

The Philosopher

THE GREAT RENEWAL

What human being, old or young, well or sick, was ever indifferent to the coming of Spring, the most welcome season of all the four? All life responds to the great renewal, the annual miracle. The skies become softer, we hear the notes of the first adventurous migrant birds, the sun shines ever more strongly, the breezes are prophetic of summer, rather than reminiscent of winter, and there is a spirit of promise and of renewal over all the earth. It is, of course, the season which speaks most poignantly to youth; but who ever becomes so aged as not to respond to its influence? However long the count of the years that have added themselves, so rapidly, one after the other, to his sum of life, another Spring brings with it hope and a touch of youth. But this Spring has a shadow upon it, darkening its joy, a more terrible shadow than any preceding Spring has ever known since humankind has dwelt upon this globe. We can only hope that before the coming of another Spring the war will be ended, and that the great source of all life and its renewals will be giving its healing to the wounded spirits and broken hearts.

HOCH DER ARITHMETIK!

How many people of German birth or extraction are there in the United States? When the war began, the talk was of six or seven millions. But the figure was inflated rapidly by the exponents of Kultur under the Stars and Stripes, who soon betrayed the fact that their Americanism was a very thin veneer over their pan-Germanism and inherited submissiveness to the Kaiser and the militarism of "the Fatherland." Soon the number was up to 15,000,000. In January the slithery Count Bernstorff, Ambassador of the Kaiser at Washington, touchingly referred to "the 20,000,000 people of German origin in the United States." Then Hermann Ridder, editor of the New York Staats Zeitung, placed the number at 25,000,000. Last month Congressman Bartholdt declared that one-third of the people of the United States were Germans by birth or descent. That would bring the number up to nearly 35,000,000. As a matter of fact, the United States census figures show that the total number of such people is 13,000,000 odd, and this includes those born in Germany, those born in the United States with one, or both, parents of German birth, and those born in the United States with one or both grandparents of German birth. The slogan of the hyphenated exponents of Kultur in the States is evidently "Hoch der Arithmetik!"

TO STARVE THE GERMAN GUNS

Besides food for man and beast, modern warfare requires food for guns of all calibres, from the soldier's rifles to the great guns that throw projectiles weighing close upon a ton. There are other absolute necessities, such as rubber, oil and gasoline. But to consider, for the moment, only the food for the guns, it is important to note that the stoppage by the British sea power of all supplies of cotton to Germany means the cutting off of a material of paramount importance in the manufacture of ammunition. A military authority, writing in one of the English reviews, figures it out that from one shipload of 20,000 bales of cotton enough nitro-cellulose, or guncotton, can be obtained for 3,000,000 rifle shots, or fifteen days' shooting for all the German armies. Of the ammunition for the big guns cotton forms 75 per cent. It is computed that Germany and Austria have been using 945 tons of cotton per day to keep up their ammunition supply. As for copper, of which there must be at least 75 per cent in the brass used in cartridges and shells, the London Times makes it plain that an average of 1,300,000 German rifles firing an average of 20 shots daily have consumed 687,000 pounds of brass daily, and the machine guns and the heavy artillery, 125 tons, on an exceedingly conservative estimate, making a total of 430 tons of brass used daily. That is to say, more than 300 tons of copper a day. And the copper is absolutely essential; the projectile contents (chiefly lead) and the ammunition ingredients are only one part of Germany's problem. The container, the outer coating of cartridges and shells must be three-fourths copper; otherwise cartridges are not dependable in army rifles, nor are the big shells in the big guns, the copper bands at the base of the shells being imperatively essential for accurate gunnery. That is to say, Germany must have more than 100,000 tons of copper a year, to keep on fighting as they have been fighting thus far (to say nothing of the necessity of meeting the increase in the Allies' guns and rifles). Now Germany has been producing only 26,000 tons of copper a year, and Austria less than 4,000. If that amount could be even doubled, and not a pound of copper used for industrial purposes in Germany or Austria, it would still fall very far short of 100,000 tons. Hence the commandeering of the copper bottoms of kettles, boilers and other kitchen utensils and of all other copper that can be laid hands on, and the desperately ingenious attempts to smuggle copper into Germany and Austria. The rigid tightening of the Allies' grip on all communication between the outside world and Austria, whatever it will mean for the German and Austrian people, will mean gradual starvation of the German and Austrian guns.

