

Public Opinion

CITY OF BAPAUME. (Boston Transcript).

Small though it be, Bapaume has always been a strong place. It is associated with the earlier feats of the great military engineer Vauban, and his success in fortifying it in 1641 established his fame, so that he passed from triumph to triumph until he became Marshal of France. It has no doubt fortifications of a far different sort to-day, but those who are superstitious will regard the omens as good, for in the Franco-Prussian war one of the all too few victories to which the French could lay claim was gained here in 1871.

ELECTROCUTING ANIMALS. (Indianapolis News).

Considerable sentiment against the use of electricity as a means of putting unwanted animals out of the way is growing up among members of humane societies in various parts of the country. The popular belief now is that animals when electrocuted suffer intense agony. Members of the Humane Society of Kansas City, Mo., have been conducting a wide intelligence campaign in which opinions of persons familiar with electricity and experienced in handling it were obtained. These people firmly believe that electricity inflicts pain, it is said, and strangely advocate the adoption of some milder way of putting animals to death.

Y. M. C. A. WORK WITH THE TROOPS. (Chicago Tribune).

The generous gifts of Mr. J. Ogden Armour and Mr. James A. Patten, who each contributed \$10,000 to the fund to be raised for Y. M. C. A. work with the troops, we hope will call attention to this worthy cause and stimulate donations.

The Y. M. C. A. demonstrated its usefulness during the last mobilization, doing a fine service in providing the men with clean entertainment, places of wholesome resort, caring for mail, and doing other services ameliorating the lot of the soldier in the field. The need for relaxation and amusement is acute in any army and it is important to have it provided under the right conditions. The Y. M. C. A. policy displays the wisdom of the serpent as it has the innocence of the dove. It does not frighten young men away by thrusting religious instruction upon them, though it provides it for those who will accept it. The result of this tact is that it is able to do a real service in its own way.

If we bring a million or two million men into the field, the Y. M. C. A. work will be a useful factor in protecting men from demoralizing influences and in keeping up the spirit of the troops.

KIPLING COMES BACK. (Chicago Tribune).

Rudyard Kipling signals our entry into the war with the first great poem he has written since the beginning of the conflict. Also he presents British literature in its most powerful phase. In resounding language he imposes a code of morals on the United States that demands we act in the interests of England.

British literature more than British battleships has built the British empire. From pennyliners to poet laureates the British writers breathe their country's greatness. Their standard of right and wrong for everybody is the good or ill of England. So skillfully and so persistently have they kept at this that they have captured the subconscious thought not only of their own people but of a large part of the outside world beside.

England's interest is very much the moral law of seacoast Americans. Eastern editorial writers have been harping it for the last two years.

Unfortunately for America our writers do not show the strong patriotic impulse that distinguishes their English contemporaries. Booth Tarkington and Mary Roberts Rinehart write with as much imagination and as skilful technique as Kipling or Wells, but their object is only to amuse, never to inspire.

Young people obtain the greater part of their impressions from fiction. No American boy or girl will gain anything from "Little Boy Baxter." The subaltern of Kipling or the midshipman of Marriott is the ideal of young manhood and young womanhood as well.

Is that, perhaps, why our rich young men do not enlist as well as the English — and why many American girls marry abroad?

MOLYBDENUM.

(New York Evening Post).

Molybdenum is a substance which is playing a part in the present war for both the Allies and the Germans. Used in hardening the steel which is used in the rifling of the big guns, it is reported to have increased the life of the guns twenty times, and many projectiles are also hardened with molybdenum as well as a great deal of the armor plate which was formerly hardened with tungsten or vanadium. It is estimated, too, that the amount of molybdenum required to harden steel is only about one-half to one-third the amount of tungsten which is necessary to give the same result.

Curiously enough, molybdenum is used also as a stabilizer in some high explosives, smokeless powders, and to make a dense smoke in the location bombs which are fired previous to the firing of the projectile. It is used in many chemicals and in dyes for leather, rubber, silk, as a disinfectant, for fireproofing, in some cases in place of platinum, while in electric lights it has replaced other metals which were previously used for the support of the filament. The output of Canada at the present time is perhaps the largest in the world.

AN INCIDENT OF 1812.

(Philadelphia Ledger).

In this war Germany has time and time again destroyed the life of an American — all non-combatants of a neutral nation. The Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia was the principal in an incident of the war of 1812 which shows how differently even an enemy then regarded personal property, let alone human lives of friendly powers. The Academy was bringing over from Italy twenty-one paintings and fifty-two engravings, which were a part of the Joseph Allen Smith collection, but a British cruiser captured the ship which was carrying these works of art to Philadelphia. The prize was taken to Halifax. Did England keep these Philadelphia treasures? It did not. Dr. Alexander Crooke, in the Court of the Vice-Admiralty, delivered an eloquent decision in that case. "Heaven forbid," he exclaimed, "that such an application to the generosity of Great Britain should ever be ineffectual! The arts and sciences are considered not as the pecuniary of this or that nation, but as the property of mankind at large." And so England sent on these works of art to Philadelphia which her cruiser, then battling against the United States, had captured.

