WAYS MONEY GOES

Postcard and Cheap Souvenirs Take Big Sum Every Year—Billions Spent for Needless Telephone Calls and Telegrams.

By EDWARD MOTT WOOLLEY.

It seems incongruous that in this rich and wonderful land of ours it should be necessary to conduct mighty selling and advertising campaigns in order to raise money to crush our enemies—cruel and dangerous enemies who are bent on throttling the very liberty on which our country has been built. If we really felt the impulse, we could raise six or eight billion dollars spontaneously and without the glare of salesmanship and publicity; and we would do it so easily that Germany and her allies would stand aghast at our overwhelming resources and purpose.

The trouble is that even yet we do not realize the tragedy that is over us. The war has not sunk into the American consciousness. With a million or more of our boys in France, and the casualty lists coming home every day, we still lack the pulsating fervor of intrepid courage—the courage that wells within one and stirs the soul.

### Fighting Impulse Needed.

The one unquestionable evidence of courage is the willingness to sacrifice. A man who sees his child in deadly peril is instantly ready to sacrifice everything, even his life. It takes no argument to "sell" to him the need of courage. He gets it from within. The fighting impulse dominates his every instinct. What we most need in America today is fighting impulse. Once we get it the doom of Germany, as a menace to ourselves and to the world, will be sealed. If we had this valorous, undaunted determination we could raise, this coming year, not merely six or eight billion, but as many billion as our country might need. Let us search our hearts, therefore, and discover why it is that brass-band methods are needed to sell us Liberty bonds. It seems all the more incredible that such should be the case when the money we are asked to contribute is merely money saved for ourselves.

Indeed, we could put through this fourth Liberty loan without even feeling it directly. I am not talking here about great sacrifices. With merely trivial and passing inhibition we can make this fourth loan a glorious manifestation of Americanism.

Never was there such a nation of spenders—we literally throw money to the winds. Cash runs out of our pockets into a hundred channels of extravagance. Tempted at every turn by something that appeals to our pleasure-saturated instincts, we hand out the dimes, quarters and dollars. We work hard, most of us, and we play hard. Many of us play with an amazing abandon that scarcely reckons the cost. And we gratify ourselves not only at plays, but we satisfy our luxury-loving tendencies and our vanity in many of the things that enter into our daily lives.

Let us consider here merely the millions that go for trivial things that do not count as permanent investments either for utility or luxury.

### Millions Spent for Cards.

For instance, take our post card mania. This habit, which perhaps we would not criticize in times of peace, is almost universal. A dealer estimates that 50,000,000 people spend an average of a dollar a year on the cheaper kinds of cards, and an additional sum of a hundred million dollars on postage. But on the fancy cards and more expensive sets, sold largely to tourists, the estimate is \$200,000,000, in addition to the postage. Including the cards that are kept by the purchasers, it is probable that the total is half a billion dollars. Many men have made fortunes in this business. I know of one former valentine manufacturer who retired with a lot of money.

It is certainly inconsistent that this great sum should go for such a trivial purpose when the nation is involved in this mighty war that calls for cash everlastingly. Here is one expenditure that could be eliminated almost wholly until the war is over. Besides this amount put into Liberty bonds might mean something worth while to the people themselves.

Then there is another class of souvenirs that masquerade as merchandise and absorb an astonishing amount of money. Travelers and tourists especially waste their cash upon these things, and immense quantities are sold to the people everywhere. The bulk of this stuff is useless junk—at least in war time, when conservation is the high need. Why spend our money these days for fancy baskets, card trays, wooden clasp articles, knick-knacks, trinkets, popguns, stuff and what whams? The souvenir stores in Atlantic City, Asbury Park, Coney Island, Revere Beach near Boston, Venice near Los Angeles, and similar establishments take more than a hundred million dollars out of our pockets every summer. One small town concern in Atlantic City sells a hundred thousand dollars worth, on which the net profit is over fifty thousand. There are factories that turn out this sort of product in vast quantities, and much

of it is fraud stuff. Wooden articles are reputed to be made from trees that grow on historic spots, but are really bogs. Strings of beads are manufactured by the mill and sold to the public as the work of Indians. The same is true of moccasins, toy canoes and the like.

At best the bulk of these goods is rubbish, and our outgo for this purpose might well be cut off entirely during the war. To do this requires absolutely no sacrifice. The people engaged in this business will simply have to do what so many of us have already done, adjust themselves to war.

Aside from souvenirs, we are wanton spenders for actual merchandise that is inferior or worthless. There is a great class of people to whom cheapness or flashiness appeals, rather than utility and economy. A dealer in cheap goods told me that he netted \$25,000 a year from merchandise that was practically worthless. He found it easy to appeal to the spending instincts of his customers.