A REMARK BY THE DUKE OF CONNAUGHT

The Duke of Connaught was reported not long ago as saying that every household should have a pet. But is it not a fact that few, indeed, are the households that have not a pet? Grandmother is the pet in one; the baby is the pet in the next. But, of course, this is not what the Governor-General meant. He was referring to such pets as dogs and kittens and other domestic animals. Nor are birds to be forgotten—which reminds the Philosopher of a parrot he is acquainted with, which is greatly prized by the household he belongs to, though the Philosopher, if he were a believer in transmigration, would be inclined to think the body of that parrot inhabited by the soul of some cynical mountebank or acrobat who had died of acute indigestion. There are houses in which a geranium is the pet. Who has not known a geranium in delicate health being made a pet of? There are pets and pets. Some people have a pet grievance. That is a pet which gets more petting than any other on the whole list. You don't need to have a real grievance at all, to start with, in order to have a full-grown pet grievance to end with. And it is a vigorous sort of pet. Your pet pup, or kitten, or canary, might die, but your pet grievance! It must be because of pet grievances that the word "pet" has a certain left-handed connection with sulking and grouching. A person who is sulking is described as "in a pet." But these reflections have carried us far from the very sensible remark of the Duke of Connaught, who is entirely right in saying that every household should have a pet.

THE RIDERS OF THE PLAINS

The annual report of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police is, to look at the outside of it, just a Government blue book, like any other. But when you look inside it, you are pretty sure to find records of adventure and of energy and resourcefulness and high courage in the discharge of duty, set forth in the most matter of fact way, as being all in the day's work—as, in truth, they are for the "riders of the plains," whose fame as the preservers of British law and order is worldwide. When one of the Mounted Police goes after a lawbreaker, he is stopped by no difficulties or dangers. The history of Western Canada is rich in stirring records of the achievements of the Police. The annual report just to hand is, like all its predecessors, interesting as no other Government blue book is interesting. Among the matters set forth in it with official brevity is the pursuit, by Sergeant C. S. Harper and two constables, of a criminal into the fastnesses of the Rocky Mountains and his capture, with the girl he was charged with abducting. Two horses were lost by falling down cliffs, and more than once the pursuing party was on the verge of starvation, the deep snow making progress difficult. But at last they sighted the smoke of the fugitive's camp, and after capturing him and his companion, began the return journey, which was as full of peril as the first one. The captors and the captured had to sleep in the snow in the open, and a guard had to be maintained all night. Going and coming took eighty-one days. The lawbreaker was turned over to the courts to be dealt with. It was all in the regular routine of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police.

AS TO WOMEN'S HONESTY, AND MEN'S

Among the items of news in the papers during the past couple of weeks (outside the war news) which have struck the Philosopher as worthy of comment, but which he has not seen commented upon, is one which told of the absconding of a young woman who was employed in an Eastern city as a cashier. The item stated that her embezzlements amounted to a considerable sum. It is a rare thing for a girl or woman occupying a position as cashier, or any other post of trust, to betray her employers and abscond with the funds; indeed, the Philosopher, who has read the newspapers pretty attentively for a good many years, cannot recall another case of the sort. It has sometimes been argued that men have a clearer idea than women of commercial honesty and plain, everyday fair dealing. It has been argued that a woman is less likely than a man to return money, if she is overpaid by error, using sophistry to convince herself that there may not have been an error, or that she is not bound in duty to report it. It has been argued that a woman is more likely than a man to keep any valuable she finds, unless she actually knows the owner and can personally restore it. These things have been said, and others like them—by male writers, it must be admitted. But the fact stands that dishonesty on the part of a woman cashier is practically unknown; and the Philosopher is prepared to wager a reasonable sum that, if the truth is got at in this one case, it will be found that the embezzling was done for a man. There are many reasons, no doubt, why women do not embezzle. They have imagination to foresee the disgrace that discovery of such wrong-doing entails, and, as a rule, they have a religion of which honesty is a cardinal principle. Nor do they gamble. Who could undertake to give the number of the men, young and old, who began gambling with money not their own on cards, horses, wheat or stocks, and having lost, went on "borrowing" from the money in their charge, until they found themselves in the clutch of the law.