FLEMING AND WALLOON.

(Boston Transcript).

A recently concocted but not much discussed German "plot" to divide Belgium by favoring the Flemings and giving them an administration with Brussels as their capital — the Walloons being given Namur as a seat of "government" — is only a continuation of a policy which the artful plotter commenced to adopt in the early days of the occupation. It is true that Fleming and Walloon have not always seen eye to eye on various matters, for they have many differing characteristics and they speak differing languages. The Flemish language is a type of low German, but it is hardly a genuine medium of literary expression, and the works of Maeterlinck and Verhaeren, who are the most eminent men in Flemish literature, appear in the French language. All university tuition is in French, and while an educated Fleming must know French a Walloon need not necessarily know Flemish. It is this fact which has divided the two races in the past, but the war closed the ranks, and the Flemings as a whole repudiate with scorn the action of those who have fallen in with the German plans.

The Flemings are a somewhat heavy and laborious people, stolid in character and lacking the vivacity which one usually finds in the Walloons, who are to be found mainly in Belgium's coal and iron areas. The Walloons are the most democratic of the Belgian peoples, and in them the Socialist movement gets its strongest support. They are fervently industrial, but with a strong attachment to the arts, and especially to music — M. Ysaye is a Walloon. They have no feeling of enmity or animosity with regard to their Fleming brethren, and in the days before the war the two races worked together in the greatest amity, even though they did not agree on a variety of matters.

A USEFUL TREE.

In a report for the government, United States Consul Yerby, stationed at Dakar, Senegal, describes a wonderful tree, known as the shea, or butter tree. It supplies the natives not only with nuts, which they highly prize, but with a butter that may become an article of commercial importance. It is already exported to Europe, where makers of artificial butter find use for it.

On the nuts that this tree produces there is a soft covering with a smooth skin that comes off easily when the nut ripens. This pulp is sweet and wholesome, according to Youth's Companion. Almost two-thirds of the nut is vegetable butter.

The tree begins to bear when it is fifteen years old and reaches its prime in twenty-five years. Chocolate manufacturers could easily utilize the product. It might also be of use in making candles and soap.

THE LATE MAITRE LABORI.

(London Daily News).

Maitre Labori's name in this country dated from the gallant defence of Dreyfus, but he was prominent in all the causes celebres in France in recent years. He defended, eloquently, but vainly, the man Vaillant, a fanatic of high character, who in 1894, threw a bomb without effect in the French Chamber. He was counsel for Madame Humbert and for Madame Caillaux, too. Probably the last case confirmed him — if he needed confirmation — in his outspoken belief in the rottenness of French Parliamentary politics. He was a big man, in every sense of the word, and leaves no evident successor at the French Bar. Really great advocates are perhaps rarer than great statesmen.

THE GERMAN NICKEL SUPPLY.

(Toronto Globe).

Nickel is an essential metal in armaments, and in a number of other classes of industries. Ontario virtually controls the world's supply of ore, and this natural monopoly permits an industrial monopoly if the province chooses to exercise it. The military argument for such a step has been painfully enforced by the war. Writing only last week, Carl W. Ackerman, who returned from Germany with former Ambassador Gerard, says the Krupps were short of nickel and the submarine merchant ship Deutschland was designed specially to bring nickel cargoes from the United States. While going through the Krupp factories last year he was told that the construction of 33.5 centimeter ship guns depended upon the Deutschland's safe return. The nickel brought to Germany on her two voyages came from the mines of this province.

BRITISH FREE TRADERS' OBJECTIONS TO PREFERENCE.

(From a paper issued by the English Free Trade Union.)

We believe that no scheme of colonial preference can be framed without taxing the industry and subsistence of our workers, without waste and loss for the Empire as a whole, and without disappointment and heartburnings within the Dominions.

We believe that no such policy can be adopted for the colonies without leading to similar measures in India, which would build up a protective Indian tariff against the manufacturers of Great Britain.

We believe that the policy cannot be reconciled with the recommendations of the recent Conference at Paris. For instance, no effective preference can be given to the chief products of Canada and Australia without such discriminations against the chief products of Russia as would force her to turn more and more to trade with Germany.

We believe that the taxation of food and raw materials must gravely handicap our manufacturers in competing in neutral markets, where competition will be fiercer than ever after the war, and that the establishment of a tariff against neutral nations must restrict our dealings in these markets when we need them most.

And we believe that, if a satisfactory scheme of colonial preference was difficult to work out before the war, it will be found to be doubly difficult to-day; because the imposition of new taxes on goods sent us by our Allies in Europe — the closing of the doors which we have opened freely in our own interests for two generations past — can hardly fail to weaken the alliance, to check common action against German schemes, and to diminish the trade with friendly nations on which the strength of our Empire and the prosperity of our people depend.