

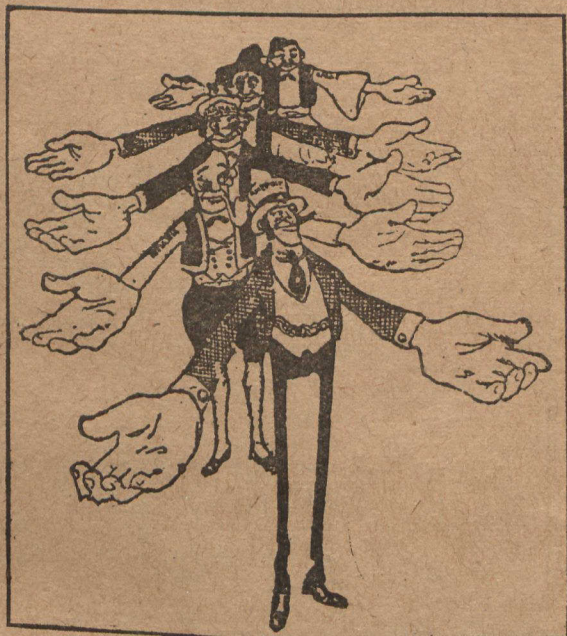
communication. Depend upon it, the secret of Imperial unity is to be found in the abridgment of the spaces which divide the Empire and in the oneness of the seas more surely than in a cast-iron Imperial Constitution. Electricity must be pressed into our service; the swift, oil-burning ship must be developed into a very shuttle of our Imperial fabric. The one must supplement the other. Probably the various States of the Empire will find it essential to exercise control of cable, wireless, and mail steamers, managing them, not for financial profit, but solely with a view to linking the Empire in close-knit bonds of sentiment and action.

## ARE WE HAPPIER ?

*Or Less Happy than our Fore-Fathers—an Interesting Question*

**W**HETHER we are happier than our forefathers used to be, or whether we are really happy nowadays at all, is an interesting question well discussed by Charles A. Mercier, in the October issue of the Hibbert Journal.

Have we not every morning on our breakfast-tables news from the uttermost parts of the earth of what happened there only the day before? Has not the meanest and poorest citizen the same privilege, and has he not been furnished at the public expense with ability to read it? Are not the very paupers in the workhouses—refuges unknown then—provided as a matter of course with appliances such as the Queen of Sheba or Semiramis, or, for that matter, Queen Elizabeth on her throne, could not command? None of these great ladies had the use of table-forks. It is improbable that Queen Elizabeth, in the whole course of her long and healthy life, ever had a bath. As we look round our rooms, do we not see luxuries and conveniences by the score that were unknown to our forefathers—carpets, wall-papers, clocks, telephones, plate-glass, easy chairs, spring beds, sash windows, door-locks, gas-lights, pianos, electric lights, cigars, blotting-paper, tea, coffee, electro-plate, and, above all, matches? In this one matter alone, is it possible to measure the daily saving of time, trouble, and temper brought about by the substitution of the friction match for the flint and steel? Do not persons of very moderate means now possess, in abundance and profusion, luxuries which only the wealthiest of our forefathers could command—books, pictures, engravings, fabrics of all kinds, crockery and porcelain, implements of iron, steel, brass, and other metals? Only sixty-five years ago, those who were not present at the opening of the Great Exhibition, and who wished to know



### A NEUTRAL ON NEUTRALS.

"On the Make."

(A Greek conception of America, Spain, Holland, Switzerland, and Greece.)

—Hellas, Athens.

what it was like, must wait for months until one artist had painted it, and another artist had laboriously copied and engraved the painting and then, for the expenditure of several guineas, his wish could be gratified. Now he could have it next morning for a halfpenny. Where our forefathers drew by hand labour, in buckets from a well, the water, often muddy and impure, that they used for drinking and domestic purposes, we have, by the mere turning

of a tap, an unlimited supply of pure water. Tropical fruits unknown to our grandfathers, or grown by the wealthy at great expense in hot-houses, are now sold on barrows on the streets at prices the poorest can afford. Undoubtedly, all classes of the people can now obtain a thousand conveniences and luxuries that not the wealthiest nor the most powerful of our



### THE SICK EAGLE.

(A neutral correspondent describes Germany as the spectacle of a sick mind in a vigorous body. The nation's spirit is troubled. Everybody is full of doubts. There is a growing certainty that the Austro-Germans will be unable to dictate peace terms.)