**Unnecessary Phone Calls.**  
Not many of us ever stop to think of the immense amount of money that is spent for unnecessary telephone calls. Wherever you go the telephone booths are occupied, and when you catch fragments of the conversations you usually find them unimportant. Reginald calls up his best girl to tell her he still loves her, Maude calls Al-gernon to thank him for the chocolates. No matter how trivial the occasion, our first impulse is to step into a telephone booth.

If five million people would save one five-cent call a day it would mean a total of over ninety million dollars a year. Doubtless several times this sum could be saved very easily by the general public on local and long-distance calls. We are lavishly extravagant in the use of the telephone. I know of business houses that talk several times a day between New York and Chicago, incurring tolls on each occasion that run from five to forty dollars or more. If there is one thing that the Americans haven't learned it is economy of talk—which in these days of war need might well mean millions of dollars in Liberty Bonds. The telephone wires are heavily overtaxed, anyhow.

Then there is the telegraph. We have this habit, too. With a little planning we could commonly use a three-cent stamp instead of a ten-word message. One large wholesale house requires all its traveling men to report daily by telegram, an expenditure that might be eliminated. The telegraph tolls of some of the large industrial and commercial establishments are so big that they seem incredible.

The night letter is, in a measure, a luxury, at least we could do away with the social phase of it and much of the domestic. I happen to know one business man, who on his frequent and long absences from home, gets a night letter from his wife every morning and sends one each night. Nor are these messages confined to fifty words, but often run several times that length. Baby had the colic; Freddy fell downstairs and skinned his knee; Jeannette had her hair washed.

I happen to be acquainted also with a young man who revels in night letters to his fiancée. They are real letters, too, beginning like this: "Darling Sue—I love you more than ever. I couldn't sleep last night thinking of you. Do you love me still? . . ."

A certain business man, the head of a large concern, goes away at intervals to rest for a week or two, but insists on having a night letter every morning, narrating the substance of the previous day's business. These messages run into hundreds of words every day.

### The Taxicab Mania.

We Americans also have the taxicab mania. There is a very large class of men and women who ride in cabs habitually, and let go immense sums in the aggregate. They take taxicabs to go a few blocks. In a group of twenty leading cities there are about four hundred thousand of these vehicles, and if each of them absorbed ten dollars every day in unnecessary fares the aggregate would be over fourteen million dollars a year. What would be the total for the whole United States? It is a luxury to jump into a cab whenever ones wants to move about, but these are stern times and we need to be more iron-minded. The boys in France do not ride in cabs, and the money we waste on this form of luxury might better go into gas masks for them.

We American men saturate ourselves with many kinds of soft indulgences—as in the barber shops. These places in the high class hotels, as well as the better shops outside, take from us immense sums—for what? Here is a typical list: Shave, 25c; haircut, 50c; shampoo, 35c; bay rum, 15c; face massage, 35c; manicure, 50c; shine, 10c; tips, 20c; total \$2.40. It is not uncommon for men to go through the whole list, and to pay additional money for hair tonics and other fancy frills.

When we analyze this list we find that the only item really necessary is the haircut—and perhaps the shine. Men can shave themselves at a cost of two or three cents, and save perhaps half an hour in time. Our soldier boys cannot indulge in these effeminacies. Many of them, in those good old days of peace, were in the class that patronized these shops, but today they are made of more Draconian stuff. Why should we ourselves indulge in these costly habits when the nation calls for cannon to back our troops abroad?

If a million men spend an average of

50 cents a day unnecessarily a barber shops we have a total of \$182,500,000, under the actual figures, taking into consideration all classes of people. In the less exclusive barber shops one finds a continual stream of men, of the moderate salary class, who indulge in the items I have enumerated. We might guess the total ought to be at least half a billion dollars.

To have our shoes shined we spend at least \$100,000,000 a year and a million more than the market price for shoe laces because we wish to avoid the trouble of putting them in ourselves. Some of this expense undoubtedly is necessary, but while the war lasts we need not be ashamed of any form of Spartan economy. We can be tight handed and rigorous with our nickels and dimes without being open to the charge of stinginess—provided we use the money for government needs. We can shine our own shoes for a tenth of this hundred million dollars. There are in New York a number of men who have grown very wealthy from the shoe-shining business. Among them are some large tenement owners—one reputed to be worth millions. There are more than fifty thousand bootblack places in the United States, some of them employing a dozen or more men. The majority of these bootblacks are within the fighting age, at least they ought to be doing some sort of war service, instead of shining shoes—while American blood runs so freely on the other side.