PREHISTORIC MANITOBA

This terrible war, which so eclipses all preceding wars in history, forces the mind into many an unaccustomed train of thought. As, for example, in regard to the ancient civilizations that were destroyed by war. Some of these were highly developed, others were but primitive, as in the case of the prehistoric people on this continent who vanished utterly, leaving nothing to succeeding ages but the mounds which afford the learned in such matters so fertile a field for theorizings. There used to be a mound within the present limits of the city of Winnipeg. It was investigated in 1879, and a number of human skeletons, pottery and implements found. There are other such mounds on the Red River, on the Rainy River, and in the Souris River country. They are relics of a race not Indian, but of Toltec origin, allied to the Peruvians; a peaceful race, that was wiped out by the Iroquois. It is strange to think that a large portion of this Western country was once occupied by people who developed a considerable measure of civilization, who had their own problems of existence, their own religion, their own arts and crafts, and who vanished ages ago.

"BURN THIS LETTER"

There came recently to light in England some letters which had been received by King James the First and put away so safely that for three centuries they have lain undiscovered. One of them, which is both interesting and illuminative in more ways than one. It was written to the King by the Duke of Buckingham, the favorite whose influence over the first of the Stuart monarchs of England is a matter of history, and is as follows:

"Here is a gentleman called Sir Francis Leake, who hath a Philosopher's Stone. 'Tis worth but Eight Thousand; he will give it me, if you will make him a Baron. I will, if you command not the contrary, have his patent ready to sign when I come down. He is of good religion, well born, and hath a good estate. I pray you burn this letter."

The letter—with its disclosure of the old belief in the philosopher's stone, believed to possess the property of converting the baser metals into gold, or of curing various bodily ills, and its disclosure also of how titles were bought three hundred years ago—was not burnt. Some historical writer ought to compile a book containing all the most important letters which those who received them should (in the interests of their own, or the writer's good fame) have burnt, but did not. An old politician said to a younger one: "Whenever you write a letter and end by a request to the man it is written to that he shall burn it, do not send it, but burn it yourself."

VERY FEW WOMEN LEGISLATORS

An interesting (and, to the Philosopher, a new) argument is being set forth in the States by the opponents of woman suffrage. Why is it, ask those who are putting this contention forward, that in the States where women have the vote, women are not being a more conspicuous part in the actual work of law-making? A pamphlet which has come in the Philosopher's mail from Cambridge, Massachusetts, says:

"Men, they say, are indifferent to the interests of women and children. They care nothing about child labor. They do not think anything about sanitation, or food adulteration, or pure milk, or factory regulation, or the social evil, or dozens of other things which women have at heart. Give women the ballot, it is said, and all these things will be taken care of by the 'mothering influence' of women."

"But, if all this is true, why is it that the suffrage States have not found it out? An examination of the official lists of members of the Legislatures in the nine States where women were voting last November shows a singular indifference to the value of women lawmakers."

Then follows this table of figures:

	Members of Legislatures	Women Members
Arizona.....	54	2
California.....	120	0
Colorado.....	100	2
Idaho.....	94	1
Kansas.....	165	0
Oregon.....	90	2
Utah.....	63	2
Washington.....	138	0
Wyoming.....	84	1
	908	10

This argument against woman suffrage may be summed up thus: Since only a little more than one per cent of the legislative membership in the woman suffrage States is composed of women, what becomes of the argument of the advocates of woman suffrage that there is need of woman's influence in lawmaking? But the plain and obvious answer to that is this: Woman's influence can be exercised without any women being elected as legislators, or seeking election as legislators. It can be exercised in electing men of the right sort. And what about the argument that if women had the suffrage, they would become numerously troublesome as office-seekers? The above figures seem to dispose of that argument. A certain man who is prominent in Canadian public life, and who is not an advocate of votes for women, said to the Philosopher not many months ago, "I must admit frankly that I have yet to hear the first solid and valid argument against woman suffrage."