Hans: "Ah, my poor Eagle, you were too slow—and now the pigeons you went out to pluck have grown into Eagles, too!"

The Bulletin, Sydney.

forefathers ever dreamed of possessing; but are we therefore happier? Convenience and luxury are desirable, no doubt, but these are not the same as happiness. It may be doubted whether these are necessary ingredients in happiness. Many of our ancestors were happy without our conveniences and luxuries: many of us are unhappy in spite of them.

There are, however, other discoveries that affect our welfare more nearly than mere material conveniences, comforts, and luxuries. Chloroform has robbed operations of their terrors, childbirth of its pains; Listerism is saving, and has saved, incalculable numbers of lives. The science of health has abolished some diseases from amongst us, has reduced other diseases to insignificance, and has prolonged the average duration of life by a considerable number of years. Does not all this contribute to make us happier? It is hard to say. No doubt it is an inexpressible relief to know that if we are to suffer the surgeon's knife we shall be exempt from pain; but it must be remembered that for hundreds of operations that are performed now, but one was performed before the days of Simpson and Lister. The number of persons who had to dread the surgeon's knife was so small that the general happiness of the community was scarcely affected. Life is prolonged, and the pain of separation from those dear to us comes later, but it comes at length. It is postponed, but it is not abolished; and, on the other hand, many a life that is a questionable boon, that would be gratefully resigned, and that in former times would have been mercifully cut short, is now prolonged in years of suffering. In early times only the strong survived, and it is certain that a community that contains a large proportion of the weak and sickly is, on the ground of health alone, less happy than one in which the weak and sickly are few.

The writer goes on to argue that insecurity of life and of property do not make people unhappy any more than birds who live in a constant state of fear can yet sing for joy. He cites as an illustration our troops in the war who frequently see their comrades struck down beside them. They well know the danger they are in, but it does not make them unhappy. Like the birds, they whistle and sing; and like their comrades beyond the danger zone, they laugh and joke. A very short experience, if it does not reconcile them to the life, at any rate accustoms them to it. No doubt it is easier to be happy when life is secure, but insecurity of life is no bar to happiness; nay, in a measure, and to a certain degree, it brings its own sources of satisfaction. It exercises the wits. It sets the faculties agog to

avoid, evade, and counteract the danger; and as long as it is successful, this successful exercise of faculty is a source of pleasure, all the keener for the magnitude of the difficulties that are surmounted. It is a commonplace that there are natures that revel in danger, and find their greatest happiness in coping with dangerous situations.

He is the happiest, says the writer, who has the greatest capacity for feeling happy, whose interests are most diverse, whose energy is greatest, and whose efforts meet with obstacles difficult but not insuperable. On all these counts he finds that we are better off than our forbears and he winds up a very convincing argument by a reference to hell.

So far, he says, I have not alluded to any increase of happiness from the general abandonment of the belief in hell and in the depredations of a personal devil. I am not sure that this modification of our belief has upon the whole increased our happiness. Escape from hell by means of a deathbed repentance was so easy and so certain, that no evil-doer need live in apprehension except of sudden death; and hence arose that horror of sudden death which so oppressed our ancestors and which we find so hard to understand. Almost everyone now would choose a sudden death rather than a lingering death, and the reason is that we are no longer in terror of that hell that awaited those who died so suddenly that they had no opportunity for repentance.

## MONEY BUYING

*How it has been Decreased by Various Events Connected with the World Catastrophe*

**F**OR several years before the commencement of the war the purchasing power of money had been slowly declining, observes Walter F. Ford, in the Fortnightly Review. But prior to August, 1914, the downward movement had been so gradual that it caused little or no hardship, although it certainly gave rise to a great deal of discussion. With the outbreak of hostilities a rapid diminution of the purchasing power of money was expected. For a time, however, the decline was slower than was anticipated, and it was only after several weeks of war that the downward movement gathered great strength. Then old standards of value disappeared and the financial system had to be reconstructed on a new basis. Manufactures—apart from war material—diminished in quantity but increased in relative cost; exports declined and imports had to be paid for at enhanced rates. We are apt to overlook the fact that, although prices may be actually higher in Germany than they are in England, the high prices which we pay go, in many instances, to neutral nations, whereas those paid in Germany—