### Women Big Wasters.

But when it comes to this kind of self-pampering women spend far more money than men. Figures secured from one large department store give some interesting sidelights on possible economies. Its sales of toilet goods last year ran about 1.3 per cent of its total sales. Thus for every million dollars in sales its customers buy \$13,000 worth of toilet articles. Apply this rate to all the stores in the United States and you have a total of unnumbered millions. The term toilet goods is very elastic, including both necessary and unnecessary articles, but the conscientious war saver no doubt would class one-third of these items as partly dispensable, such as perfumery, certain soaps, powders, rouge, toilet waters, so-called beauty compounds, and the like.

America's women are highly scented. We live in an atmosphere redolent with ambrosia. From almost every woman one passes on the "parade" streets of the cities there comes an aura of roses, or perhaps violets. Our girls demand scents, in infinite variety, not only in perfumery itself, but in hundreds of products. Merely to gratify our sense of olfactory luxury we spend tens of millions of dollars annually. Yet in France the husbands, brothers and sweethearts of our women and girls are sweating and fighting in noisome places amid the stench of disease and death. The odors they get are of gunpowder and blood. Surely we can spare some of our perfumery money in the cause for which we sent them abroad.

If it were possible to estimate the money spent by women in New York alone for hairdressing and beauty culture it would undoubtedly run into the tens of millions. One hairdresser in the metropolitan district states that within eighteen months, or since America entered the war, he has built up a business that nets him seven hundred dollars a month.

A woman proprietor of a so-called beauty establishment says that fifty customers bring her a revenue of \$30,000 a year, that she realized a clear profit of \$20,000 on powders, creams and perfumes, that she sold sets of cosmetics at seven hundred dollars each. Thousands of women pay fancy fees for hair waving, tinting and bleaching. One concern announces twelve colors, ranging from black to golden blonde. Much money also goes for removal of freckles, wrinkles treatment, face bleaching and so on. The manure bill in New York is enormous, and the chiropody outgo large. These places are furnished in the utmost luxury. If only we could impress on women of this class the dreadful hardships our American youths are undergoing in the great cause!

The lesson ought to sink home to all women in America, who in greater or lesser degree, let their good money go for such futile vanities.

It is estimated that a million men and women throughout the country are giving to the Turkish baths an average of a dollar a day. Thus we have a total of \$365,000,000 a year. To this we can add perhaps half as much for massage, attendant fees, special treatment and incidentals.

Bathing is commended, but most of us, at least those who have the Turkish bath habit, can take our ablutions at home. The soldiers in Europe don't have Turkish baths. We imagine we need them here. We eat big dinners and fill ourselves with rheumatic deposits, poison ourselves by gormandizing. We contract colds because our systems are too badly clogged to throw off the germs. It is when we are stuffed with rich viands and all sorts of luxuries that we turn to the Turkish bath for relief. Why not discipline ourselves during the war and transfer all these millions of dollars into the fund that is going to beat autocracy and the German peril?

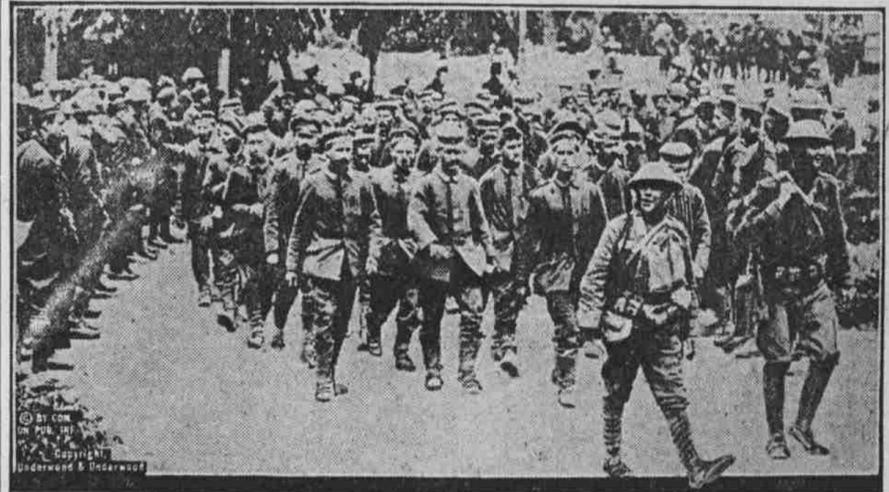
I have touched on merely a few of the items of unnecessary outgo. The list might be extended indefinitely. But there ought to be enough here to set us thinking, and we can make the extensions ourselves. There is no use denying the fact that the people have not yet put themselves on a war basis financially. We are still wasting millions on trifles. The war would be over now if we had taken ourselves in hand at the beginning.

## FRONTAVIKS AT VLADIVOSTOK TO AID THE CZECHS



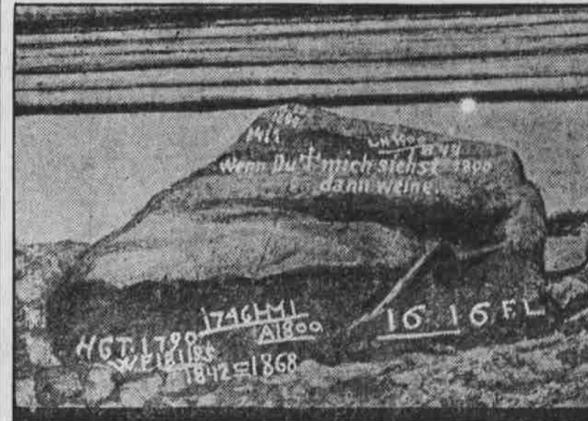
The arrival in Vladivostok of the Frontaviks (Russian soldiers who have served at the front and have been discharged by the bolsheviks) to assist the Czech-Slovak army to down the bolsheviks. The crowds give them an ovation.

## AMERICANS PROUDLY BRING IN FIRST PRISONERS



American military police of the First division escorting the first batch of Hun prisoners taken by the Yankees in the Picardy offensive.

## HUNGER STONE PREDICTS WOE FOR HUNS



This is the famous Hunger Stone of the Elbe, near the chain bridge at Tetschen, Germany, which bears on its face the inscription: "When you gaze upon me, then cry." The legend attached to it is that when the waters of the Elbe fall away so the stone is visible hardships are sure to follow, and in every instance since the date of the first inscription, 1417, the prediction has been found to be true. This year the waters have fallen to the lowest level reached in over five hundred years.

## NOVEL TRENCH MORTAR SUCCESSFUL



This novel gun is the French 155-millimeter trench mortar, sometimes known as an accompaniment gun. It follows the infantry everywhere. It has net with great successes along the French front.

## CONDENSATIONS

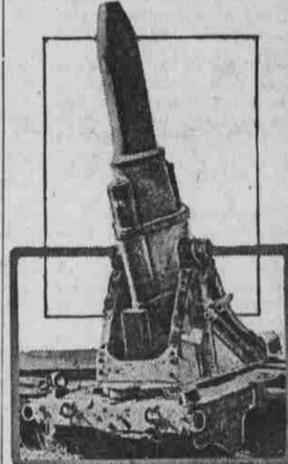
Chiefly for roofing automobiles an imitation glass that resembles celluloid has been invented in Europe. Many old-time knitting machines have been dragged from the garret to do duty in the present emergency. Telephone operators in Egypt are required to speak five languages, English, French, Italian, Greek and Arabic. The wages of able British seamen are now \$69 a month and food, as against \$25 before the opening of the war.

Bavaria has a suspension bridge with but one tower, the cables at the other end being anchored in a high rock bluff. Doug Johnson of Providence, Ky., had a sow which gave birth to eight pigs, and not a pig in the litter has an eye.

It is said that a pair of night hawks, which have made the roof of a Bath (Me.) bank building their summer home for 30 years, are back again.

To increase the volume of sound from a phonograph a Parisian has invented an instrument that will play three records simultaneously.

## CAPTURED "MINNIE" IN U. S.



This big mine thrower, or mine-thrower, as the Germans call it, was captured from the Huns and is a part of the great war expedition which the United States has been giving in various parts of the country and which will open in Chicago on September 2. The "Minnie," as the British have named the weapon, is shown in position with a big shell set in the muzzle ready to be thrown into the enemy trenches.

**Hysterical Mutism in Ancient Times.**  
A case of imagined inability of speech, one of the puzzles of today, is narrated by Herodotus, who tells that Croesus had a son who was in other respects proper enough, but dumb. When the city was taken, one of the Persians, not knowing Croesus, was about to kill him. Croesus, though he saw him approach, from his present misfortune took no heed of him, nor did he care about dying of the blow; but this speechless son of his, when he saw the Persian advancing toward him, through dread and anguish burst into speech and said: "Man, kill not Croesus!" These were the first words he ever uttered, but from that time he continued to speak the remainder of his life.

**Fire Barrage.**  
Barrage or dam, is a new word in the military vernacular—specifically the act of barring by artillery fire. By exact measurements a line of guns is brought to bear upon a certain terrain. The fire creates a complete screen of projectiles. Behind it a body of troops is safe; through it no enemy can advance. By moving barrage line forward ("creeping" barrage) a detachment can advance with a minimum of casualties. It is controlled by observers at the front, who find ranges and direct artillery fire by telephone or wireless, and it demolishes, in front of the attacking force, wire entanglements, trenches and "pill-boxes."